

The Great Lakes Social Studies Journal

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Cultivating Collaboration in Changing Times



The Great Lakes Social Studies Journal



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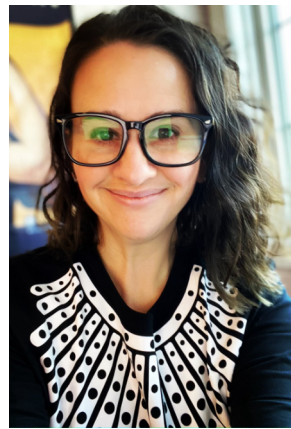
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From the Editor...

From April 18-21, 2022, MCSS hosted an amazing virtual conference around the theme of “Cultivating Collaboration in Changing Times.” We had so many great sessions that we know attendees couldn’t get to them all. So in this issue, we feature four articles based on conference sessions from Tim Constant, Jane Lo, Tom Hinken, Ellen Zwarensteijn, Phil Gersmehl, and Kymberli Wregglesworth. We also highlight three research pieces that center around collaboration in rural communities (from Ronald Morris and Denise Shockley), in gaming (by Nancy B. Sardone), and across content areas (by Troy Hicks, Rebecca Bush, and Jessica Ellison). If you missed this year’s conference, hopefully this issue can catch you up. And we hope to see you in Traverse City in 2023!



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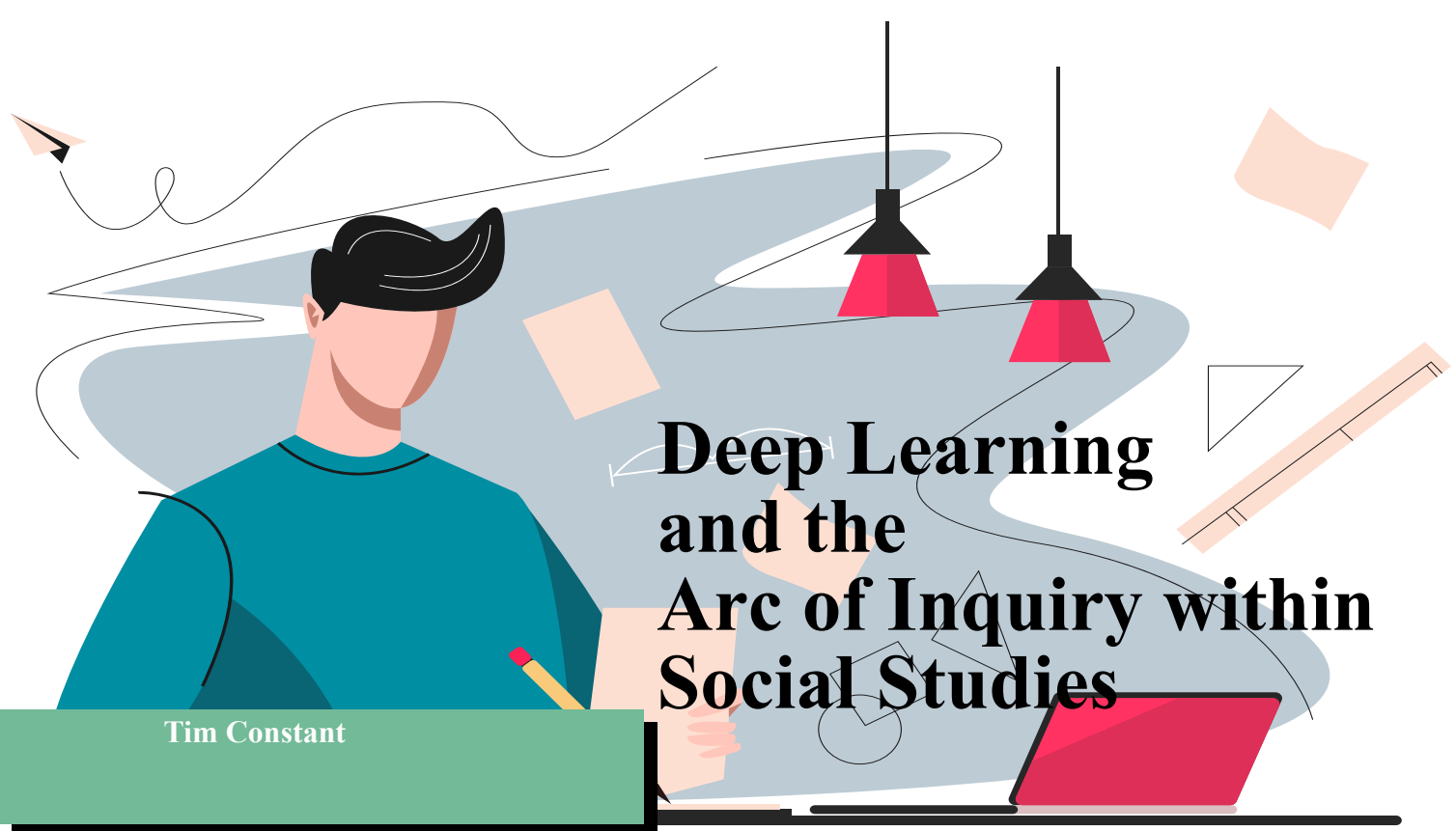
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Tim Constant

What is Deep Learning and how is it similar and different from the Inquiry Design Model? How does Deep Learning align with the Inquiry Arc? New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL), also known as Deep Learning (DL), is a global partnership of over 1,300 schools in eight countries with a focus on changing and transforming traditional approaches to learning by examining ways to address local and global issues using six learning competencies (6 C's): creativity, communication, citizenship, critical thinking, character, and collaboration. Each competency has learning dimensions which collectively define each competency along with specific language which defines the learning progress for each dimension starting with limited evidence up to proficient. According to Quinn et al. (2020), Deep Learning is learning that remains with someone for life because it focuses on education through “the skills and attributes needed for learners to flourish as citizens of the world” (p. 5). It is a “whole child-whole system” approach to learning that is action oriented and focused on identifying the need for change, developing a plan, and implementing the changes needed (Quinn et al., 2020, p. 8).

There are significant and noteworthy elements of support and alignment between Deep Learning, the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards, and the Inquiry Design Model. Deep Learning aims to empower students to address local and global issues and the process of examining and resolving these issues is where depth of knowledge occurs. Teachers serve as the facilitators of learning rather than the primary source of learning and students are empowered to identify an issue they would like to address or passionate about and through brainstorming and exploration, develop and implement a plan for resolution of the issue. Deep Learning avoids what the Inquiry Design Model identifies as “overprescription” of learning and the process of Deep Learning has many similar qualities to the Inquiry Arc. Both begin with developing questions and planning inquiries which is Dimension 1 of the C3 Framework. Without a compelling question and supporting questions, Deep Learning cannot occur. It is the driving force for inquiry and for Deep Learning. According to *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, “Questioning is key to student learning. The C3 Framework encourages the use of compelling and supporting questions, both teacher- and student-generated, as a central element of the teaching and learning process” (NCSS, 2013, p. 17).

Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework is where there are differences between Deep Learning and the Inquiry Arc. The IDM process “is a distinctive approach to creating curriculum and instructional materials that honors teachers’ knowledge and expertise” (<http://c3teachers.org>). However, with Deep Learning, the focus is not on teacher knowledge and expertise but on the students and their curiosities, wonderings, and knowledge. Through Deep Learning, teachers provide students access to disciplinary concepts and tools for civics, history, economics, and geography with students determining what tools to use and how to use them for developing and pursuing the compelling and supporting questions. It is also the students, through the support and guidance of the teacher, who are empowered to explore resources to address the issue they are passionate about and to determine the validity and usefulness of resources which is Dimension 3 of the C3 Framework.

Deep Learning is a constructivist approach focusing on student/learner agency which supports Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework – drawing conclusion and taking informed action. For an Inquiry Design Model to be Deep Learning, it requires what Swan, Grant, and Lee (2019) call a Student-Directed Inquiry (p. 119). This type of inquiry, under the observation and guidance of teachers, provides students an opportunity to choose what they would like to study or explore, how to engage in learning, and how to demonstrate learning has occurred (Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2019). This begins with teachers believing in their students’ abilities and their confidence in autonomous learning. This can be challenging, especially if teachers are new to the profession, to a school/district, or have a new

set of students such as the beginning of the school year or the change to a new semester or trimester. Student-Directed Inquiry and Deep Learning are not pedagogical approaches to begin with but a goal that takes time to achieve. It requires the development of strong and trusting teacher-student relationships and a paradigm shift in learning from a teacher-centered to a student-led approach to learning which is new for not only teachers but students. Since this approach is untraditional, it takes time to develop, especially at the secondary level where constructivist pedagogy and Deep Learning is rare.

Deep Learning is more prevalent in early childhood and elementary education with little presence at the secondary level. Why would this be if Deep Learning’s main focus is to increase student engagement and agency? Wouldn’t teachers at the middle and high school level want an increase in student engagement and agency? Part of the answer is the daily format and logistics of early childhood and elementary education versus secondary. Secondary teachers do not have full- or half-day self-contained classrooms like early childhood and elementary; therefore, it is more challenging for secondary teachers who see different students each hour. Due to student turnover and the significantly higher number of students on class rosters, it is challenging to build the relationships with students to the extent of those with self-contained classrooms. In addition, secondary teachers do not have extended and uninterrupted time for instruction and exploration like early childhood and elementary educators. It is very different having the same 15 or 20 students all day versus a total of 125 to 150 students throughout the day and different students each hour which is the case in secondary.

Curriculum pacing is also a concern for many educators and another possible reason why Deep Learning is not often embraced by secondary level educators. For example, if

Deep Learning requires Student-Directed Inquiry, teachers need to understand that this will take additional time therefore affecting curriculum pacing. According to Swan, Grant, and Lee (2019), there is no way around this time commitment. “At a minimum, teachers report that these kinds of independent research experiences take two weeks, but could take longer, depending on students’ facility with research and how extensive a teaching experience is planned with other students or peers” (Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2019, p. 122). Therefore, teachers need to understand and be content with the fact that Deep Learning and Student-Directed Inquiry is more time intensive but in turn provides student agency, increases engagement by connecting with student passions, allows for extensive inquiry and skill development, and through student agency makes students feel like experts in a specific topic or area of inquiry (Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2019, p. 135). It also allows teachers who are concerned about teaching standards and pacing to address numerous standards in one larger project over time. In other words, it is working smarter and not harder.

One of the noteworthy differences between Deep Learning, the C3 Social Studies Framework, and the Inquiry Design Model, is Deep Learning’s pedagogical approach to addressing local or global issues. The foundational approach to Deep Learning is empowering students to take informed action which is Dimension 4 of the C3 Social Studies Framework. Therefore, less time is spent on Dimensions 2 and 3 although they are necessary to inform the action being taken by students to solve a societal problem. Students need to identify, evaluate, and use disciplinary resources in order to address a problem; however, Deep Learning takes inquiry to another level. It expands on Dimension 4 by inspiring and empowering students to not just identify what action to take but actually taking action that is sustainable. This requires the six global competencies within Deep Learning,

especially critical thinking. Deep Learning projects, at least at first, need to start small and focus on one or two competencies.

As an educator, it is important to understand that Deep Learning is not an additional pedagogical principle. It is inquiry-based learning. It aligns and supports the C3 Social Studies Framework and the Inquiry Design Model. Deep Learning enhances inquiry work already being done by students but provides greater student agency, therefore increasing student engagement by connecting their passions with a cause for action.

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Family Engagement in Jurisprudential Education



Ronald V. Morris and
Denise Shockley

How do Appalachian students and their families develop thinking skills in the face of community poverty? Through a family engagement event, students and parents from multiple schools learned together over a common meal—a murder mystery dinner! The event intended to bring families together, build intergenerational connections among the participants, and promote critical thinking skills for students and families.

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers operate with Ohio Department of Education competitive funding. The centers are administered by the Gallia-Vinton Educational Service Center (ESC) and require an Ohio Department of Education School Age Child Care (SACC) license for facilities that care for middle school students. The after-school program provides educational enrichment activities, a positive social environment, and quality supervised child care during the school year. The assets of the community include a highly effective educational service center functioning to support the schools and families across two local school districts. The ESC arranged pre-event publicity, utilized special projects funding for the culminating event, and provided food from the general fund to get families to come to the University of Rio Grande cafeteria.

The staff of the educational service center has numerous years of experience and advanced leadership skills in content and pedagogy. The assets of the people are that they are highly connected to the location by blood and tradition. In addition, they also have tight family connections across multiple generations and large extended families.

Middle and high school students learn in after-school programs designed to enrich their academic capacity. The students meet before school Monday through Friday and after school Monday through Thursday. The programs provide four components that increase reading and math achievement, provide youth development, and foster family engagement. Participating students attend three high schools and three middle schools in Appalachian communities of southeastern Ohio (“Mountaineer” and “Appalachian” are used to reflect a resident of Appalachia instead of the pejorative term “hillbilly”). Families engage in a activity centered on jurisprudential education. Over 200 people participated in multiple generational learning because of the program.

The event was the evening of the murder mystery dinner where parents, students, and multiple generations of a family came together to solve the crime. In a community laden with rural poverty the crime scene investigation program takes on the additional role of family nutrition as well as an educational endeavor. A

common meal and an uncommon educational experience helped the family to elevate the educational skills of their child. The social experience of bringing people together aids families learning together in the community.

The purposes of the project were to work toward intergenerational cooperation, using evidence to find clues and solve problems. The Appalachian community members need the opportunity to engage in jurisprudential education as a way to learn more about clues, people, and problem solving. In helping the entire family, the students acquire additional skills that help them as they navigate in school and outside the home. In the process they engage in jurisprudential education, which is, the process of using the tools of law related education to help students make decisions. Jurisprudential education is important in that it allows students to learn a pattern of examining clues and evidence to make logical decisions based on data. In this case it was used to help students process large amounts of information to bring to justice a murderer in a family-based mystery play.

In this paper, we describe how this culmination project of the murder mystery dinner unfolded and we hope to illustrate how other locations could do similar programing in their area.

Systemic Issues that Maintain Intergenerational Poverty

Unjust systems keep families and communities in generational poverty, and Appalachian students must overcome a variety of problems. While there are obstacles to overcome, there are common values attributed to the region that pull the people together. Appalachian literature reflects values associated with the region, but some values are represented more than others (Valentine, 2008). This is not too surprising as some values are associated with positive or nostalgic overtones. A variety of people came to Appalachia at the end of the nineteenth

century as the coal industry flourished. While all communities are not the same, many communities have the same types of problems (Kingsolver, 2017). Modernity tends to fragment families, lack of work proves to be detrimental in building generational wealth, and a lack of educational attainment leaves citizens with few opportunities for advancement. To combat these problems, schools become important places for food acquisition and physical activity (Jones et al., 2020). Schools take on additional tasks in the community in addition to providing a curriculum. When students leave their community for higher education their accent may trigger expectations of underperformance. Even when students make it to college there are still obstacles to overcome (Bradbury & Mather, 2009). Low expectations may exclude students from leadership positions. The political process may also tend to marginalize female mountaineers. Women's economic status is influenced by public policies that open or deny them access to childcare, higher education, and public services (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2004; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Lack of opportunity for these services and lack of funding may force women to leave their communities to get the services they need. The dearth of opportunity for mountaineers appears in geographic, economic, higher education, and public policy decisions. While there are a variety of people who became mountaineers and are tied together by cultural values, a lack of opportunity plays a role in keeping the contemporary Appalachian in the hills.

Part of what keeps Appalachians in the hills is the long shadow of rural poverty. People in small insular communities expect poverty to manifest itself in traditional patterns. While poverty depresses both urban and rural working memory, the rural working memory is distinctively depressed in children living in urban poverty. Rural poverty asymmetrical deficits are more extreme and visuospatial working memory deficits are more pronounced than verbal working memory deficits (Tine, 2014). The lack of enrichment found in rural poverty depresses learning. People living in

rural poverty try to compensate for their environment. Positive personal qualities, positive social conditions, and risk-taking abilities all contribute to resiliency in youth living in rural poverty (Curtin et al., 2016). Some compensations are easier than others. Some obstacles take years to overcome. Some people never overcome the obstacles that barricade their progress.

Role of Schools in Addressing Rural Poverty

One role of the school in areas that are symptomatic of rural poverty would be to engage in multiple generational learning. Progress intergenerational learning might illustrate educational inequalities. As when Barnes (2010) studied artist and progeny working side by side while Field (2013) looked at opportunity for learning across generations. Both found that lifelong learning also involved the teaching or innate acquisition of creativity. Inter-generational learning relations motivated people to move toward creativity in finding solutions to problems. Furthermore, the child led aspects of schooling directed learning across life.

The National Council for the Social Studies directs attention to the C3 Curriculum that promotes inquiry (NCSS, 2013). The curriculum puts forward four domains including: question generation, disciplinary knowledge and skills, examining sources, and forming conclusions and taking action. As students accomplish these tasks, they engage in an inquiry arc as they direct their own investigations into issues and examine their own evidence. They scrutinize their evidence to determine context, source, bias, and significance. Students ground their questions in a disciplinary field from social studies; furthermore, students use the C3 Curriculum to construct knowledge of social worth. As producers of knowledge they share their insights with community stakeholders and act on what they have learned. The C3 Framework includes such ideas as:

- D1.1.6-8. Explain how a question represents key ideas in the field.

- D2.Civ.9.6-8. Compare deliberative processes used by a wide variety of groups in various settings.
- D3.4.6-8. Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- D4.4.6-8. Critique arguments for credibility.

Law related education follows the inquiry arc, and it has the advantage of being relevant to the lives of the students. Students see real world applications in the issues they explore and many of the issues tie directly to their life in and out of school. Golston (2008) described a multicultural law magnet program while Hanson (2002) described democratic living and higher order law thinking skills modeled and practiced through the curriculum of school policies and practices. School student councils, rules, procedures, and infractions provide multiple opportunities to see law related education at the building or school district level. Students from a variety of backgrounds are all equal in the eyes of the law. VanderStaay (2007) discussed culturally responsive teaching and communicating with urban students about law related education. Despite the symbolic statue of a blindfolded justice with balance and sword, bias is discussed by students. Implicit bias may show up in the representations of who is stopped, arrested and incarcerated. Cassidy (2004) saw the necessity of engaging in community building while developing the legal aspects of a topic or theme in the social studies curriculum combined as an opportunity to teach research and study skills. Students get opportunities to integrate social studies and language arts skills when engaging with content. Fundamental social studies content and questions easily expose controversial issues for students to explore. Marri (2010) used core subjects to integrate social studies and language arts while engaging students in law topics to develop confidence in public speaking. Students used democratic citizenship skills to practice innovative learning methods using legal procedures, topics, and critical thinking. Students examine places where the law is blind and where the blindfold slips prejudicially. Law related education allows students to pursue the

inquiry arc as they examine controversial issues.

Using a law related education approach, educators work on solving crimes using jurisprudential frameworks. McIntyre (2011) used history to conduct crime scene investigations, or in this case history scene investigation. Students used a variety of communication skills such as reading, writing, and critical thinking when examining artifacts from history which they used as clues on the scene. Using the artifacts from the scene they engaged in discovery learning to perform inductive reasoning and draw conclusions. Similarly, students worked as sleuths in both crime scene investigations and murder mysteries. Students were curious and had to think like a lawyer when using a murder mystery. Peterson (2009) found that the students understood the content and concepts, but that the students engaged with the material and remained focused on it. In class students with multiple learning styles encountered notes, discussion, role-play, and a trial. The students had to solve the murder, or the guilty party would get away with the crime.

Procedures

As an activity Gallia-Vinton ESC contracted with the Murder Mystery Company, Inc. from Columbus, Ohio to provide a drama service. The company provided a scripted role-playing event with criminal suspects and sleuths. Participants used clues and evidence to solve murders from prewritten suspect roles. Each team received a list of rules for the investigation including such assurances that the murder is a name tagged suspect (see photo 1). Each costumed suspect received an information sheet with some light details about their character. All the suspects were introduced (see photo 2). Each team of investigators tried to interview as many suspects as possible. Each team had a list



Photo 1: All the suspects are introduced.



Photo 2: Families negotiate for clues

of suggested questions to ask suspects including if they knew anything suspicious about another character. Each family talked about their investigation (see photo 3). The family team had to determine motivation and opportunity for each suspect (see photo 4). Families worked on solving the crime (see photo 5).



Photo 3: A family talks about their investigation



Photo 4: Families work on solving the crime.



Photo 5: The families attempt to come to a consensus on who committed the murder.

The families used inquiry in their activity and engaged in question generation. Some questions were to establish a chronological sequence and other questions were to establish motivations. The families linked their question to the disciplinary content of government and civics as they examined jurisprudential education. The families examined sources in the form of witnesses and clues. Finally, the family members drew conclusions prior to taking action to unmask the villain.

During the American Revolution, Generals Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery invaded and attacked Canada. The campaign was doomed by supply, weather, illness, and political bickering. General Arnold led troops in a feat that rivaled Hannibal's crossing of the Alps to invade Rome. This formed the historical content of the murder mysteries. Families generated inquiry question such as:

-Was Richard Montgomery murdered? (Family 5)

-Did the British kill Richard Montgomery? (Family 11)

-Was General Arnold the American Hannibal? (Family 16)

-Did Arnold's men kill Montgomery? (Family 19)

-Did Montgomery's men kill Montgomery? (Family 31)

-Was Benedict Arnold the greatest general of the American Revolution? (Family 48)

The above questions connected to the purpose of the murder mystery. Students linked a key question to major idea of the American Revolutionary War to develop their individual skills.

Eighth grade students examined social studies content from their American studies class. They had to "explain how a question represents a key idea" of the American Revolutionary War (D1.1.6-8 NCSS, 2013). Furthermore, students had to "compare deliberative processes used by" prosecutors and

courts to determine who killed General Montgomery (D2.Civ.9.6-8 NCSS, 2013).

Families explored a little-known event of the American Revolution. They “develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both” as they attempted to determine the murderer (D3.4.6-8 NCSS, 2013). In addition, families had to “critique their arguments for credibility” (D4.4.6-8 NCSS, 2013).

Data

Over 200 people were in attendance including parents, students, program staff, community members, and university representatives. The program managers created a handout for families to use to examine clues. The program managers used exit slips with a three-question survey and open-ended response to evaluate the effectiveness of the program for families (see Appendix A). There was a 100% response rate on surveys with 69 families completing a survey. All 69 families said that the event was a positive experience. Similarly, 61 families stated that the after-school program was an important part of their child’s educational plan. This was followed by 64 families stating that the crime scene investigation supported their child’s academic success. Finally, the open ended question asking for other ideas the families thought would be helpful in supporting academic or life skill attainment garnered statements such as: “Any activity that allow students to learn the skill of public speaking,” “Talent Shows,” or “Problem Solving Skills.”

Findings

The data collected from students and families explored the outcomes of the program. The role between family members illustrated intergenerational learning as they investigated the murder. After-school program manager Gwen said:

The Midnight Masquerade Mystery Dinner Theatre provided a unique experience for families that both engaged and entertained the participants. Family members were asked to be part of the cast and they played their roles enthusiastically by assuming the character, dialect, and persona. After listening to the storyline, the participants were off and running to search for clues, interview suspects, barter for information, and solve the mystery. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable experience smiling and laughing while using context clues and reasoning skills. We received many thanks for the event.

The crime scene investigation required families to work as team supporting their rich cultural tradition of depending on family. In this process students and parents communicated orally, listened carefully to one another, and decoded written narrative. They used these skills within their group and between groups. After-school program manager David said:

We planned for the evening to be focused on family involvement with the dinner and murder mystery aiding in that effort. I witnessed the engagement of those attending the event in helping to solve the mystery. The adults were just as engaged as the students. It was such an enjoyable evening for the families and students. There was laughter and lots of socialization between the various schools.

Students enjoyed themselves as they assumed roles in the murder mystery to act out the events as they unfolded.

The intellectual contribution was within the inquiry arc as students generated questions and examined evidence before reaching conclusions. After-school program manager Connie said:

An evening of mystery, intrigue, murder and investigating was enjoyed by intergenerational family members at the

dinner Theatre. Participants were provided masquerade masks, clues, and play money to help solve the crime. Survey results indicated the event was successful in providing an enjoyable way for families to work together as a team to solve problems and appreciate the learning process. Without knowing it, students and family members used inquiry-based learning, context clues, and problem-solving skills in a fun filled lesson!

The limits placed on the members of the community by poverty meant that there were few opportunities for families and students in the Appalachian rural area. Families took advantage of an enrichment experience they would not normally be able to afford as part of the community resilience of Appalachians. Amy, an After-School Site Coordinator said:

The Murder Mystery family event gave students and their parents a unique opportunity to interact with each other. Families engaged in a meaningful conversation while practicing the skills of collaboration, communication, information gathering, problem solving, and seeking a resolution together. Some families discovered that they had worked through all the investigation steps only to find out they had not selected the correct suspect. Very few families in the area had been able to attend a similar event due to limited access to performances and not having the financial means to purchase tickets. Overall, I would rate the event a great success as families were able to work together toward a common goal.

Teens and parents drew conclusions and made predictions to investigate the crime scene. The intergenerational learning environment was conducive to inquiry learning through a jurisprudential framework.

Students linked a key question to a major idea of the American Revolutionary War to develop their individual skills. Also, students learned the skills and procedures used by

prosecutors and courts in organizing information for a trial. Moreover, the emphasis on community assets included the inclusion of multiple generations to solve problems. The family members critiqued their arguments for credibility. They also, examined claims and counter claims while evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of both.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was for students to solve a murder mystery in the context of an intergenerational experience where siblings, parents, and grandparents work together. The goals of a murder mystery experience helps students to use evidence to engage in inquiry. It helps students to generate questions to explore, evaluate evidence, and make conclusions.

Intergenerational events provide a forum where family members brought their knowledge and skills together to talk and interact without the distractions of home life. The different family members model how to generate questions, evaluate evidence, and form conclusions. Family members contributed their mutual support, and they propelled hesitant participants into the activities. Sometimes they even prompted them to move into leadership roles. The study of law related education in a felicitous manner helps students work with others and project their presence in front of crowds of people.

Pitfalls

Preparing for a large family engagement experience does necessitate considerable planning in advance of the event. Teachers traditionally think about their classroom structure and school building protocols when scheduling events. For a much larger and more intense event, the planning needs to occur months in advance to account for guest talent/presenters, venue selection, meal choice, room arrangement, pre and post instructional units, resource material distribution, publicity, registrations, and evaluation. It takes significant amounts of time to prepare for family engagement events. The program design, event

logistics, staff training, learning goals, selected activities, correspondence with venue – presenters – students -- families, meaningful evaluation, and measuring impact of content and experience need a specific timeline. A timeline will efficiently communicate milestones and tasks to keep everyone focused on the event goals.

One sure way of managing expectations is to set realistic goals and to be specific about what to accomplish. Do some research to determine what resources will make it happen and how much time will it take. Think about obstacles or limitations they might encounter while trying to achieve the goal; often these limitations are internal but can also be external. An internal limitation might be, it has never been done like this before while an external limitation might be a room capacity imposed by the fire marshal. Moving beyond functional fixedness is difficult compared to finding another venue. Finally, check the commitment of the staff to reaching the goal; if the goal is important then keep focused on what is required to reach the goal.

A teacher may decide to assign relevant readings, reports, or oral presentations to build competence while reaching a content or experience goal. Too often the component pieces of the assignments are not communicated to students with relevant comments and corrections along the way to build toward the final desired result. Students need a clear sense of what will be expected of them at every step in the assignments. It is imperative to evaluate the learning that occurs at an event that is planned to accomplish specific learning goals. Having a fun and engaging experience is desired but one must measure the impact of the knowledge gained. Without having a mechanism for evaluation, it is difficult to look back at what has taken place and decide if and how it was successful or unsuccessful.

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Appendix A**

INTRODUCING THE MICIVICS COALITION

Ellen Zwarensteyn and
Jane C. Lo



A main purpose of schooling, whether public, private, or home, is political; meaning that these institutions exist to help solidify and create shared meaning and understanding. However, these institutions are not, by definition, partisan (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). One common *political* (as opposed to partisan) theme across the state of Michigan is the notion that schools present opportunities to help students build a shared understanding of civic engagement and governmental processes. In this way, schools are essential in helping students develop a sense of civic identity and belonging (Winthrop, 2002; Youniss 2011), without which, potential disenfranchisement, learned helplessness, and apathy could arise (Bennett et al., 2013).

Moreover, despite overall advancements in education since the 1950s, political knowledge levels remain stagnant. “[I]f we compare today’s young adults not with today’s older adults but with the young adults of the past—we find evidence of diminished civic attachment” (Galston, 2001, p. 219). Specific measures regarding willingness to talk about the news, caring about current events, voting, watching the news or reading the paper, and other traditional forms of political involvement have declined with each generation (Galston, 2001, p. 220-221).

In our session at the MCSS conference this year, we argued that schools do not prescribe what kind of citizen students will become; rather, they provide understanding and entry into the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for participation in a democratic society. A brief survey of district and school leaders across Michigan reveals that there is a disconnect between the goals of graduating students who are ready for informed and efficacious community involvement and existing curricular commitment to civic education in our K-12 schools. Notably, while civic aims are at the top of most school leaders’ goals for graduating students, schools are not held accountable to the amount and type of civic education students receive, beyond the required semester of government in high school. A review of news media headlines over the last decade in the state of Michigan and across the nation illustrates a need for enhanced civility and fundamental knowledge of our government and civic processes.

There is no single cause of the apparent democratic decline, nor is there a romanticized past of days where every student felt a sense of belonging, engagement, efficacy, and knowledge. However, recent events and the rise in polarization illuminates a need for reinvigorating civic education in the state of Michigan. Thus, a group of individuals, organizations, and companies are coming together to address the numerous causes, and

potential remedies, of a fracturing democracy. The emerging **#MiCivicsCoalition** seeks to unify individuals, organizations, and companies across the state of Michigan to re-engage in bolstering civic education.

The initial vision of the **#MiCivicsCoalition** is to “Cultivate civic education champions in the state of Michigan who are engaging productively to create better civic communities across the state.” This is a two layered approach - suggesting both a means and an end. The means to achieve better civic communities is to convene dedicated people across all industries, parties, communities, and walks of life to iteratively understand, innumerate, and implement solutions and approaches. The end can be measured by more informed and efficacious Michiganders who are working towards healthier, more dynamic, and civil communities across the state.

At the same time, representation and diversity is important within the Coalition as an end in itself, but is also recognized as a mark of its success. This means the inclusion of varying experiences and voices across Michigan, such as geography, race, socio-economics, gender identities, partisan perspectives, academic disciplines, government officials, non-governmental sector, age, educational experts, corporate representation and much more.

Currently, the **#MiCivicsCoalition** is early in its development. The existing Coalition members are divided into three working groups: policy, education, and community partners. Each group is tasked with creating a mission that is supportive of the vision of the Coalition, with eventual aims to identify actionable items, and implementation strategies, that address the needs assessed. To that end, the most immediate goal of the Coalition now is to continue to spread the word across the state and gather more committed individuals to establish and solidify processes and procedures for future work. We want to gather more individuals and perspectives, to understand different viewpoints, and to broaden the reach of the work. By connecting a broader base of civic education

stakeholders with varying perspectives across the state and building a coalition amongst them, the **MiCivics Coalition** hopes to ensure robust dialogue and action benefiting all of Michigan communities.

Overarching goals of the Coalition include:

- Creating a space for transparent dialogue around various civic education needs in the state of Michigan.
- Identifying challenges, affordances, and strategies for building more robust civic education in the state.
- Setting a collective agenda for strengthening civic education and engagement in K-12 settings and their communities through changes in policy and practice.

Initial (draft) goals of the Coalition work include:

- Legislative and/or MDE appropriations for more civic education professional learning
- More co-curricular opportunities for student and teacher engagement
- More mandated civic education hours K-12
- Integration of a more robust, funded, and meaningful assessment of civic knowledge and skills on state assessments at key benchmarks in a student’s school career

Success of the work will be measured in years, if not decades, with specific indicators to be determined by coalition members. This effort will require multiple years, even decades long, commitment - and ideally with the formation of a structure that will endure permanently (or until the vision is achieved).

There are existing tools and strategies for existing coalition work, which may include:

- Organizing regional dialogue between stakeholders on the needs for the state of civic education in the state. This could be achieved through a variety of in person and virtual meetings and conferences.
- Building a coalition around setting a policy agenda for improved state civics standards/mandates. This could be achieved through a variety of in person

and virtual meetings and conferences. We imagine advancing a pledge for civic education as a starting point to build a coalition and create common ground among numerous stakeholder perspectives.

- Re-establishing an annual summit that draws stakeholders from across the state to set the agenda around civic education and also mobilize civic education related policy and actions. This conference could model civic dialogue, cultivation and curation of resources, curricular and co-curricular opportunities for schools, and more.
- Providing civic education related professional development for K-12 educators. Our focus groups reveal a real need to meet the demands of teacher knowledge and skills along with administrator skills for meaningful evaluation. Every administrator in a focus group identified their goals of graduating engaged and knowledgeable members of civic society - yet reflected on the lack of opportunities for themselves and their teachers to learn. One immediate need is to identify what and how those needs can be met. Furthermore, emerging policies in pre-service teacher education in Michigan may make the need for disciplinary knowledge even more important and organizations, like the Michigan Center for Civic Education, and the work of the coalition essential to provide more content and skills for meaningful civic education.
- Working with state legislators to advocate for more robust civic education policy. This could include working on appropriations and educational hours to advance the goals above.
- Acquiring legislative appropriations to continue coalition and civics related advocacy and professional development work.
- Developing a coherent communications strategy to gather and galvanize coalition work, share successes, and learn from each other. This would include connecting regularly with the CivXNow coalition, learning from other states, and utilizing the state toolkit.

All voices are encouraged to help shape the future of a civically informed and engaged Michigan. Uniting behind education could transform our state and each resident. Recognizing our shared interest in knowledgeable, efficacious, and civically minded individuals will best nourish and grow industry and vibrant civic communities. We look forward to listening and working with you to champion civic education and civic engagement.

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Teacher Agency in Social Studies Education: Gaming Peace Education

Nancy B. Sardone

Teaching social studies methods to teacher candidates can be a daunting task. First, social studies encompasses a large body of content, including the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, psychology, and religion. However, most undergraduates have studied only American history and maybe European history upon college entry. In the first year of college, perhaps General Education courses expanded undergraduates' knowledge through a required course or two in the social sciences. Further complicating the knowledge gap issue is the research literature highlighting social studies as the most disliked subject taught in K-12 schools, pointing to stagnant instructional strategies as a potential cause of such disinterest (Leming et al., 2006). Finally, the marginalization of social studies due to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and its successor, *Every Student Succeeds Act* of 2015, and testing pressures focusing on mathematics and English Language Arts have not helped build interest in social studies. Instead, it sends the message that the social studies are less critical than other content areas (Good et al., 2010). Marginalization often finds social studies methods courses enrolled with candidates possessing questionable importance for the social studies, presenting an opportunity for teacher educators.

Semester after semester, most candidates remark their K-14 social studies education as minimal, unmemorable, and driven by textbooks, aligning with Leming, Ellington, and Schug's (2006) findings. To change the perception that the social studies are less critical than other content areas, the curriculum under study embeds multicultural content, including human rights education and assignments beyond the typical lesson/unit planning staple of many social studies methods courses. Unfortunately, human rights education, which connects with the study of nonviolent conflict and peacemakers who work for a more just society, is often absent from required state standards and curriculum (Banks, 2001) and teacher education programs (Brantefors, 2019).

The curricular changes followed Banks' (2001) first approach to integrating multicultural content. This approach changes the course curriculum's primary goals, structure, and nature to enable candidates to view concepts, events, issues, problems, and themes from the perspectives of diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. This approach compares to Banks' additive approach, which adds to the curriculum's content, concepts, themes, and perspectives without changing its structure. In the newly framed course, candidates develop interdisciplinary lessons and activities aligned with social studies and English Language Arts standards and pedagogic practices to build effective and culturally responsive instruction

for K-6 students. In this transformative design, candidates engage in discussions, conduct research, and develop inquiry-based assignments to enable them to view concepts and issues from more than one perspective. In addition, they reflect on and analyze how their prior social studies education might impact their understanding of themselves in the world and how their worldview has developed. As such, candidates leave the course more equipped to offer in-depth content knowledge steeped in cultural awareness and societal complexities for their future elementary students. Preparedness emerges from the four major course assignments designed to promote engaged learning, solicit active participation, and evoke critical thinking. Beyond the collaborative game design assignment – the activity under study – another uses familiar children’s film clips that depict global places for elementary students’ comparative analysis of the geography of a place and its culture: *Aladdin* showcasing the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, and *Up* exhibiting Angel Falls, Venezuela.

Since there is less research on materials for human rights education at the elementary level, specifically peace education, this study presents the development of peace games as a strategy following social cognitive and critical pedagogy theories for attributes of teacher agency to emerge. Strengthening candidates' human rights and peace knowledge through the facilitation of game development as a transformative educational practice with the demonstration of “teacher as agent” is the focus of this study. The findings aim to fill the literature gap on candidates' agency development during preparation.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

There is an emerging interest in teacher agency among education scholars and its importance; however, a theoretical and empirical understanding of teacher agency remains elusive. Teacher agency is crucial for facilitating student learning and continued

professional development, collaborative teacher learning, and school development (Toom et al., 2015). In the context of teacher agency, Vahasantanen (2013, p.14) suggests that “although the theoretical discussion surrounding agency has been extensive..., there has not been much empirical research on agency within the field of education,” including teacher preparation programs (Toom et al., 2015).

Agency derives from Bandura’s social cognitive theory (2000; 2001). Within the social cognitive theory, human agency presents as people’s ability to regulate and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior through existing self-beliefs (i.e., self-efficacy). Bandura argues that there are four properties of human agency: (1) intentionality, (2) forethought, (3) self-reactiveness, and (4) self-reflectiveness. Self-reactiveness, specifically the ability to construct appropriate courses of action and motivate and regulate execution, aligns with the operational curriculum (Bandura, 2000; 2001). Finally, self-reflectiveness, the metacognitive capability to reflect upon oneself and the adequacy of one’s thoughts and actions, aligns with the connection between curricular cycles and awareness of curricular development. Self-reflection is a powerful metacognitive skill to develop as it requires the consideration of one’s assumptions, beliefs, and understandings of the world. This perspective emanates from the works of many seminal scholars, arguing that valuing and caring for one another is the foundation of morality (e.g., Dewey, 2007; Noddings, 2019), also found in the peace education literature (e.g., Levinas, 1994). In addition, Kolb (1984) suggests that evaluating one’s progress toward understanding is self-reflection, allowing the learner to form abstract concepts from their experience to guide active experimentation and inform future learning experiences.

Teacher agency has emerged from the human agency research literature to describe teachers’ active effort in making curricular choices and taking intentional action by crafting learning experiences that can meet state requirements to make a significant difference to

their students. Teachers must "engage in innovative learning, adapt themselves to diverse requirements in their working environment, interpret and negotiate with their colleagues and parents, make independent choices, and find a balance between their personal preference and shared collegial understandings" (Toom et al., 2015, p. 2). In addition, teachers must build a relevant, inspiring, and constructive environment for their students and themselves, and colleagues (Toom et al., 2015).

Characteristics aligned with teacher agency pertain to lifelong learning (being eager to learn and reflect), mastery (giving guidance, being accessible, positive, committed, trustful, and self-assured), entrepreneurship (being innovative and feeling responsible), and collaboration (being collegial) (van der Heijden et al., 2015). Teacher agency is indicative of teachers maintaining control over integral aspects of the educational process: their perspective and curricular choices. Teachers do not control the curriculum provided to them but do control how that curriculum is provided to their students—learning how curriculum functions and the choices for its dissemination provides an empowering awareness. Such awareness can transform understanding of the learning process from passive to active.

However, teacher agency is an issue discussed with working teachers who admit that they are sometimes complicit in relinquishing control of their learning. They may be reluctant to push back against structures that do not work or are unaware of how to make constructive changes. Some districts require teachers to follow the curriculum and instructional policies without freedom (Boaler & Greeno, 2000). Even when there is good will, some teachers report that they have little opportunity to address their weaknesses in adapting curriculum to meet students' wide-ranging needs. Teachers with opportunities – such as continuous professional development, better pay, supervisory and collegial support – exercise their agency better than those with fewer opportunities (Toom et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, there is promise in the development of teacher agency, such as the recent training-based intervention study with teacher educators who indicate becoming more knowledgeable and interculturally aware agents in their classrooms (Vu, 2020). Participants engaged in weekly discussions about teacher agency and reflective journal keeping for ten weeks. In the second phase lasting an additional ten weeks, participants collaborated in applying their agency knowledge when building interdisciplinary projects based on a critical topic. Findings reveal that teacher agency emerged as a result of the educational intervention. In addition, participants experienced cultural differences in their collaborations and challenged themselves to break free from traditional views of pedagogy and resistance to change. This example is critical pedagogy, a method to develop teacher agency by encouraging the critique of power structures and oppression and promoting participation (Freire, 1970).

In critical pedagogy, a teacher encourages students to question and challenge inequalities in society. Critical pedagogy demystifies the democratic authority or power and encourages a transformative discourse focused on equality (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) argues against the "banking" education model favoring a dialogic and problem-posing/problem-solving education. He objects to the traditional frame of education, the banking model, in which students are "empty vessels filled by the teacher" (p. 79). One aspect of the current study examines if and how teacher agency emerges among candidates using the educational intervention in the form of a collaboratively developed game. Another part of this study examines what candidates learned about peace education as active participants in collaborative game development. Discussed in the following section is the importance of peace education.

Peace Education

Starting in fourth grade, the required history curriculum in many U.S. states emphasizes military conflicts from the American Revolution

up to the War on Terrorism. Students learn about significant events, battles, leaders, causes, alliances, opposing viewpoints, and consequences (Hubbard, 2015, p. 5). With the curricular focus on historical conflicts, when would students develop conceptualizations of peace and learn how to act toward a more just society? Unfortunately, we seem to know little about where concepts of peace are formed, especially among U.S. students. A small body of research literature indicates that children often define peace as the absence of war when asked to define both war and peace (Sunal et al., 2012, p. 2). Peace, however, means far more than the absence of war.

Human rights education, which connects with the study of peacemakers who work for a more just society, is often absent from or minimized in required state curriculums (Banks, 2001). Nevertheless, students' growing diversity and cultural differences in schools have spawned a need for a more collaborative culture, and it is a vital issue that asks educators to reconsider curricular focus. If we teach war, we must teach peace; an alternative to violence. Scholars and educators have challenged human rights educators to be more explicit about what knowledge might sit at the heart of a human rights and peace education (e.g., Page, 2008; Parker, 2018). The importance of knowledge and understanding the complexities of society has been long ago described by Freire (1970), drawing attention to the role of knowledge in unlocking new conceptual connections and new understandings of how the world works.

Maria Montessori's philosophy of child development recognizes that young children are active learners, needing choice and independence while being guided by a teacher who facilitates their learning by preparing an environment favorable to their development. The idea is that children who benefit from these experiences grow into confident adults, interested in continued learning and curious about life while being respectful and considerate. Further, Montessori posited that self-directed students would not blindly follow like those who rely entirely on adult authorities

(1966). Finally, students must be aware of alternatives opposite to violence. By involving much more than a focus on the dreadful consequences of violence and war, peace education relies on educating enough people to establish widespread support for peaceful behavior and policies (Harris, 2018).

Peace education is gaining knowledge and values and developing skills, attitudes, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, others, and the natural setting. It requires people to develop reflective capacities for achieving and maintaining peace (Reardon, 2002). Zembylas (2011) contends that peace education programs should not reduce to theories of peace, peer mediation skills, or legalistic approaches but rather favor discussions of personal and collective human rights. The above points to the reasons for the inclusion of peace education in the social studies course where the study occurred. The educational intervention, namely the collaborative game development as a vehicle to deliver peace education to elementary students, is discussed in the next section.

Game-Based Learning

Games used for learning align with the social studies advocacy literature calling for active, hands-on methods to learn topics (NCSS, 2017). As a form of active, hands-on learning, gaming has made great strides as a teaching and learning tool over the last decade. In addition, several empirical studies evaluating the impact of game use in varied disciplines report positive outcomes in effectiveness (e.g., Klawe, 1999; Papastergiou, 2009; Rosas et al., 2003; Virvou et al., 2005). However, some scholars disagree about the value of "gaming" serious topics suggesting that game designers often trivialize tragic human experiences (e.g., Brown, 2007; Totten, 2002). Similarly, educators have emphasized the harmful effects of games on children (Granic et al., 2014), and there are numerous studies about the negative impacts of digital games. For example, digital game studies report aggressive behavior, depression, or hyperactivity (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010;

Gentile et al., 2012; Lemola et al., 2011; Tortolero et al., 2014).

However, there is a vast body of research literature and empirical studies on the positive impacts of game use, that is, games used in educational environments with educational objectives in mind. Educational games (Zeng & Shang, 2018) are also referred to as learning games (e.g., Klopfer et al., 2009) and serious games (e.g., Noemi & Maximo, 2014). Learning games can promote cognition, concentration, and motivation and seem to fit the preferences of today's learners. In a meta-analysis, educative gameplay was more effective toward learning and retention than conventional methods (Wouters et al., 2013). Because games are often goal-oriented, they can increase motivation through trial and error opportunities to help players develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills (McGonical, 2011). Games can draw players in (Nebel et al., 2017) and enhance their ability to process information, make decisions, apply knowledge, solve problems, and collaborate (Oblinger, 2006). Recent research indicates that playing educational games increases engagement with topics (Clark, 2017).

Games used for teaching and learning purposes are on the rise. Many teachers, like students, have become avid gamers with the influx of smartphones and inexpensive software applications (Joan Ganz Cooney Center, 2012). *Project Tomorrow's* National Speak Up report (2016) revealed that in 2010, only 23 percent of surveyed teachers said they used games to teach content, compared to 48 percent of those surveyed in 2015. One of the most extensive nationwide surveys on the use of games reports that among the 694 K-8 teachers surveyed, 74% use games for instructional purposes, with 55% of those teachers using games weekly (Takeuchi & Vaala, 2014). The 2016 National Speak Up report stated that six out of ten middle school students play games, while another report from 2011 revealed that 91 percent of children in the United States, ages 2 to 17, play digital games at home for fun (NPD Group, 2011). These accounts indicate that gameplay is a large part

of youth culture (NPD, 2011). Among games played include those that promote peace, discussed in the following section.

Games Promoting Peace

Recent studies on two different digital games, *Peace Maker* and *Global Conflict*, report the impact on peace education (Kampf, 2016; Kersten et al., 2003; Movius, 2008). In one study, the digital game *Peace Maker* positively contributed to learning about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Gonzalez et al., 2013). In another, findings revealed that *Peace Maker* contributed to gaining knowledge about the narratives of both sides in the conflict and attitudinal change, at least for those participants who did not identify as Israeli or Palestinian (Cuhadar & Kampf, 2014). Further, researchers found that the digital game, *Global Conflict: Palestine* was a solid peace education tool to teach young people a less stereotypical view of the Israeli–Palestinian situation (Kampf, 2016; Kampf & Cuhadar, 2015). Kampf's (2016) experimental study examined the short-term and long-term effects of attitudinal change toward the Israeli–Palestinian conflict using *Global Conflict: Palestine*. Findings revealed a shift toward a more impartial perspective, looking at the conflict from both Israeli and Palestinian points of view immediately after the game intervention and retention one year later, despite the severe clashes between Israelis and Palestinians occurring during that time. Game titles and URLs are found below.

- *Peace Maker*: A serious government game that simulates the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. <http://www.peacemakergame.com/>
- *Global Conflict Palestine*: A serious game within the "Global Conflicts" series. It is a role-playing game that aims to challenge the player's beliefs and ideas about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. <https://www.seriousgames.net/en/portfolio/global-conflicts/>

While digital gaming is undeniably popular among today's youth, 93 percent of families with 4 to 10-year-olds report playing tabletop

games (board and card) with their children at home (Joan Ganz Cooney Center, 2017). Reasons cited for tabletop game preference include more social interaction; better format; and overall appeal of specific game titles -- *Life*, *Monopoly*, *Scrabble*, and *Settlers of Catan*. Sales of tabletop games are increasing, predicted to reach more than \$12 billion (U.S.) by 2023 (Research & Markets, 2018). The growing number of game bars and cafes worldwide has helped companies attract consumers to the global tabletop game market. Tabletop games have advanced into critical thinking and problem-solving opportunities with titles like *Gloomhaven*, *Pandemic Legacy*, and *Through the Ages* (Board Game Geek, 2019). The growing popularity of tabletop games and the relative ease of tabletop game development over the more technologically complex digital game is why tabletop game development was chosen as the intervention mechanism to examine knowledge gains and the emergence of teacher agency.

The Study

This study employed a qualitative content analysis and observation with a convenience sample to examine the development and demonstration of teacher agency through the lens of a co-creation tabletop game. Content analysis is well suited for analyzing and summarizing exploratory research data (Babbie, 2007).

Participants

Teacher candidates enrolled in a required social studies methods course at a private university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States participated in this project, which ran for four Spring semesters, 2017 to 2020. This group consisted of 64 candidates, ages 21-40, with the majority female (62), progressing toward earning their licensing credentials in grades K-6. Undergraduate majors included psychology (44%); English (14%); Interdisciplinary Studies (13%); Mathematics (10%); History (3%) and Natural Science (2%). Ten students, all female, represent 14% of the

population as graduate students having earned varied undergraduate degrees (e.g., Business, English, Theatre). Students entered this course having completed a special education course with an associated field experience. The researcher received permission to conduct research with informed consent.

Instruments

This study used three modes of inquiry, described as follows. Mode one is the collaboratively developed tabletop game and components. The second is the researcher's observations and notes of the gameplay during the game jam and presentation of game improvements. The third mode of inquiry is the reflection questions with individual responses: 1. *Please comment on the game collaboration with team members.* 2. *What Social Studies content did you learn through this assignment?* 3. *What was learned through the game jam event that you deemed helpful to the overall improvement of your game?* 4. *What did you learn about game development through this assignment?*

Procedures

Working in teams of varied sizes, candidates learned about game-based instruction, researched historical figures, co-designed a tabletop game, set game objectives and rules, designed activities, considered improvements, and developed their final version of their game.

The class session on game-based learning occurred during week 11 of a 15-week semester, beginning with the instructor presenting research findings on the impact of game-based learning. Participants were asked to read the nationwide survey conducted with K-8 teachers revealing that 74% use digital games for instructional purposes, with 55% of those teachers using games weekly (Takeuchi & Vaala, 2014). In addition, since candidates will be dually certified as elementary and special education teachers, it was shared and discussed that 55% of the teachers surveyed reported that low-performing students seem to be more

motivated when using digital games for learning (Takeuchi & Vaala, 2014).

Participants considered recommendations made by Hays (2005) based on a meta-analysis of forty-eight empirical studies on gameplay effectiveness. Outcomes highlighted that games are more effective if they address specific standards, embed debriefing and feedback practices, and provide instructional support during play. In addition, shared was a description of the elements of well-designed games based on the work of Elias et al. (2012). These traits included a focus on player-centric basic concepts such as having a reasonable number of players, being aware of player skill level, and creating fair rules that make sense to players. Further, the use of commercial tabletop games (board and card) as models for prototype game development was permitted, as using the features of well-developed games for points of comparison and analysis are deemed helpful (Elias et al., 2012) as well as being a widely accepted practice in the gaming industry (van Roessel & Katzenbach, 2020).

Topics of peace and war were discussed with students via assigned readings by Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*; Hunter's TED Talk, *World Peace and Other 4th Grade Achievements*; Sunal et al.'s 2012 article, *What Does Peace Mean? Kindergartners Share Ideas*, and Hubbard's 2015 article, *What is a Peacemaker?* In addition, question sets were provided for each article/TED Talk to evoke critical thinking. Finally, a discussion ensued on teacher agency within the broader scope of development of instructional materials and meeting the diversity of students' needs.

The assignment provided participants with a non-exhaustive list of 30 peacemakers and conflict makers for their consideration. Assignment guidelines provided resources to peace organizations, such as the Nobel organization, *Peace Works: The Peace Education Foundation*, and the *U.S. Institute of Peace*. Participants were required to develop a task aligned with chosen state Social Studies

and ELA writing standards that a developed rubric would evaluate.

A game jam was held the following week. Candidates led their peers through 15 minutes (e.g., three rounds) of gameplay, with feedback offered to game developers from players. The game jam provided candidates in the role of game developers the opportunity to reflect on their assumptions and beliefs about the topic and consider the ability of their game to effectively communicate knowledge to players. Research on game jams has suggested these events as beneficial for providing applied learning experiences and encouraging social interaction (DeSalas et al., 2016; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010). Finally, in week 13, each team highlighted their game improvements.

Data Analysis

A qualitative research design with a convenience sample was employed to examine the development and demonstration of teacher agency through the lens of a co-creation tabletop game. The researcher took notes during the game jam and the presentation of game improvements. Upon conclusion of the game unit, the researcher collected the game board, game components, and participants' final written reflections.

Examination of the emergence of teacher agency is measured using the characteristics posited by van der Heijden et al. (2015): lifelong learning (being eager to learn and reflect), mastery (giving guidance, being accessible, positive, committed, trustful, and self-assured), entrepreneurship (being innovative and feeling responsible), and collaboration (being collegial).

Lifelong learning, mastery, and entrepreneurship are three characteristics of teacher agency examined through researcher observations of participants while presenting their game during the game jam, acceptance of peer feedback, and presentation of game improvements and notes taken. The final game

product demonstrates reflection and action on the provided feedback and commitment.

Entrepreneurship in terms of innovation was demonstrated in the game product during the game jam, along with a more profound content analysis in which the game contents, chosen state standards, developed activities, and rubrics are examined, with notes taken. The first reflection question (*Please comment on the game development collaboration with your team members*) provides a window into the collaborative characteristic of teacher agency.

Every game received codes associated with each teacher agency attribute. The codes are a 1 for no; the teacher agency attribute was not demonstrated in the game, game components, chosen standard, developed activities, or the fourth reflective question. Alternatively, the game coding of 2 means, yes, the teacher agency attribute was found. Codes were tallied and reported in the next section.

Responses to reflection questions numbers two through four were analyzed by examining and making a master list of comments, then finding commonalities among the responses to *What Social Studies content did you learn through this assignment? What was learned through the game jam event that you deemed helpful to the overall improvement of your game? and What did you learn about game development through this assignment?*

Results

In teams, candidates completed a total of twenty-two games (n=64), categorized as Type 1 or Type 2 based on attributes associated with teacher agency, outlined in the prior section. The details of how each game fits the Type 1 or Type 2 category and how it shows teacher agency are discussed below. A more detailed description of sample games is available in the Appendix.

Games categorized as Type 1 equal eight of the twenty-two games (representing 21 of the 64-total number of students, or 33%). Common

among Type 1 games is that candidates relied on students to provide answers versus guidance toward an answer. Also common among Type 1 games is the lack of attention to gameplay flaws, including a lack of focus on player-centric basic concepts such as having a reasonable number of players, being aware of player skill level, and creating fair rules that make sense. Other issues among Type 1 games include the lack of assurance that state standards are in the game and the lack of cooperation and responsibility among team members. Further, the planned activities associated with Type 1 games cannot evoke deep meaning about the content, staying at the recall level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Games in this category were not facilitated by candidates as agents of change, as candidates are not acting purposefully and responsibly, directing their growth as future leaders of children.

I Have, Who Has: World History Edition is an example of a Type 1 game, including 25 cards containing the name and facts about famous peacemakers and conflict makers. This game is a simple game of reading the answer on the cards and does not meet standards or achieve the curricular aims of what NCSS (2017) refers to as powerful social studies teaching and learning. The collaboration characteristic of teacher agency seemed to disappear among candidates presenting Type 1 games. The team collaboration seemed healthy at the start of the assignment but seemed to fade over time. The fading is noted by comments made by some candidates in their reflective responses about their team members whom they felt were not doing their "fair share" of the workload. In summary, Type 1 games had issues indicating that teacher agency was absent, or yet to emerge, among Type 1 game developers.

Games qualified as Type 2 games (representing 43 students of the 64-total students, or 67%) teach concepts of peace and conflict prior to gameplay through a lesson and discussion. The games also include post-play activities and debriefing. They are well-developed and include age-appropriate content,

game rules/objectives, and activities to evoke learning.

Type 2 games demonstrate teacher agency characteristics of lifelong learning and mastery as participants demonstrated responsibility, reconsideration, and collaboration through reactive and reflective thought about curricular choices and standards, as indicated in their final reflections and final game products. Candidates in this group thought about the cycle of learning from inputs (e.g., devising pre-play instruction) to the facilitation of learning through play to the development of activities requiring critical thinking as an aspect of innovation and entrepreneurship. Type 2 games were developed as guided learning tools aligned with state standards.

An example of a Type 2 game is, *Guess Who in History*, based on the popular children's game, *Guess Who*, where players ask questions about physical attributes to deduct them from their game board, convening on the correct answer. Before gameplay ensues, a direct instruction lesson is delivered where the teacher would convey information about the game's 50 historical figures, placed in categories. Those categories include labor leaders, civil rights activists, suffragists, Nobel Peace laureates, terrorists, gangsters, dictators, warriors, and politicians. Then, working in teams prior to gameplay, students are asked to complete a graphic organizer that places historical figures into the categories for which they are best known.

In summary, social studies content learning did occur through this assignment, based on the responses to the second reflective question (*What Social Studies content did you learn through this assignment?*). More than 80 percent of candidates remarked that the assignment organized their thinking about historical characters by placing them in categories rather than historical timelines. Further, all candidates reported that through this assignment, their knowledge of one or more of the following historical characters improved: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Clara Barton, Desmond Tutu, Cesar

Chavez, Dorothy Day, Eleanor Roosevelt, Malala Yousafzai, and Wangari Maathai. In addition, 100% of candidates reported that they did not know at least one historical character prior to this game project, including Idi Amin, Genghis Khan, Pablo Escobar, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Mengele, and Pauline Cushman. Finally, most candidates (75%) indicated the game jam as helpful to the improvement of their game, citing the flow of gameplay as the central area of improvement followed by a revamping of the game for closer adherence to the chosen state standards (*What was learned through the game jam event that you deemed helpful to the overall improvement of your game?*).

Reflective question four (*What did you learn about game development through this assignment?*) revealed mostly positive statements about the importance of using multiple means of engagement when teaching, and games fit that grouping. However, a small group of participants (20%) found game development to be a laborious process and not within their purview due to the [perceived] time constraints as a working teacher. Perhaps the lack of self-efficacy is hidden in this minority response.

Limitations and Further Research

This study reports on the results of a small-scale, exploratory research project in which the collected data focuses on content analysis and participants' reflections. The study aims to gain more insight into the characteristics of teacher agency through the educational intervention of tabletop game development.

Discussion

Interestingly, some Type 2 games looked like Type 1 games at the game jam. However, after playing or observing other games during the game jam, most candidates were self-reactive, described by Bandura as having the ability to construct appropriate courses of action and motivate and regulate their execution aligning with the operational curriculum (2000;

2001). The improvements required more in-depth research and curricular development from team members, indicating many of the attributes associated with teacher agency.

One of the reasons for choosing the tabletop game development as an assignment in a teacher education social studies methods course was for candidates to experience the possibilities of this popular curricular approach. As such, agency, meaning a moral sense of purpose, might emerge through collaboration, negotiation, and innovation. This moral purpose would, as Fullan (1993) described, "keep teachers close to the needs of children and youth; ...causing them to develop better strategies for accomplishing their moral goals" (p.1). However, teacher agency did not emerge from 21 of the 64 participants. Instead, learned content knowledge seemed to be consumable. Candidates did not demonstrate that they were thinking about the larger purpose; the education of children and how they could parlay and articulate the learned content knowledge to their future elementary students in a meaningful and engaging way. Some candidates seemed to be more concerned about their course grades than developing meaningful and engaging instruction.

Some participants found game development a laborious process based on reflective responses to question four. Therefore, it is doubtful that the needed research and development would have occurred. Since teacher agency was examined as it emanated from the collaborative game assignment, perhaps teacher agency might emanate from another assignment that participants deem as more reasonable from a time point of view or interest. Alternatively, perhaps the game development assignment confounds with self-efficacy. Human agency within social cognitive theory presents as people's ability to regulate and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior through existing self-beliefs (i.e., self-efficacy).

The assignment under study situates in a course in the middle of the program sequence before fieldwork commences. This sequence may have impacted the emergence of teacher agency attributes and the candidate's perspective of their role as a teacher, as there is no elementary internship in this course. Perhaps lack of proximity to elementary

students prevented the more humanistic or "real" engagement with materials, viewing this as "just another course assignment" versus a model for what lies ahead. To further investigate candidates as agentive adults, it may be worthwhile to administer a self-efficacy survey to review what candidates say about collaboration, curriculum and standards, and their skills.

Conclusion

Much confusion still exists as to what constitutes a human rights education as espoused by Parker (2018), who questioned, "is it democracy, citizenship, comparative constitutions, peace/conflict, rights of the child, universal moral ideology?" However, many educators agree that understanding *perspectives* is "one of the most important outcomes in conflict resolution and a prerequisite for developing empathy" (e.g., Cuhadar & Kampf, 2014, p. 515).

The social studies methods course was redesigned to evoke the understanding of *perspectives* following Banks (2001) multicultural integration approach, allowing candidates to consider and construct personal meaning as they engaged with course materials. The educational research community has embraced the pedagogical benefits of game-based learning. Since teachers have a gap regarding the contexts and conditions to integrate games within their teaching practice effectively, addressing game-based learning while in the preparation stage helps mitigate this hurdle. Extending to game development represents another facet to lessen this challenge. Further, exposure to the importance of teacher agency, development of teacher agency characteristics, and reflection of its attributes must occur in preparation programs for action to emerge prior to employment as teachers. Study findings help address the gap in the development of teacher agency among candidates. Nonetheless, more work is needed.

View the Games

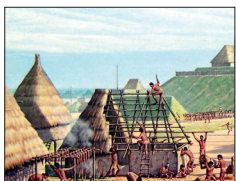
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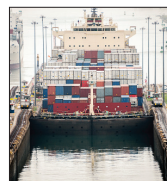
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- Truman and the Atomic Bomb
- From Allies to Enemies: Why Did the Cold War Begin?
- The Interstate Highway: How Did It Change America?
- Vietnam: Would You Have Enlisted?
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- What Were the Consequences of 9/11?



Questions? And to order:

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Spatial Thinking in K-2: Geography, Reading, and Math



Phil Gersmehl

The revised Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations for K-2 have a number of standards about map-making and map-reading. Here are three examples:

- 1 - G1.0.1 Construct simple maps of the classroom to demonstrate aerial perspective
- 2 - G1.0.1 Construct maps of the local community that contain symbols, labels, and legends...
- 2 - G1.0.2 Use maps to describe the spatial organization of the local community...

At roughly the same time as these standards were being drafted and circulated for public comment, scientists around the world were using new eye-tracking and brain-scanning technologies to do a lot of research about visual perception and spatial reasoning. Can this research help us design more effective educational materials? This article will explore four insights gained by carefully reviewing the research.

Insight #1: A literal reading of the standards might not result in effective lessons.

Most children need a conceptual scaffold in order to construct a two-dimensional map of a 3-D environment. One reason for this need is a condition that developmental psychologists call *dual representation* – the

fact that a map or model is both a thing in itself and a representation of something else (DeLoache, 2000; Uttal et al., 2009).

Here is how it works. At first, most young children see a map only as a visual entity. Like a poster that a teacher calls “Mona Lisa,” a map can be perceived as just a complex visual image with a name but no representational meaning. To that child, a map is an art object, not a depiction of a larger physical space. As such, it can be copied from a teacher or another student. Unfortunately, a drawing or map that is merely copied can look like one that is properly constructed. This can fool both student and teacher into thinking that the student has mastered the idea of map-making. As a result, the student proceeds into higher grades unable to learn from maps.

Insight #2: Map reading is complicated by the fact that visual perception is an extraordinarily complex process.

Two vision scientists (Navalpakkam & Itti, 2007) began a review of this topic by using this analogy:

“Imagine that you are on a safari. The guide cautions you to beware of tigers hiding in the tall grass. Which visual features will you enhance or suppress in order to quickly detect a tiger?”

Suppose you get a fleeting glimpse of a huge paw or part of a face. The relative position and context around the image are important. You can

rest easy if it is high above you, surrounded by blue sky, because tigers don't fly. If the image is off to the side, partially obscured by grass, the threat level is higher. You now have a large number of different things to do. These include verifying the color, filling out the partial shape, checking whether it has a furry texture, deciding if the image is increasing in size (and therefore coming toward you), identifying some possible refuges, and looking for an unobstructed running path toward one. There isn't time to do all these different things one at a time. The animals that survive, and pass their genes on to the next generation, are those with brains that can process many different aspects of a scene at the same time.

Brain-scanners now provide a lot of empirical support for an idea that some people have suspected for a long time – the human brain processes a visual image through a number of separate networks. Different brain areas seem to be “tuned” to examine different spatial features and relationships, like comparative size, orientation, proximity, sequential order, color association, surrounding context, and so forth. These brain networks function in parallel, many of them more-or-less simultaneously, and not always consciously (Buetti et al., 2016; Maunsell, 2015; Travis et al., 2019). For better or worse, this is the visual system that children use to look at a map, graph, or other visual image. Part 1 of the GIANTS K-2 package has links to a simple “game” and a map presentation that show how different children might use different brain networks to organize perception in different ways, and therefore get different “messages” from the same map.

Insight #3: Scaffold activities have to be done carefully, and often in a specific order.

The online GIANTS “curriculum” has more than 75 mini-activities that focus on specific spatial skills. No teacher is likely to use all of them, and the desirable order might vary, depending on local circumstances. To help with choosing, the GIANTS website has teacher notes, explanatory presentations, and

a structured planning guide. *Scaffold activities* use local resources to introduce and provide practice with the spatial-thinking skills described above. *Spinoff activities* provide direct links with specific math and ELA objectives. This idea leads us to the last insight, which in today's curricular environment may be the most important.

Insight #4: The scaffold activities that are needed to help teach children how to make a map are also part of the foundation for learning how to read and do math.

Consider this quote from Stanislas Dehaene (2009), director of one of the largest reading-and-math neuroscience labs in the world:

Visuospatial attention is of paramount importance to the normal development of reading. Good decoding skills do not arise from *associations* between letter [shapes] and speech sound alone – letters must also be perceived in their proper *orientation*, at the appropriate *spatial location*, and in their correct *left-right order* (p. 298).

We added italics to his statement to highlight different spatial relationships that Dehaene identified as important in reading, because (and this is the key insight), *these spatial ideas are precisely the skills that a good classroom-mapping project has to scaffold*. This short report is not the place to try to describe these activities or to cite all of the evidence that supports that simple statement. In designing the activities in the online GIANTS K-2 “curriculum,” we reviewed more than 4000 relevant research reports, in a range of disciplines that included neuroscience, developmental psychology, vision science, linguistics, architecture, and robot engineering, as well as cartography and geographic information systems. Part 1 of the online GIANTS package has explanatory presentations, posters, discussion questions, and a bibliography of 80 of the most useful research studies. As it says in the accompanying teacher notes, busy teachers should not view this list as a reading assignment! The presentations are

there to provide a quick summary of the research. The bibliography can be very useful, however, in curricular discussions about class time or support resources, where people have been known to make intuitively plausible assertions that actually have no research support.

Conclusion

It is possible to “do” a classroom-map activity in one day. It does not take long to “teach” children to produce colorful images that look somewhat like a map. Unfortunately, a sizable fraction of these students will not actually know how to make or read a map when this activity is done. If the mapping activity is structured as a multi-week “treasure-map” project, however, it is possible to build in the scaffold activities that many students need to overcome the dual-representation problem and learn about different kinds of spatial thinking. At the same time, a thoughtful teacher can also incorporate a number of spinoff activities that help address issues in learning to read or do math. Parts 2, 3, and 4 of the GIANTS online package include a full set of planning documents, background presentations, mini-activity ideas, and other resources to implement three big mapping projects. The background documents, planning guides, explanatory presentations, and mini-activities are easily accessible on the GIANTS website, <http://ss.aisd.org/k2overview.html>

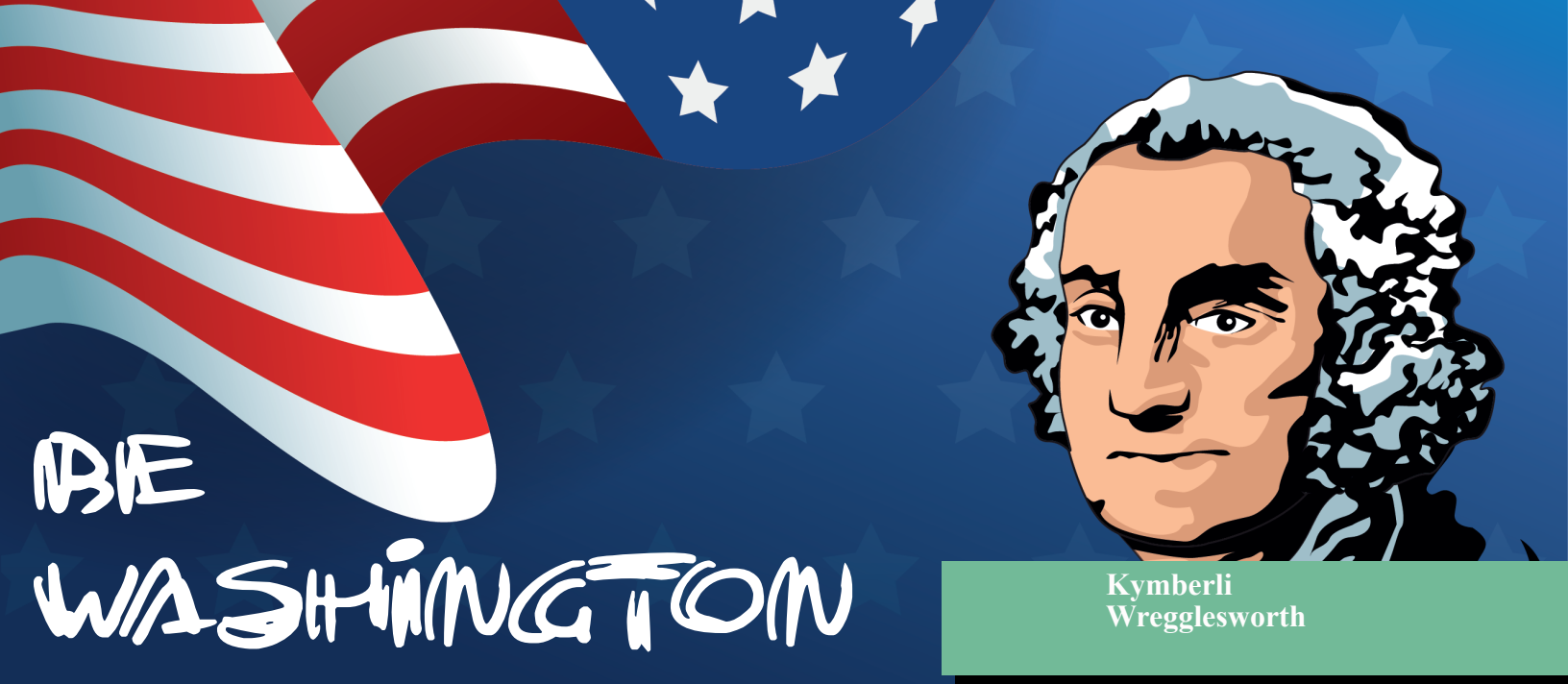
When half a dozen kindergarten and first-grade teachers in a high-poverty school in Harlem were willing to “waste” 40-80 minutes a week doing early versions of these geography projects, reading scores on standardized tests went up dramatically (Gersmehl & Gersmehl, 2011). Since there was no formal control group, scientific integrity precludes claiming that the geography lessons “caused” the increase in reading scores. But we can claim to have obeyed the Hippocratic Oath: “First, do no harm.” These classrooms offer no evidence that spending time doing geography lessons has harmed reading scores. One wonders how

many popular reading or math programs can honestly make the same claim?

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**Dr. Gersmehl's
Recommended Reading**



Every action would set a precedent. Every decision would be unprecedented. Every statement would be remembered as a first. For George Washington, the first President of the United States, every move would create history and every reaction would be an example for the future. A visitor to Mount Vernon can learn about many of these historical firsts through displays and artifacts, but even without traveling to Virginia, teachers and students can participate in the decision-making process Washington used on a number of occasions by playing Be Washington.

For Mount Vernon visitors, one of the highlights of visiting the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center is the Be Washington Interactive Theater. The enormous video screen and high-quality audio, in combination with the individual touch pad interactive stations, gives guests an experience like nothing else they have ever seen. Luckily for most teachers and students, although on a smaller scale, the Be Washington experience can be brought into their classroom.

The interactive experience is hosted by Christopher Jackson, who played George Washington in the original cast of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: An American Musical* on Broadway. Jackson introduces one of four historical challenges that Washington

experienced as president or as commander in chief. A variety of other actors play the roles of advisers and cabinet members who you have the opportunity to consult before making your final decision in one or all of the challenges.

Teachers can create a free account, and then share the game with their students either in class or as homework. There are no downloads necessary, and all that is needed is a reliable high-speed internet connection. The four historical challenges include "The Battle of Second Trenton," "The Newburgh Conspiracy," "The Genet Affair," and "The Whiskey Rebellion." Each scenario is presented with a limited amount of time, so players will not have enough time to hear from all of the advisors, creating an urgency that Washington would have experienced when the event actually occurred. Once students have finished playing, the game will relate what actually happened and show the historical percentage for each of the three choices.

When I first learned about this game and saw that there was an episode dealing with the Genet Affair, I immediately thought about combining it with a lesson I was already using that included students listening to and analyzing "Cabinet Battle #2" from *Hamilton*. The rap battle made a great introduction to the study of the primary documents, but having students play the game first is much more exciting and engaging for them. That way, I can keep the rap

battle until the end of the lesson as a fun formative assessment.



To begin, distribute the background information from the Be Washington: “The Genet Affair” lesson plan to students. The teacher and students should read and discuss the information, and students will pre-vote on how they would address the situation if they were in Washington’s shoes. Then distribute the graphic organizer, also from the lesson plan, and instruct students to take some brief notes as they play the scenario to help them make their decision at the end of the game. They should keep in mind their pre-vote, but also be open-minded to new information and opinions they will hear from the advisers in the game.

Then, the teacher should project the game information in the classroom and guide students to join the game. The teacher is able to pause the game at any time, making it fire drill proof! The game takes approximately 15 minutes to play, without any stoppages. I like to pause it just before the actual resolution is explaining and have student volunteers share their decision and the reasoning behind it. It often makes for lively discussion as students are generally strongly invested in their interpretation of the situation.

The next step in the lesson is to distribute and analyze the primary document excerpts associated with the Neutrality Proclamation and the Genet Affair. The teacher may choose to put students into pairs or triads, depending on student experience with primary documents. Students should be prepared to discuss their analysis answers with the class and defend their ideas with evidence from the text. There are two sets of documents: one dealing with the Neutrality Proclamation

specifically, and another covering the Pacificus/Helvidius letters. Teachers may opt to use one or the other, or both, depending on their personal choice or lesson requirements.

The final step in the lesson is the formative assessment. The teacher should play “Cabinet Battle #2” from Hamilton for students (a link to a school appropriate version is included in the resources). Alternately, if the language is not an issue, the teacher could also show the video version of the rap battle from the Disney+ version of the musical. Once students have listened to the rap battle once, the teacher should distribute the (clean) lyrics to students and play the audio again. Due to the fast pace of the rapping, much of the lyrics can be missed with only one listen. Students should follow along, marking places in the lyrics that they think relate directly to the primary documents they analyzed in the previous step. Now allow students to partner up and using the excerpts from Part 2, research the entire documents and list in the margins of the lyrics sheet the parts of the documents they think relate directly to what was said during the Cabinet Battle.

Be Washington is an engaging way for students to experience what it was like to be the first!

Resources

Be Washington: “The Genet Affair” lesson plan available for download from <https://www.mountvernon.org/education/lesson-plans/lesson/be-washington-genet-affair/>

Be Washington game available at <http://play.bewashington.org/>

Clean/school appropriate version of “Cabinet Battle #2” available at <https://vimeo.com/280605472>

Clean/school appropriate lyrics of “Cabinet Battle #2” available at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NOAWGwfO8Ih_1DtnhxsyuVUICJbOsLh9IX1LT63llok/edit?usp=sharing

Digitally Writing New Histories



Bringing Primary Sources, The C3 Framework, and Literacy Practices to Life

Troy Hicks, Rebecca Bush, & Jessica Ellison

As the lesson began, Nikki invited her seventh grade students to look closely at a map of Michigan, one of many drawn in the early days of colonial settlement. Within the context of her World Geography class, looking at one of the first maps of Michigan was connected to her curriculum and provided students with an accessible way to begin thinking critically about what was included on maps... as well as what was missing.

She began by asking the students to describe what they noticed. This map, drawn by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and entitled “A Map of the Acting Superintendency of Michigan, 1837” included information about the Indigenous Peoples who resided in the Michigan Territory (Schoolcraft, 1837). Her goals were to help them critically think about the ways Native Americans were represented in that era and the impending effects of ceding lands that would occur in the decades to come.

“It doesn’t really look like a mitten,” one student shared immediately.

“The map is old because it is on brown paper and faded,” offered another.

“The cursive is hard to read,” sighed one more student.

“Yes,” Nikki responded, “What else do you notice?”

She was hoping that her seventh graders would approach the map with a different perspective, noting the Native American Tribes in the “Population” table to the left, as well as the places on the map where the tribal lands were indicated, such as the large swath of the northeastern lower peninsula that showed “Ceded by the Ottawas and Chippewas.” In doing so, she hoped that they could connect to current conversations about social justice and the increasing use of land acknowledgements.

Yet, at that moment — as in many times she had tried to use primary sources in her teaching before — the conversation started to fizzle. Even though she tried to point out a few key features, including the names of the tribes of Indigenous peoples that were written on the map and to think about why, exactly, those names were placed that way, students only seemed interested in the odd shape of Michigan’s mitten. She wasn’t quite sure how to pivot the conversation, looked at the clock, and decided that the lesson wasn’t progressing in the manner she had hoped.

“OK,” Nikki said. “Let’s move on. Please grab your Michigan History textbook and open to chapter three.”

Though we may have slightly overdramatized this scenario from a seventh grade classroom, it is not outside the realm of possibility to imagine that our fictionalized teacher, Nikki, might share similar frustrations that thousands of other social studies teachers have felt: when introducing primary sources, students may be interested in them for a limited time, or in a superficial way, and then we feel compelled to continue on with our curriculum.

In this manner, unfortunately, our goals for using primary sources may fall short of *The College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards*’ (hereafter, The C3 Framework) (NCSS, 2013) aspirations that students “integrate data and information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, in order to form a coherent and empirically-based understanding of an idea or social event, noting discrepancies among sources” (Swan & Lee, 2015, p. 75). Similarly, in Michigan, our *Literacy Essentials for Grades 6-12* suggest that students should be able to engage in substantive writing about primary sources, including ones that are “of varying complexity, structure, and format or genre” (Disciplinary Literacy Task Force, 2019, p. 21). While the Library of Congress has provided educators and students with many resources for investigating primary sources (n.d.a), like Nikki and many other teachers, we too have struggled with ways to make primary sources a key component of our curriculum, and especially the kinds of deeper, more critical analysis and interpretation that historians and sociologists might expect within their disciplines.

It was with this challenge in mind that we — Troy, Beckie, and Jessica — developed a project that was funded through a 2020-21 Midwest Region Teaching with Primary Sources grant: “Digitally Writing New Histories.” We argued in our grant application that, as social studies educators continue to

implement *The C3 Framework*, new opportunities for students to engage in literacy practices continue to emerge. In addition to reading, writing, and thinking like historians, geographers, economists, and political scientists (disciplinary literacy), teachers are also expected to teach students how to engage in more nuanced literacy practices. As we will describe in more detail below, these “critical” and “digital” literacies are essential, too, especially as we guide students through Dimensions 3 (Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence) and 4 (Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action) of the framework.

Before examining the literacy goals that undergirded our project, a brief description of the Library of Congress’s (LOC) work on Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) is warranted. As described on the LOC website, primary sources include “original documents and objects which were created at the time under study” (Library of Congress, n.d.c). In contrast to secondary sources that “analyze, interpret, and evaluate primary sources” and tertiary sources that “summarize and synthesize information about a topic from other sources,” primary sources “provide firsthand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic or question under investigation” and are “usually created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented” (Primary Sources at Yale, n.d.a). Though this definition covers most of what we would define as primary sources, Primary Sources at Yale notes that “primary sources can also include autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories recorded later” (Primary Sources at Yale, n.d.b), sources that continue to be relevant in our age of increased digital publication and social media production.

As we began to work with teachers in the fall of 2020 — introducing them to a more expansive definition of primary sources and considering the ways in which they might, in turn, ask their own students to investigate and use these digitized sources in new ways — we

also realized that we needed to provide even more background on the kinds of literacy practices that they would want to understand and employ. This process was enlightening for us all, facilitators and participants alike. As we share our group's work here, we have two goals for making our work public. First, the teachers involved in the project were able to use the Library of Congress's Teaching With Primary Sources resources to create units around compelling questions. To that end, we invite social studies teachers to both visit our project website (<http://www.misocialstudies.org/teaching-with-primary-sources-grant.html>) and adapt the openly available lesson and unit plans for their own classrooms.

Second, by sharing insights from our work together, we hope that the layered literacy practices become more accessible to other educators, and we encourage teachers to design rich, nuanced lesson and unit plans in a manner that incorporates disciplinary, digital, and critical literacies. A further exploration of these literacies underscores the complexity of these practices, and especially in their applicability to Dimensions 3 and 4 of *The C3 Framework*, where we turn our attention to next.

Critical, Digital, and Disciplinary Literacies in Social Studies and the C3 Framework

As we planned the year-long professional development experience, we were conscious of three overlapping perspectives from literacy studies that could inform our work: disciplinary, critical, and digital, literacies.

While movements toward "content area literacy" and "writing across the curriculum" have been around for decades, *The C3 Framework* makes an explicit call for what Swan and Lee call a kind of expansion in definitions of literacy that have been simultaneously happening in English

language arts (Swan & Lee, 2015). They go on to argue that this expansion includes a "broader notion of literacy" that requires "other forms of expression [that] have unique qualities in each of the core areas of social studies" (p. xxii). Moreover, within the state of Michigan, the *Essential Practices for Disciplinary Literacy Instruction: Grades 6 to 12* (Disciplinary Literacy Task Force, 2019, p. 12) have been in place since 2019, and work to integrate them in social studies classrooms is on-going. Disciplinary literacies are described as "the specialized literacy practices of a particular disciplinary domain" that "include the ways that scholars identify, evaluate, use, and produce the wide range of texts and information or data sources typical of their particular discipline" (Disciplinary Literacy Task Force, 2019, p. 33). In short, disciplinary literacies are the ways that experts read, write, and think within their area of expertise.

In relation to these disciplinary literacies, Vasquez, Janks, and Comber (2019) have argued that "critical literacy involves having an ingrained critical perspective or way of being that provides us with an ongoing critical orientation to texts and practices" (para. 2) and that "the world is seen as a socially constructed text that can be read" (para. 7). Building on the idea first introduced by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire that students should be able to read the word and the world (Freire, 2014), educators who employ critical literacy practices invite their students to question power relationships that are evident in traditional narratives about history, to interrogate the underlying causes and effects of various events, and even to interpret maps as texts that can be imbued with a certain perspective or bias. As evidence of a recent project that adopts a critical literacies perspective — and has brought about substantive controversy and conversation as a result of that perspective — *The New York Times' 1619 Project* illustrates the ways in which historical events can be reinterpreted through a critical lens, bringing to light new ways of understanding common assumptions

about America's disturbing history of racial inequality (Silverstein, 2019).

From these disciplinary and critical literacies, we can then layer on one more approach. Both because our current endemic state of the COVID-19 crisis may continue to demand remote instruction and because technologies are now inextricably linked with life in school, it is imperative that digital literacies be taught explicitly. As Hicks, Baleja, and Zhang (2019) describe them, digital literacies are "the complementary and interwoven skills, both technical and social, that people must employ when using Internet-based communication—including hypertext, images, audio, and video—to consume and create messages across a variety of academic, civic, and cultural contexts" (para. 1). In addition to evaluating sources through methods like lateral reading and fact checking (opening up multiple tabs in a web browser to read from one source while simultaneously finding out what others have to say about that source) (Wineburg & McGrew, 2017), teachers must also invite students to create their own multimodal compositions, ones that include digitized historical artifacts (aka primary source artifacts) while also engaging in strategic aspects of composition with images, sounds, and videos. For instance, students can integrate these sources into interactive story maps and timelines, creating nuanced and engaging arguments with multimodal tools, all in the service of strengthening their skills as historians, geographers, economists, and sociologists.

It is within this context of disciplinary, critical, and digital literacies — and broader expectations related to teaching literacy in the social studies classroom — that we find ourselves, and the very place in which we began our work. This shift towards disciplinary, digital, and critical literacies occurs in an era where students have more access to primary sources than ever before.

Both historical documents and artifacts as well as images, videos, and social media posts created with contemporary technologies all serve as primary sources. In addition to the countless number of digitized sources available through the Library of Congress website (loc.gov), we invited teachers to examine artifacts through virtual museum visits. In combination with the critical thinking questions provided by the Library of Congress's teaching materials, we examined these resources through the lenses of disciplinary, digital, and critical literacies. As a way to move through the four dimensions of *The C3 Framework*, we designed our professional learning program as our own kind of arc of inquiry, in which teachers would participate in "a set of interlocking and mutually reinforcing ideas that feature the four Dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies" (NCSS, 2013, p. 17), a process we describe in more detail below.

Our Professional Development Work in 2020-21

As noted above, our work was funded through a Teaching with Primary Sources Midwest grant, and it allowed us to recruit Michigan social studies teachers to engage in a flexible program of study, with the potential to earn SCECH credits and a modest stipend for their work on a final unit plan. In our initial invitation shared via the Michigan Council for the Social Studies (MCSS) in the summer of 2020, we noted the expectations of regular attendance in real-time sessions via Zoom, yet were keenly aware that the 2020-21 pandemic school year would pose challenges to us all. Therefore, applicants were made aware that they could always watch recordings and participate asynchronously, and many did take advantage of over thirty hours of workshop and virtual museum visits that were recorded for them. Still, throughout the 2020-21 school year, we were able to meet with most of our colleagues in monthly workshops and to set up the virtual museum visits, which the majority of

our participants were able to attend, remotely, in real time.

These workshops focused on the integration of primary source pedagogy with overlapping goals for integrating disciplinary, critical, and digital literacies. For instance, in our first workshop session, Jessica grounded our thinking in the characteristics of primary sources themselves in order to ensure that all participants shared a similar foundational knowledge as they explored grade-appropriate methods to incorporate these resources in their classrooms. As concerns about distance learning in 2020-21 were providing a sense of unease for some at the start of the school year, Jessica displayed a primary source to reflect teachers' current situation: a photograph of two boys learning at home when schools were closed during the Spanish flu pandemic, entitled "The Back Yard Workshop, while School was closed for Influenza" (see image below).

As she argued in the session, using sources that are relevant to a learner's lived experience builds a connection between human experiences across time. Participants engaged in an "Observe, Question, Reflect" analysis of the image, without the caption, to encourage teachers to rely on what they could see and infer. Through this protocol, teachers offered some interesting interpretations of what they thought was happening, yet no one pinned it down exactly. Then, using the effects in Google Slides to have text appear, when Jessica shared the caption and context of the boys engaging in "distance learning," the image took on a new, familiar meaning for teachers currently living in a reality of schools closed for a pandemic. The image served as a writing and discussion prompt, with Jessica's constant reminder that primary sources tell stories about people, and those stories matter.



Jessica's slide for writing and discussion, featuring ...The Back Yard Workshop, while School was closed for Influenza. Mountain Division, Denver, Colo." (1919). Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017668474/>.

As Jessica introduced us to various types of primary sources as well as digital repositories of these sources, she highlighted strategies for sharing these human stories with students. Learners who can ask questions, uncover evidence, and draw conclusions based on primary sources will be more adept at processing and understanding complex histories and a complex present. We designed various activities during each monthly workshop. For instance, Jessica led us through an activity understanding the connections between the NAACP's 1917 Silent Protest Parade on Fifth Avenue in New York City and the 2020 racial justice protests. She made the argument that primary source documents, especially those with impactful visual appeal, can help students recognize patterns of responses to various events as well as identify recurring themes of history both temporally and spatially. Each helped participants in our workshops build bridges between their present context and the past that created it.

Additionally, over our entire series of workshops, Jessica reminded participants that primary sources are for everyone, no matter their age, grade, or reading level. For this mixed-grade, regionally diverse group of Michigan teachers, it was essential to develop a sense of commonality between participants. Also, we needed to reiterate core principles of our work: all students are capable of reading primary sources, and all teachers deserve to feel comfortable sharing primary sources in class. As shown in the next image, Jessica reminded us to look beyond “the usual suspects” when it comes to finding and integrating primary sources into our curricula, noting a number of other interesting sources that could provide opportunities for analysis using the Library of Congress’s “observe, reflect, question” protocol in their collection of analysis tools (Library of Congress, n.d.a). Thus, throughout the year, we engaged in primary source analysis with resources from the

Types of primary sources

The Usual Suspects

- Newspaper
- Diary/journal
- Letter
- Government document
- Map
- Advertisement
- Autobiography
- Photograph
- Literature
- Propaganda

Outside the Box

- Broadside
- Object/Artifact
- Ephemera
- Film footage
- Recording
- Building/historic site
- Oral history
- Patent
- Pamphlet
- Census record



Jessica's slide featuring various kinds of primary sources, including an image. “Dear Mrs. Parks, we were very sorry to hear about your fall and we hope you'll soon be well.” (1998). Retrieved from the Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2015651327/>).

Library of Congress, as well as our museum partners listed below.

As we progressed from month to month, participants in our project were able to engage in “real time,” synchronous Zoom-based sessions, or to follow up by engaging in “any time,” asynchronous viewings of the recordings of our sessions. In total, we held eight 90-minute, monthly workshops from September through June to learn more about the TPS program and methodology as well as eleven 90-minute museum workshops with eight different museum partners. These visits included four visits with the Holocaust Memorial Center (recently renamed as The Zekelman Holocaust Center) and single visits with the Arab American National Museum, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Detroit Historical Museum, the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, the Grand Rapids Public Museum, the Hartwick Pines Logging Museum, and the Michigan Historical Center. These visits were engaging for our participants, as well as for the museum staff who were working to develop new modes of delivering their programs during COVID-19 induced shutdowns of their facilities. Some quite literally walked us through their facilities with a

smartphone in hand and shared primary sources; others had transitioned their resources and activities into presentations, digital handouts in Google Docs and Drive, or invited us to dive into their own databases and digitized collections. Needless to say, we were all working and learning in new modes throughout the year, and we appreciated their partnership.

In sum, we offered a net total of 31.5 hours of learning experiences, as well as individual coaching. Over the course of the project, we also touched on a number of different digital learning platforms including timelines (such as Timeline JS and Sutori), story maps (with Storymap JS), Jamboard and Padlet (for brainstorming and content curation), and Adobe Spark, now Creative Cloud Express (for social media style posts and videos). Some teachers were willing to integrate these technologies in their unit plans, as described below, again thinking about the overlapping nature of disciplinary, digital, and critical literacies that they could then share with their own students.

From Professional Learning to Unit Planning

Throughout the series of monthly workshops, we provided participants with time and space to brainstorm, draft, respond to, and revise their final instructional unit plans. To do so, we employed the Inquiry Design Model (IDM), which is described in this manner:

IDM builds out from the C3 Inquiry Arc through: a) compelling and supporting questions that frame and give structure to the inquiry (Dimension 1); b) summative, formative, and additional performance tasks that provide the opportunities for communicating conclusions (Dimension 4); and c) disciplinary sources that allow students to explore

the compelling question, build content expertise, and develop the disciplinary skills to successfully support and defend their ideas (Dimensions 2 & 3) (c3teachers.org).

By using this framework for their unit planning, we were able to sequence the professional learning around each element of it, especially the aspect of forming compelling and supporting questions (rather than topics, events, eras, regions, or historical figures). In doing so, we kept the focus on inquiry, broadly, and interrogating primary sources, in particular. By modeling various questioning techniques and writing-to-learn strategies, participants in our workshops were able to then envision their own inquiries. To that end, participants developed units based on compelling questions that included:

- What causes genocides to occur? What lessons can we derive from genocide education?
- As museums collect artifacts from ancient cultures, which items are collected and why?
- What is identity and how is it formed?
- How can ordinary “stuff” make history?
- How did copper contribute to the ‘Age of Modern Revolution’?
- How and why do humans modify physical environments?
- How do we keep the Great Lakes great?
- During periods of conflict in the nation’s earliest years, why don’t we think of cooperation coming from a wide range of ethnicities and gender?
- Who/what is the most influential individual, group of individuals, or thing — that has made a difference in Michigan history? How might we honor their contributions?
- Is propaganda good or bad for society?
- The American Dream: Whose Dream?
- Who is most culpable for creating segregated communities in Post-War America?

In each unit, the intentional use of primary sources was used to investigate evidence needed to answer the compelling questions. We welcome educators to review all of the units

available on the project website (<http://www.misocialstudies.org/teaching-with-primary-sources-grant.html>), and we share three examples from different grade levels here.

For instance, in high school teacher Erika Sponsler's unit, "The American Dream: Whose Dream?" students will examine items from post-WWII America including songs, advertising, articles, video clips of commercials, and, perhaps most importantly, maps and data on red-lining and housing discrimination. In the series of lessons, she has them examine a number of primary sources that question the American Dream, ranging from Justice Thurgood Marshall's Dissenting Opinion in *Milliken v. Bradley* on busing in Detroit, to posters on AIDS activism, to the lyrics of John Cougar Mellencamp's "Small Town." As a final project, students have opportunity to then create pieces of writing in the form of a "Letter to the Editor" to, as she describes it, "talk about how 'we' collectively in the US can defend and support expanded access to the dream," or students have opportunity to "create a 'take action' advertisement/PSA on how laws/government/access can be protected and enacted to help citizens be better able to achieve their dreams."

Next, at the middle level, Aaron Eling created a unit with a focus on geography, building on existing curricular resources from the openly available GIANTS curriculum. For his students, the compelling question of "How and why do humans modify physical environments?" launches them into an inquiry about the effects that cities — and the people that inhabit them — affect the biosphere as they research, design, and build a "City of the Future." He scaffolds them through the process with graphs from Our World in Data, articles about the work of urban planners, and a National Geographic documentary on an existing "city of the future," the city state of Singapore. As they gather ideas, they

complete a GSPEC (geographical, social, political, economic, and cultural) analysis and, by the end of the unit, students will need to find resources to build their city, either as two-dimensional map using a snapshot of a Google Maps image and annotating it, or by using the freely-available three-dimensional software, TinkerCad (www.tinkercad.com). In short, they use primary sources to understand the ways that cities are designed now, and how they could be reimaged for the future.

Finally, at the elementary level, in Patti Bouwens' unit on conflict in the nation's founding, she invites students to interrogate a painting of Washington accepting supreme command of the forces for the Revolutionary War and the infamous political cartoon from Franklin's *Philadelphia Gazette*, the image of a snake in pieces, "Join, or Die." The focus for each lesson in the unit is to then investigate primary sources related to individuals whose contributions to the revolution is less well-reported in our history books, including military leader and Native American Thayendanegea (aka Joseph Brant) and Susanna Wright, a New York woman who helped Franklin, among others. For their final project, Bouwens gives students a list of women, Native Americans, and African Americans who played a role in the revolution. Students investigate and describe how their stories have been silenced in the past, yet need to be told now.

In each of these examples, the teachers worked diligently to incorporate primary sources, as well as to address elements of critical, digital, and disciplinary literacies. Moreover, the units reflect elements of *The C3 Framework*, as noted above. Dimension 3, in which students evaluate and use sources, and Dimension 4, in which they communicate conclusions and take informed action are evident. In this process, we worked to help them bring to life the principles outlined in our grant title, "Digitally Writing New Histories." Through their introduction to hundreds of digitized primary sources — from the Library of

Congress and the many museum partners that we visited — teachers were able to engage their own imaginations, bringing the critical, disciplinary perspectives needed to enliven and interrogate the common narratives of history. These skills, including their ability to compose multimedia texts of their own, were then able to transfer into the unit plans they developed and, eventually, to help their students write new histories for these pieces of art, newspaper clippings, photographs, maps, and more. As they combined these literacy practices in creative ways, students were able to repurpose the digitized primary source documents and compose across multiple modalities, pushing them well beyond the kinds of brief, limited analysis of a source in one lesson and into a more robust, dialogic engagement with it that stretched over days or weeks.

Conclusion: Rewriting Histories with Primary Sources and Digital Tools

As we reflect on our work with the teachers involved in this project, many of whom might have previously approached primary source instruction as our fictionalized teacher, Nikki, would have, we are heartened by their final evaluation of the experience. One stated that:

I thought writing a IDM [inquiry design model] unit was powerful. It took more than 15 hours, but I learned so much. I would like to spend more time on using technology with primary documents and how to use that with my students. It's always good to stay current on the ELA connections and C3 as well.

Another added:

The grant has given me a lot to think about when working with primary source documents. I have experience teaching with primary source documents before working with the

grant. Most of my experiences focused on building disciplinary literacy skills which are important. The grant has really helped me grow in thinking about the sources themselves and helped me grow as a learner and teacher in thinking about how to evaluate primary sources for use in my classroom.

We hope that the skills that educators learned and, more importantly, the work that they have made public through their unit plans will help them — as well as all Michigan social studies educators — to enact the Library of Congress's goal to help “students engage in learning, develop critical thinking skills and construct knowledge” (Library of Congress, n.d.b). We can imagine how Nikki, our fictionalized seventh grade teacher might, too, teach her students to digitally write new histories. For instance, based on some of the strategies that we tried in our workshops, experienced with our museum partners, and have seen in our colleagues' unit plans, Nikki might try some of the following ideas:

- Use the “HIPPO” writing method to have students write about the historical context, intended audience, point of view, purpose, and outside evidence/how it connects to other content (Tomasson, n.d.).
- Use the “GSPEC” writing method to have students write about a topic, focusing on the geographical, social, political, economic, and cultural implications of the topic (Fitzpatrick, 2011).
- Use the Library of Congress's own Teaching with Primary Sources analysis tools to have students “observe,” “reflect,” and “question” as they review a primary sources (Library of Congress, n.d.a).
- Find two images taken in the same location yet showing different eras, such as those on HistoryPin (www.historypin.org), and invite students to write about them (Sizemore, 2015).
- Invite students to upload an image of a primary source or video and then annotate it using tools like Thinglink (www.thinglink.com, mentioned in Citizen U Primary Source Nexus, 2015), or other tools like NowComment (www.nowcomment.com)

- or EasyZoom (www.easyzoom.com).
- Invite students to upload multiple images of primary sources into a bigger project by building a timeline creation with a tool like Sutori (www.sutori.com) or creating a museum exhibit using a tool like ArtSteps (www.artsteps.com).

Beyond these, there are a number of additional websites that offer ideas around “taking informed action” that can be found at Be A Citizen (beacitizen.org), the Civic Action Project (crfcap.org), the Civic Engagement Resource Group (www.civicsurvey.org), Educating for American Democracy (www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org), Facing History and Ourselves (www.facinghistory.org), Learning for Justice (www.learningforjustice.org) and the Stanford History Education Group’s “Beyond the Bubble” History Assessments (sheg.stanford.edu/history-assessments). Nikki could refocus her students’ attention on the deeper implications of Michigan’s history related to issues of social justice, considering the map from the 1800s as a starting place to think about Native Americans’ land rights.

Of course, Nikki’s students would still be able to appreciate and find a small bit of humor in what we, as contemporary citizens in a digital world, perceive to be the awkward manner in which Michigan’s mitten was drawn nearly 200 years ago. Yet, by digitally writing new histories of primary sources, they would also be able to look even more closely at the implications this map had for Michigan’s history, and its future. She might have considered ways that her students could download and annotate the 1837 Schoolcraft map, or compare what was drawn there to contemporary maps available on Native-Land.ca. She might also have invited students to explore primary source material through the Library of Congress’s digital collections, many of which feature Native American voices. While any one of these tasks would have taken more time than simply looking at the map, we believe that —

by designing our lessons and units with the goal of integrating disciplinary, critical, and digital literacies — teachers like Nikki can meet multiple goals within the C3 and create an informed citizenship.

To that end, we welcome educators to consider our approach of digitally writing new histories as one way to help their own students think about ways to reimagine our state’s — as well as our nation’s — future.

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