

Instructions: Use the following style format for the title page of your Honors Thesis Project. Note that you have the option of granting permission for your thesis to be used for educational purposes (see below.) If you choose to grant permission, please include the statement below at the bottom of your title page. If you do not wish to grant permission, simply exclude it from the page.

SOCIAL STUDIES: THE LOST ART OF BEING SOCIAL

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Graduation in the College Honors Program

By
Teresa Singh
Teacher Candidate & History Major

The College at Brockport
December, 2012

Thesis Director: Allison Wright, Professor, Dept. of Education & Human Resources

Educational use of this paper is permitted for the purpose of providing future students a model example of an Honors senior thesis project.

Abstract

The content area of social studies has in recent years been replaced within the educational curriculum across the country. This paper discusses how the slow removal of studying the socialization of mankind from the education system is directly linked to the decline in societal values, citizenship and a sense of value. Through a brief overview of how education was established in America to specific programs and misconceptions in teaching social studies, this paper delves into finding out the importance of teaching social studies. My research revealed that social studies are a vital organ within the body of education. My findings ultimately show the systems of education have always been viewed in some aspect or another for the betterment of society. This concept is not new nor is little written about the impact if ignored, but fewer today are looking back to the past to help find answers to the present day issues of our schools, teachers and students. Until more administrative heads re-examine the fundamentals of education our children and our own futures are faced with a dismal society. For if removing that which teaches us the past, how then can we learn to live in the future free from repeating the mistakes of the past?

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	7
Justification	9
Research Question and Methodology	11
Historical Purpose of Social Studies	12
Formation and Foundation of U.S. Curriculum	12
Past Approaches to Social Studies	13
Colonial Society	13
Democratic National State	15
19 th Century	18
20 th Century	20
No Child Left Behind Era	23
Absence of Social Studies in the Classroom	24
Misconceptions of Learning History	27
Transforming Social Studies for the Future	30
Implementation of Citizenship Begins in the Classroom	31
Classrooms Gone Amuck	35
Peace Circles	37
Conclusion	39
References	41
Appendix I	43

Lesson 1 – Community and the Culture Within the classroom 46

Lesson 2 – Developing communities through good citizenship 52

Lesson 3 – Introduction to Culture 56

Lesson 4 – Who Am I – The Culture Within..... 60

Lesson 5 – Community – Citizenship – Culture – Wrap-up 65

Lesson 6 – Who we are can Impact Others and Ourselves 69

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my thesis director, cooperative teachers, and peers and family for all their assistance and advice in making this project a success. In the very beginning when the ideas of what I wanted to research were swirling in my head, my thesis director Allison Wright helped to guide my passion for social studies. Perhaps because we share the same passion for social studies content and believe in the worthy argument that social studies still belongs within the walls of the elementary schools, or because we understand that the idea of teaching social studies only within gaps to a busy schedule is a great injustice to our students and even has a greater impact on society than many realize. Allison not only helped to guide my approach to this project but she has been flexible and understanding even during my final weeks when I feared this project would not be completed on time.

Thank you to cooperative teacher Melissa Ketchum, who allowed me to explore my theories of teaching about “communities and citizenship” in an approach that allowed students to construct knowledge through their own exposure and experiences within communities and citizenship. Melissa’s guidance and advice in lesson planning and state standards allowed the opportunity to design lessons that not only identified the gaps I believed were missing in the way social studies has been approached in recent years, but allowed me to make sure lessons successfully incorporated standards that would substantiate a best practices approach to teaching social studies. In addition, I would also like to thank, cooperative teacher Brian Moroni, who continually checked to make sure my project was progressing.

Finally, I would like to thank peers and family for their support, advice and most importantly time to complete this project. The numerous hours away from those who are such an intricate part of my life was to say the least, a hardship. If it were not for their understanding and

support this project could not have been a success. This project was a great a privilege and opportunity afforded thanks to The College of Brockport and all the resources and support staff at Drake Library.

Introduction

Night after night we watch the local newscasts as mothers cry for their children gunned down in the streets, as teenagers are arrested for violent crimes, and as children are rescued from abusive homes. We watch these scenes with preconceived notions as to “why” these things are happening in our advanced society. Maybe coming up with solutions to fix the problems, even perhaps pointing our fingers to blame these inadequacies on our school systems while ignoring our own responsibilities in the home. The scary reality is that these issues do have a place in our schools. It lies in the content area of social studies; a content area that has consequently dwindled to the bottom of the list of priorities across the nation, as we shift from whole-child focuses to test result scrutiny.

Within the walls of classrooms across America the struggle to find social order stands in the midst of chaos. The truth; teachers are striving to meet mandates that at times squelch common sense and best practices for the sake of test scores. On top of test scores, each day teachers are faced with the struggle to keep students engaged, and cover curriculum content while also trying to meet the social needs of each child. With the burden of such a heavy load, something has to give, but who determines what that something must be? With so much pressure it is no surprise to hear that some objectives are prioritized targets over others. It is also no surprise that the strain is still on the shoulders of our schools and its teachers to find the answers of how to teach social studies in a manner that will contribute to the education of citizens that will graduate and be an asset to society. Ultimately, it should not be surprising that the consequence if we fail, or should I say as we fail, is the society of the future. However, we cannot afford to continue simply pointing fingers of blame; we must come to the realization that there are root causes to the problem. We must realize that schools have had, and still have, the

wherewithal to help influence society in a positive way, but they cannot do it alone. We must stop and question ourselves as to whether the choices we are making are the right choices for the short term, or more importantly, our not so distant future.

Justification

As an aspiring elementary teacher and history major I have witnessed the struggle of teachers in classrooms in Upstate New York first handedly. What I found began to cause me to question my own aspirations and whether I was on the right path, not as a teacher, but as a history major. What I found in our classrooms was an overemphasis on content areas that teachers deem important, while ignoring other contents because of time constraints. To my surprise, I found social studies instruction limited to an hour lesson maybe twice a week in some schools, a fifteen minute flashcard game before lunch, or worse, completely removed from the curriculum. At most, some teachers may have developed a more substantial project that was supposed to compensate for the lack of daily emphasis. Such projects include poster board presentations or brochures in which students display researched or around the holidays, teachers use these events as a way of quickly connecting with cultures and customs around the world. Seeing what social studies has been reduced to in our schools was shocking to say the least. These quick-fix approaches simply skim the surface of social studies without really delving into the core of learning social studies. It could be argued the importance of learning about history is secondary to that of reading and mathematics, as a boring topic filled with a bunch of dates and events from the past.

I can understand why this topic is less than popular with many teachers and students, but the truth is social studies can be so much more. It goes beyond dates on a timeline and coordinates on a map; it goes beyond who fought who, and who discovered what. It teaches us how to live, to be social, to learn about the people of the past and to ask the big questions of “why?” We may not learn enough to bring world peace, but we can learn to show compassion, empathy, change our society for the better, and be a positive asset to our own communities. I

believe the lack of non-conceptual lessons in social studies is one of the many causes that has resulted in a digression in our society to the extent that has caused violence, crime and social issues to accelerate. Consider for a moment why students are faced with growing issues of bullying, a lack of accountability, metal detector, and security officers as one of the growing positions in schools.

Research Question and Methodology

I intend to explore the roots of social studies within the earliest foundations of the education system in America by forming a comparison between the early formations of curriculum to the evolution we see in today's twenty-first century classrooms. I will discuss the topic of communities and citizenship with a third grade elementary classroom in Upstate New York and develop a simple unit plan that explores the conceptual teachings of social studies supported by research based strategies. I will also explore the impact the No Child Left Behind Act has had in influencing the teaching of social studies content. My thesis paper and project focuses directly on, "What are social studies, and what are these studies intended to teach us about being social? By redefining the lost art of teaching social studies I will explore the influence it has on being social and ultimately the impact on society.

This project also includes lesson plans specifically designed to show how teachers can create lesson plans that positively reinforce social ideals while also addressing areas within the New York State Curriculum. In addition, I will explore some classroom management techniques that promote social order within the classroom. The overall goal of this paper focuses on the relationship between social studies in the classroom and social order in society, the lack thereof being the root cause of the social crisis we hear about or witness each and every day.

Historical Purpose of Social Studies

There is a quote shared by Benjamin Franklin, George Santayana and Winston Churchill, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it” (Tri-County Times, 2012, p. 1). This quote becomes the essence of why we learn history, or are there bigger, deeper, even broader theories under the surface?

Take a moment to consider two fictional characters, Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* and Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. “Both met with bizarre characters, Alice tried to find her way out of Wonderland; Dorothy headed toward the Emerald City. Along their [journeys] there were obstacles; Alice met with highly unreliable characters while Dorothy only had to follow the yellow brick road avoiding the obstacles along her path. You could say that Alice was in a state of perpetual uncertainty; while Dorothy knew what needed to be done. You could even say Alice was working through a maze, while Dorothy had a map. Alexander Pope, an English writer once observed that learning should be a map, not a maze. A well-taught social studies curriculum is just that: a map that helps make sense of the human experience” (Ellis, 2010, p. 3). If this is really the essence of what it means to our success in life, the absence of social studies in the classroom is in fact a crisis that demands attention. Perhaps we should pause and ask ourselves, “Can we make sense of our lives without that map?”

Formation and Foundation of U.S. Curriculum

Researching the history of the subject of social studies is quite revealing. It may seem evident that history, or the subject “social studies” has been part of our education system from the beginning, but the fact of the matter is that “social studies has [only] been around as a school subject since about 1918” (Ellis, 2010 p. 8). This helps to substantiate the initial “force of

tradition” (p. 8), it holds in our nation’s outlook for what its citizens should learn, but to me it forms deeper questions as to why it took so long. My research revealed that it is the terminology of “social studies” that is relatively new, not its content. Social studies became the overarching subject that included history and geography according to the National Education Association. These social studies content areas had already existed as part of school curriculum for many years.

Past Approaches to Social Studies

It is often said that teachers have helped to shape the lives of their students; we help to prepare them for society, for citizenship, and to live successful lives. According to Edwards and Richey (1963) the purpose of educational institutions is to prepare the learner to participate intelligently and helpfully in the social order of which he is a part of (p. xi). Although these social orders are never stagnate for long, there are certain aspects of social order that are consistent relevant to citizenship, communities, and justice. However, the road to define the purpose of education in the New World was a long process. Its slow evolution is the result of what we are faced with today, but what were the contributing factors that led to the social studies crisis we are faced with today? To understand what happened, we must briefly look at scattered incidences in the past that paved the way for social studies.

Colonial Society

It is no surprise to consider the early establishment of schools in the New World as an extension of Europe. As a matter of fact, the “American educational theory and practice tended to reflect European pattern” (Pulliam, 1976, p. 15) despite attempts of these early Americans’ to escape the clutches and influences over their lives. Although education was relatively wide

spread there was little structure, no curriculum and many unqualified members of society acted as teachers. Because there was such a diversity of religious organizations, the church in communities naturally took over the responsibility of education. The whole purpose was to extend the arms of religious beliefs unto the young, while learning reading and other content areas were considered secular. The influence of government was minimal, if at all and only stood up for the values the church deemed important.

Much like the schools east of the Atlantic, the schools also remained socially stratified. This social culture remained throughout much of the colonial period. Education, greatly privatized, was only seen as an avenue for those who could afford to send their sons to be educated. It was not until the rough and ready pioneers emerged that education spread to other social classes. These pioneers created a demand for their children to be educated in trade that could help to carry the family forward. No longer could the Americans of Europe live the life of social order and plantation owners. Americans were evolving, and so was education. However, this extension to a lower social strata did not reach the gamut of social classes. There would be many left out of education for many years to come. Many continued to still see education as localized manifestations of a community and church, public schools had not yet emerged until old field schools in small communities became a means of using over used farmland. Another form of school emerged for orphans and paupers, although funding was of a private nature through charity and church organizations, like the Anglicans, these poor students were educated in history, agriculture, mathematics and religion.

Schools differed from New England, the Middle Colonies and the South. This diversity lead to advantages and advances in education in some regions compared to others, however, religious influence of some sort was greatly evident in all. Evidence of this diversity shows

Quaker established schools were not as socially stratified, making allowances for the poor, girls and even freed blacks. On the other hand, schools under the Puritan philosophy saw education as a means to “show mankind the way to overcome the evil in his nature” (p. 29).

The connection between man’s nature and school was an early partnership in American history. The overall involvement of religious organizations within the schools speaks to the importance the early Americans’ view of the social control education offered to society. A control in many ways they saw as limiting the beast within us, or in the very least using education to train students in the ways they wanted their society to be established. In other words, social studies in which we consider a content area within the facet of education was in its earliest form the very purpose and formation of education. To educate a society in order to carry on the beliefs and values of which we are taught. In Edwards and Richey’s, *The School in the American Social Order* (1963) they stated the founding fathers’ “purpose was not equalitarianism; schools were not designed to open the doors to social and political opportunity, but to bring youth to a willing acceptance of prevailing pattern if religious, political and social arrangements” (p. 50-51). In other words, the religious influences of this time envisioned “schools [as] a handmaid of the church” (p. 13).

Democratic National State

The power of the church slowly changed as the colonies grew independent in power and thinking. As the Revolution loomed “democracy threatened [the] dual system of education [where] the elite [attended] good schools and the masses were... ignored” (Pulliam, 1976, p. 38). The economic growth worked to diffuse the social stratification of the cultures as newspapers and libraries-expanded and ultimately influenced a shift in the minds of the colonialists. This

shift correlated with the early colonists' dissatisfaction with conditions of European politics and mercantile capitalism which for far too long had controlled their lives and stifled their government. Despite the need for self-government, the revolution struck harmful blows to the education that did exist in the colonies. With the political views of separation of church and state and the state of infancy, an education system was on the verge of existence. However this dip in progress helped to slowly reinvent education in the newly independent country known as America.

During the Revolution education had greatly come to a standstill in many of the colonies because of various reasons connected to the war effort. Since many of the educators were leaders in their respected communities or individuals that were still devoted to Europe few were left to teach in local communities outside of the battlefields. However, at the end of the war, many returned home with independence and a new vision for what education should be, and who should receive it. The earlier shift in attitudes and thinking across the colonies before the war heightened afterwards as a rise in the philosophical thinking and the enlightenment of many individuals began to ultimately influence the birth of a new education system under the new nation. As a new independent nation, the need for an education system was very apparent to many, especially those in politics who wanted to define what this nation would stand for. "Education was a reflection of this new spirit, as were self-reliance, optimism, individualism, and democracy" (p. 51). The educational views of many of the founding fathers and those early political philosophers pushed for a national education system that would define this newly acquired democracy.

Among these men included many of the men that are considered to be the founding fathers or pioneers of education. Men like John Locke who "not only provided a theoretical

basis for the Declaration of Independence, but also... his denial of the existence of innate ideas and his insistence that the mind at birth is passive and like a blank tablet upon which experience writes” (p. 39). Locke’s ideals also fully related to that of Benjamin Franklin and his ideologies in empirical science. Locke’s ideas were further qualified by individuals such as Thomas Jefferson whose resolution for his beliefs in democracy “provided the ideology for extending educational opportunities to all citizens and argued that no democratic society is safe without an educated population” (p. 48). Noah Webster, known as the “Schoolmaster of America” for his textbooks and dictionary was also caught up in the Enlightenment and Revolution” (p. 47) and supported the need for free schooling, and separation of church and state. He also believed that girls should be educated because they would be mothers of future citizens and therefore teachers of youth. He further claimed that by the government allowing free schools, “children could learn the virtues of liberty, just laws, morality... and patriotism” (p. 48). Many more men followed these outspoken individuals on their quest for reinventing education and helped to prepare the foundation for many to build upon.

Another influential figure in the history of American education is John Amos Comenius. A name not as common perhaps to those of Locke, Franklin, Jefferson, and Webster, but equally significant and influential to the early developments in education and to those very men predisposed to Comenius’ ideologies. Like these men Comenius, although not American, believed that “our sense organs are our teachers” (p. 40) this realism view firmly linked him to Locke’s empirical theories and Franklin’s views on the potential for science. Furthermore, like the humanistic liberal views of others like John Milton, Comenius “believed that war could be prevented if scholars were brought together to work out solutions to international problems... [and] that universal education could improve civilization” (p. 40). Comenius’ influence in

education continued according to Ornstein and Levine (2008) who stated “his emphasis on using the senses, rather than passive memorization, to learn was followed by later educators such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Montessori, and Dewey” (p. 94).

Whether as a patriot or as an advocate for education, these men uplifted the values they believed would establish a righteous democratic state for its citizens. A nation although culturally diverse and socially stratified, could come together through the arms of education. A free education for all that could bring resolution to the divisions that kept them apart. They believed in the need for an education system that provided for the future citizens of this nation. It seems plain to see how intricate the pieces of education are linked hand in hand to that of social studies. How the very establishment of this nation considered education as the centerpiece to democracy and how the ideology of human existence predicated upon the values, laws, and citizenship learned in school.

19th Century

Despite the push for public education and free schools by the founding fathers the overall consensus was that education did not belong in the hands of the federal government. Therefore, the Constitution has no reference to education, however state control and nonsectarian public schools are stated in the First and Tenth Amendments. With variations in state control across the nation brought differences in what schooling consisted of from state to state. These differences were not limited to books, curriculum, gender, class but also ethnicity. Although still in its infancy, the education system or lack thereof, was slow to start after the Revolution, but changes were just ahead as the immigrant population exploded.

The development of what is considered public schools today was relatively slow as a

nation, although in some states changes were very apparent. During the industrial revolution children were a large part of the work force leaving little or no time for schooling. As a result church organizations which understood the need to educate children developed Sunday schools, which were used to teach reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. From here sprang up other forms of schooling including monitorial schools where master teachers trained pupils who then helped to educate as aides; and common schools, a forerunner to elementary schools, offered to all children in all social and economic classes. However, because schooling differed from state to state, such as in the southern states where enslaved African children continued to be excluded until after the Civil War and the Thirteenth Amendment, other ethnicities also faced exclusion or separation.

The nineteenth century was not without its own heroes to the worthy cause of education. Horace Mann was a great advocate for the establishment of public schools. He used his political ties to further his views which worked to influence the wealthy on their civic duty. He was a proponent of Thomas Jefferson and believed in civic education for a democratic society. “He believed citizens needed to be literate to vote and to participate intelligently in the processes of republican government” (p. 133). The ideology of Americanization came into greater view since the time of Webster with the influx of immigrants and the great nationalism that swept across the nation. However, this push to unify into a common culture of Americanism was met with resistance in varied measures from state to state. It is important to note that although its intent was not meant to strip cultural norms from groups; in some cases Americanization was used as an extremism that attempted to eradicate some groups of their cultural. Yet during this time other groups made progress in furthering education as a tool of inclusion.

Among these advances included women who could “use their sensibility to children to manage their classrooms, teach a common curriculum that encouraged literacy and civility, and serve as moral mentors” (p. 135). Catharine Beecher among other feminist worked to connect the common school to women’s education. Like Webster, who promoted education of future generations relied upon women, Beecher formally brought about the feminization of education by connecting the profession of teaching to women teachers. This helped to establish normal schools and women’s colleges as well as establish a higher standard for teacher-educators.

During this period many changes across the nation tested and validated what it meant to be American in the growing populous and expanding nation. For education it was still a long road ahead with struggles in teaching a diverse culture, understanding theories and pedagogies, as well as understanding the human mind. Many of these changes extended into the next century and even continue to challenge educators today. Mixed up in this melting pot of education remained the need to understand the people that made up this nation as well as define it and its diverse citizens.

20th Century

Education in the twentieth century was consumed by much debate over how much federal input belonged in schools; continued inequalities between races and ethnicities; and philosophical theories on education. However, despite these contentions, education made great strides during this period by addressing many issues that had been ignored in earlier centuries. Some of the issues surrounded the idea that schools had become as Pulliam (1976) states “big business” (p. 107). Pulliam also goes on to state the overall industry of education faced further issues of the “relationship [between] school and... society” (p. 107). Occupied by two world

wars and the social context that spread across the country due to economic depression and the meaning of democracy in the face of war brought new areas of concern in the American psyche and societal functionality. However, it was in the midst of defining citizenship at the end of the nineteenth century and at the very beginning of the twentieth century when curriculum advancement brought changes to elementary programs. These changes included the combining of history and geography into a new content area called “social studies.” This change would unintentionally coincide with the social issues that develop as a result of pre and post wartimes.

In the twentieth century education became the grounds for philosophical debates by many that made considerable contributions to what we call modern education today. Individuals such as Dewey and Rousseau raised ideas and questioned social conflicts, the use of scientific procedures, naturalism approaches and the human experience which contributed to both the division and the coming together of philosophers and their views within this progressive movement. Although discussion of these debates go beyond the scope of this paper one worth mentioning is that of progressive educator George S. Counts. Counts followed in much of the philosophical ideals of Dewey in which they argued for the “enormous potential of education to improve society and that school should reflect life rather than be isolated from it” (stateuniversity.com, 2012, p. 1). These words are the essence of what this paper aims to analyze and argue. Counts saw the link between social problems and education. He argued that education could take action towards a new social order. Such words by Counts at the cusp to WWII brought much controversy and debate.

Counts (1932) declare in his controversial writing, *Dare the School: Build a New Social Order*: Faced with any difficult problem of life we set our minds at rest sooner or later by the appeal to the school. We are convinced that education is the one

unfailing remedy for every ill to which man is subject, whether it be vice, crime, war, poverty, riches, injustice, racketeering, political corruption, race hatred, class conflict or just plain original sin. We even speak glibly and often about the general reconstruction of society through the school. (p. 3)

His words speak to the noble duty many of the founding fathers hoped for in educating its citizens and it seems even silently in the quiet places of our psyche humanity though the centuries looked towards the system of education to fulfill the responsibility of man by educating its citizens into a new social order for the sake of reconstructing the chaos we live in.

This journey through the educational history of America allows readers the chance to contemplate what factors helped to determine how system developed over time. Some of the main points emphasized throughout this progression are the connections between education and the society man builds. At the very inner core of education lie the answers of why we deem it necessary to educate. Surrounding these answers are the justifications through which we accomplish this goal – for the future of man. How can we then, decide to leave out the very content we consider vital. The next sections of this paper discuss how social studies is slowly removed and replaced and the domino affect it has on all of us if it continues to be ignored and or misconstrued.

No Child Left Behind Era

In this section rather than discuss educational changes that took place in the twenty first century, I decided to focus on one aspect that has had an enormous impact on the education system in America. Although this noble cause was put into effect as a means of raising the bar to higher expectations of our children it has had a reverse affect that not only defeats the purpose for which it was intended, but it has even crippled the teaching methodology of good teachers. In 2002, President George W. Bush signed into affect the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act which required all federally funded schools to administer standardized testing as a means of progress monitoring schools and their efficiency or inefficiencies. Although its intention in his words were to end the “soft bigotry of low expectations [results show] testing mandates lowers, rather than raises expectations” (Brooks, Libresco & Plonczack, 2007, p. 749). In fact, educational experts are pinpointing many of the side effects as a result of NCLB and theorizing on what changes need to take place.

Although credited for “better defin[ing] what education should be about... NCLB fosters curriculum and instruction decisions that run completely counter to higher-end learning or research-based knowledge about what stimulates students...to want to work hard” (Lewis, 2007, p. 483). Thinking back to the comment made in 1976 about schools becoming a place of “big business” (Pulliam, 1976, p. 107) in a book review by Fine (2007) she discusses a Harvard publication called *Collateral Damage: How High-Stakes Testing Corrupts America’s Schools* which suggests “these tests have been... easily incorporated into American schooling because of the application of the corporate model... [as a result in the] rise in business leaders as superintendents and school chancellors” (p. 46). In addition the design flaw in NCLB makes the assumption that “children learn discrete skills in a linear progression” (p. 46) which in fact is in

contrast to the years of research that states otherwise.

Significant to the purpose of this paper is the impact NCLB has had on curriculum content. As a result of testing emphasis placed on mathematics and reading, it has pushed other contents areas, including social studies, to the back burner of instructional importance. Teachers are spending 75 percent of their time on math and reading rather than sharing classroom instruction time more equitably (Caweiti, 2006, p. 64). Granted it is futile to attempt to teach everything of importance, after all, that is not what education was meant to accomplish “for if everything taught is said by teachers to be important, then nothing will seem important to students” (Wiggins, 1989, p. 57). But where does this leave social studies? Shall teachers accept external mandates and abandon common sense teaching methods? The answer is, of course, no, but the answers to this dilemma are less easily answered.

Absence of Social Studies in the Classroom

In light of NCLB and the numbers game so many educators and administrators have fallen victim to there are those who still hold onto the pedagogy of the past and hope for a restored education system. In our classrooms time in many ways is as equally valued as learning content. When we consider the amount of time available and the amount of learning outlined in the curriculum it becomes evident why short cuts are taken, content is excluded, and worse of all teachers are not teaching. As a result of these time constraints, teachers are forced to run through curriculum pages checking off completed lessons that have been covered rather than learned without stopping to consider if students have conceptualize the lesson with any depth at all. In fact the word “curriculum” comes from the Latin word for race course or track, which seems a rightful definition for the curriculums placed before teachers today. Brooks, Libresco and

Plonczak (2007) stated it best when they said “we want all children to hurry along a single path and get to the end as soon as possible” (p. 750). Whether a race track or as Alexander Pope stated, a map, scrutinizing the curriculum is essential in finding answers to the absence of social studies.

Prior to the new Common Core Curriculum that started in 2012 social studies was on the verge of extinction. During this time through teacher innovation of “borrow[ing] time” from mathematics and reading, teachers found a way to justify teaching social studies content which would have otherwise been ignored (Fry, 2009, p. 32). What emerged through this feat was a strong emphasis on the use of “interdisciplinary methods [of instruction, which has been a proven method of] “student achievement equal to, or better than, that of students who are taught in the separate subject approach” (p. 32). Although some may argue this borrowed time approach offers “spaces of liberty... [for a more] equitable education for all students” (Brooks et al., 2007, p. 750) I argue otherwise. Granted finding these spaces of liberty and borrowing time are noble causes in the fight to keep social studies content alive within our obscure curriculum, however the heart of what social studies is meant to accomplish is being lost. I agree “meaningful social studies supports the reading, writing, inquiry, and analysis skills that are taught in other content areas,” (Fry, 2009, p. 32) but not at the cost of the ideals responsible for developing responsible citizens. Others agree; such as Hinde who argued “the elimination from elementary school curriculum does more than deny children the opportunity for a meaningful social studies education – it defies the historic national goal of education... which has been to educate youth for the purpose of democratic citizenship” (as cited in Fry, 2009, p. 31). Also supporting the argument of the dangers to society includes Cawelti who confirmed “without social studies, students miss opportunities to develop skills that are essential for active

citizenship” (p. 38). As others join the bandwagon for the lost art of social studies a consensus has risen in the need for teachers to revive what has lay wasted and begin to once again “lead children through learning experiences that promote [civil] values” (p. 38).

Misconceptions of Learning History

In the aftermath of NCLB many approaches have surfaced in an attempt to make sense of what, how and why we teach. These approaches have come to question curriculums and find solutions for the gaps, not in time, but in content. Teachers use innovation to include social studies in space of liberty by borrowing time from math and reading, but we must pause and really question whether nature of the of social studies is being addressed in these stolen moments?

What has become the norm for many teachers is this misconception that they have justly addressed social studies through read-alouds, holidays around the world, or celebrating Martin Luther King Day. Perhaps it is because of the slow decline in social studies education, or the lack of support from the curriculum and other resources or has something else caused teachers to lose sight of the bigger picture being addressed in social studies. It is not surprising to see social studies decline when one considers the focus and shifts made by curriculum specialists, textbook writers and assessment providers. Unless these specialist understand the reasons we teach social studies and the importance of learning the “humanity” within social studies their misguided attempts to addressing the content can be misconstrued. Furthermore the content can become simply a series of events from the past in faraway places without any depth to the real purpose.

Interestingly, the confusion is not limited to those outside the classroom walls. The fact of the matter is that it was not until 1993 that the official definition of the term *social studies* was ratified.

According to the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS): Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. With the school program, social studies provides coordinated,

systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences.. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (Ellis, 2010, p. 4).

Therefore, while integrating as defined by the NCSS is an important part of teaching social studies, it must include a constructivism approach. Students must have the opportunity to “construct knowledge... not be viewed merely as passive receivers” (p. 17). This approach requires teachers to become facilitators of learning, not directors. Their role is to guide students in research methodologies in gathering materials from a variety of sources including family and community, providing room for classroom decisions, broaden student thinking through open-ended questioning, give time for student reflection, and allow students the opportunity to make real-world connections.

It could be argued that constructivism is a wolf in sheep’s clothing just as NCLB at its infancy, but where NCLB failed to produce positive results for its worthy cause, the constructivism has prevailed. In a study by the Washington School Research Center report, a strong relationship between constructivism and student achievement exists and is projected to grow if more teachers turn their classrooms into spaces of liberty to allow knowledge to be constructed (Brooks et al., 2007, p. 754).

Other fallacies include the superficial approach to social studies through other attempts at content integration. This includes using reading block to read non-fiction historical literature or

even fictional literature with underlying social issues buried within. Although the attempt is noble many times the English Language Arts objectives take precedence since there are fewer social studies objectives. For example if students are learning about citizenship reading stories alone will not be enough. Answering questions about neither the reading, nor simply discussing the concept is enough. Students have to understand the meaning first, and then they have to be able to relate to the concept. Only then is the “social” in social studies being addressed.

Transforming Social Studies for the Future

In this section I refrained from suggesting teaching methodologies in an attempt to redefine the *lost art of social studies*. In the words of Albert Einstein "Scientific theories should be able to be described so simply that a child could understand them" (as cited by Kizlik, 2012, p. 1). The same goes for social studies. Much can be said about the definition, rational, standards, themes, strands and threads of social studies. Although these do have a place in the development of curriculum and the structure of content and dissemination of content over grade-levels their purpose is strictly secondary. The heart of what the "social" in social studies is intended to achieve is an intrinsic personal realization within a child. I say "within" a child because social studies present students with ideas and theories that they must then personally conceptualize. As teachers our goal and objectives with each lesson plan we design is to understand this personal growth taking place within each student and find ways to nurture, sustain and sometime contest. It is not easy, nor a simple step by step procedures, but an acquisition of knowledge over time that transcends into the values they will esteem.

To support this journey, the curriculum is intended to help "students understand human interactions that occurred in the past, are occurring now, and that are likely to occur in the future" (p. 1). However, that is not enough; what must occur in the classroom to help change the approach to social studies is the manner in which teachers teach. In an article by Kizlik (2012) he emphasized the importance in how and why we teach social studies as a way to "help students develop and nurture values that will make it more likely that they will be able to determine for any situation what the right thing is and do it, especially when doing the right thing is hard to do" (p. 1). This idea of allowing students the opportunity to develop and nurture values is the lost art of social studies. It is the missing element in curriculum, in our classrooms and even in our

homes. It is through this one facet of curriculum that students have the opportunity to learn “about decency, respect, courage and honor” (p. 1). By transforming the way we teach social studies, as teachers we have the eminent opportunity and privilege to bring back life into the art of being social and ultimately partake in the future our students will build as *good citizens*.

Implementation of Citizenship Begins in the Classroom

As part of my focus I wanted to develop a unit plan that could drive home the importance of teaching social studies. This unit is designed to emphasize the need to not simply teach social studies’ concepts as integrated lessons during reading blocks or as part of rules and rituals for the start of a school year, but to show the interconnections a social studies lesson has with the real-life of our students. The lessons are designed to teach students not only about the world around them, but how they relate to the world, how the world helps to define who they are and what they will become. The lessons ask students to examine themselves as individuals as part of their families and as part of their community. These questions lead to students constructing their knowledge of the past, of their present and for their futures. In a world where individuals such as Raymond Williams argue that “community [is] a paradise lost” (Bauman, 2001, p. 3) further coincides with the inadequacies that connect our society to the education students receive and to some degree support to Williams’ point. If so, it is vital that our students begin to create a brighter future by reconstructing this paradise – one community at a time.

In Appendix 1, I have outlined the six lessons that make up this unit plan titled, *Journey into Our Classroom Community: How do rituals, routines, rules and families’ culture shape our classroom community?* Although the title focuses more upon the ideas surrounding rituals and routines to form connections with classroom management the unit is extended beyond the

borders of establishing rituals for the sake of behavioral management and strives to help students form connections between home and school; self and school; self and community; and finally self and world. By forming these linear connections students can begin to understand themselves.

Lesson One broaches the big topic of community by asking student to question how they as individuals are relevant in the big picture of the world that surrounds them. Students are asked to explain who they are as individuals by defining their citizenship, religion, language, social order, and cultural norms. It is really eye-opening to see how much students do not know about themselves. By allowing students to discover themselves it allows them to begin questioning who they are. This becomes even more important when they are unable to answer what seems as simple questions about themselves. However it is this discovery that promotes the connection between the classroom and home. Students will want to know more about themselves and will extend the lesson to their home.

Lesson Two focuses of citizenship. In this lesson students discover the meaning of community and their contribution as good citizenship through the culture of Ants. This integrated lesson goes beyond the common emphasis of integrated for the sake of covering content. As a matter of fact the integration was only a secondary bonus to the lesson. Too often teachers are trying to invent ways of integrated lessons to meet curriculum standards when the integration of lessons is in many ways naturally aligned with each other. In this lesson students begin to visualize their own role as good citizens by supporting their own community. Students also learn that everyone has a role or job and whether you are the queen ant or a guard ant, a good citizen supports their community by doing their job to their best ability. Teachers must be

there along this journey of discovery to ask questions and help to hold in place the theories and connects the students formulate as they try to relate their learning to themselves.

In Lessons Three and Four students discover seven elements of culture and slowly unravel their own culture. These lessons allow students to connect the classroom with their homes and engage parents or relatives in their discovery of self. The students' complete interviews and analysis which helps them better explain why they do certain things. This is particularly fun because light bulbs begin to light up as students learn about themselves and share the positive impact of connecting with families. This allows students the opportunity for authentic inquiry that supports the extension of the classroom into the home which is a vital piece in helping students relate their learning to the real-world.

In Lesson Five students take what they have learned about the seven elements of culture and compare what is unique about them, but also discover what aspects they share with others in the classroom. The objective is to allow students to form connections with each other through the discovery that although they have certain cultural practices that are unique, they might also have other practices and customs that are similar with others in the classroom. With this discovery students are able to make connections with others to build upon the objectives emphasized in the lesson on building communities. This also helps to breakdown the walls of stereotyping individuals and cultures while also building upon the ideals of teamwork and a sense of community.

Lesson Six works more as a final assessment piece that checks for student understanding. The objective is to have students express themselves through creating a replica of themselves and indentifying with the different elements of culture. Through this lesson students analyze the information collected and apply to their creations. This assignment allows the formation of

cognitive connections with role students have in the classroom community. Through a visual form of expression students who are less vocal or verbal have the opportunity for expression of self through art. This also silently addresses the ideals surrounding the freedom of expression allowing student the opportunity to realize differences are abundant but there are global universals working to unite us.

Though this unit does not address all the aspects of social studies addressed in this paper, the overall contents within the unit are right on target. By incorporating social studies back into the classroom through meaning-making lessons focused on students constructing knowledge through life experiences and exposure to their role in the world around them, social studies is reinvented. The unit focused upon social studies contents of citizenship, community, and culture which perfectly aligns with what the early Americans deemed education as a whole should be built upon.

Classrooms Gone Amuck

A hot topic that has prompted many publications to fill bookshelves and professional development magazines is the infamous issue of classroom management. With a wide variety of social emotional issues classrooms are bursting at the seams with management challenges. Many teachers are trying research-based practice after practice without results. In part, I attribute this disarray to the societal deficiencies we, our students, and their parents are faced with each day. Some may say that these issues are isolated among certain demographics, cultures and financial statuses, and while that may be a predominate factor it is not the justification to ignore the issues. At some point there must be a tipping point where we stop pointing the fingers away from ourselves and re-evaluate what contributions we are making to our community and society as citizens.

It seems as though there is a lack of accountability and integrity thought to our children today. Do we stop to explain or show examples of how and why we should do certain things, the right things? Morality seems to be lost and replaced with a depraved nature that sees actions righteous as long as one is not caught or seen doing the wrong thing. If allowed, this underhanded nature is allowed to flourish until individuals are so entrenched and blinded that moral character is fictitious and only found in storybooks.

So how is a teacher able to change the mind of a child that does not understand why to follow the rules? The answers are not easy, nor are the tasks for the teacher or school alone. There must be a partnership between the school and the home in order for the child to understand a broader perspective. A partnership in of itself is not an easy task because the same issues and

beliefs are also flourishing in the homes. I am not placing blame on the homes but on the society that allows this indecorum to exist.

In a word I believe the answers lie in learning and experiencing “consequences.” Mackenzie and Stanzione (1996) state, “some [students] will need to experience the consequences of their acceptable or unacceptable performances repeatedly before they decide to cooperate...” (p. 14). What I believe will help to foster these ideals are social studies lessons. Through social studies students have the opportunity to learn about events in the past, the actions taken by individuals and the results and consequences for those actions. By using research-based methods of how to successfully teach social studies content, student learn how to relate individually to the past. This way of learning changes their perspective on life and their approach to living.

Along with a strong emphasis on social studies content, student actions must be rewarded rightly, not only positively. It is widely practiced as a classroom management and behavioral tool to reward students positively rather than punish their negative behaviors and although I agree this approach I also think that teachers must have consistency and unbiased judgments. These ideals are best defined by Fred Jones (2007) who states, “there are no degrees of consistency... if a student is disrupting... and you fail to intervene, you have just taught that student that their goofing off is acceptable behavior. When you see unacceptable behavior... you either act and your rules become reality, or you fail to act and your rules are nothing but hot air” (p. 183). In other words if we fail to be consistent we are in fact failing in our duty to nurture. The power of teaching consequences allows teaches to approach social studies lessons reassured that what they are spending valuable time on will benefit the child but also benefit the

adult that child becomes. This will become part of the circle of life that will in change societal direction forward towards a positive future.

Peace Circles

A tool that has become prominent in schools today is the restorative initiative called *Peace Circles*. According to Ted Wachtel (2007) “we must find a way to adapt and to compensate for our profound loss of social connectedness” (as cited in PiRI, n.d., p. 1). Perhaps the origins of *Peace Circles* are an ideal solution for the social disconnected baggage our students come to us carrying. A *Peace Circle* is a community building practice based on Native American traditions. Interesting, a Native American tradition is being used today to help bridge the gap between individuals, resolve conflicts, and form relationships. It is interesting when Native Indians who have had a long tattered history within American society, one of much conflict, one-sided resolution and frigid relationships is contributing to the positive learning of American citizens. History has proven to come full circle with a Native tradition being used in American schools, a place where once in history the Indians were not even allowed to attend.

Peace Circles are viewed as a restorative practice or restorative justice tool that is structured around the premise of providing a safe meeting place where participants can speak openly about values, tragedy, problem-solving and conflict resolution. It is a time to talk and listen as individuals try to find resolution in a peaceful way. Within the classroom as in any other restorative program, the need to build community, talk, understand, support, heal and celebrate is evident. Allowing time in a busy day for *Peace Circles* allows students the opportunity to administer to their needs as humans.

The impacts *Peace Circles* can have within the walls of a school are huge when we consider the growing issues of peer pressure, social acceptance and bullying. All of these socially stratified issues can be addressed in the safe environment of a peace circle. The structured environment protects from allowing individuals commenting out of turn, arguing and even being critical. This protective environment is controlled by the facilitator who must maintain order for this restorative program to yield benefits to the classroom and the students.

Peace circles of course are not the only answer to addressing the social breakdown of our students, but it is a powerful start. Its impact will be evident during instruction, group work, centers and outside the classroom activities. Allowing time for students to openly communicate is essential to building a community of citizens vested in the goals and norms of the society in which they are a part. Teachers must be strong facilitators in order to guide the early establishment of the circle as well as openly share experiences to prompt the positive involvement of students. Through this somewhat open forum students learn to open-up and find safety with those around them. *Peace circles* allow for judgment to take a backseat as students learn to cope in a society that grows apart in an era when everything is superficially connected.

Conclusion

The journey to discover the true intentions of why social studies entered the U.S. curriculum revealed much about the early acquisition of education as a whole in America. From inception the education system within America built society upon the premise of citizenship, community, morals and values. These ideals combined the controlling influence of both the church and state in which they attempted to govern the education it bestowed upon society. Over time as theories and teaching methodologies made advancements the contents areas evolved, formulated or were defined, and social studies emerged as a major content area encompassing both history and geography. As years passed and education continued to be a target of state legislation the changes caused adverse affects on society.

Within this whirlwind of defining what education in America should and should not be, social studies became collateral damage. The results of legislations like the No Child Left Behind Act quench the life out of social studies content. During this time many noble teachers attempted to use innovative resources in order to keep social studies alive. The innovations allowed teachers to *borrow time* or utilize *spaces of liberty* to bring social studies into their classrooms even if it was not included in curriculums. These innovations included integrated lessons, read-alouds, and various other activities they felt were enough to both quantify what they were attempting and meet curriculum objectives.

These noble attempts however, brought about further demise to the scholarship of social studies and a rise in the misconception of what social studies are mean to teach our students. These misconceptions allowed for a thwarted view of the main focus of social studies and falsely brought a rise in curriculum focused concepts of threads and strands of social studies to override the real reasons for teaching. The prevailing emphasis of citizenship, community, cultures, and

civic duties are rightly important aspects of social studies and absolutely deserve to be a major part of curriculum. However, the heart of social studies goes beyond the acquisition of this knowledge about what good citizens should do, or what communities are or differences in cultures. It goes beyond a series of events that transpired in the past and dates on a timeline.

My research has revealed a vast scholarship of educators across this country that support a rebirth of social studies as it is meant to be taught. Although it has in recent years erroneously been replaced by teachers who were under the false pretense of doing the right thing, my findings hearken to the voice of reason and the whispers of hope. In the midst of confusion there is hope for the future of ourselves and our students, but the task is ours. As teachers, we must redefine what social studies really means within our classrooms. We must understand that social studies develops understanding and deals with the morality of man. We must open up those spaces of liberty and borrow time, even steal it if we must for the lost art of social studies. In these attempts we will help our students to define what “social” stratifications will exist in the future, we will help to define what direction each child’s moral compass will point and ultimately paint a bright future of social harmony as global citizens.

References

- Bauman, Z. (2001). *Community: Seeking safety in an insecure world*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.
- Brooks, J. G., Libresco, A. S., & Plonczak, I. (2007). Spaces of liberty: Battling the new soft bigotry of NCLB. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88(10), 749-757.
- Cawelti, G. (2006). The side effects of NCLB. *Educational Leadership*, 64(3), 64-68.
- Counts, G.S. (1932). *Dare the school: Build a new social order*. New York, NY: The John Day Co.
- Edwards, N., & Richey, H. G. (1963). *The school in the American social order*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Ellis, A. K. (2010). *Teaching and learning elementary social studies*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Fine, S. (2007). *Collateral damage: How high-stakes testing corrupts America's schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Fry, S.W. (2009). On borrowed time: How four elementary preservice teachers learned to teach social studies in the NCLB era. *Social Studies Research & Practice*, 4 (1), 31-41.
- Grant, S. G. & Vansledright, B. (2004). *Elementary social studies: Constructing a powerful approach to teaching and learning* (2nd Ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Jones, F. (2007). *Tools for teaching*. Santa Cruz, CA: Fredric H. Jones & Associates, Inc.
- Kizlik, B. (2012). A purpose for social studies: Or what is social studies for anyhow? Boca Raton, FL: Robert Kizlik & Associates. Retrieved from <http://www.adprima.com/whysocial.htm>.
- Lewis, A. C. (2007). Looking beyond NCLB. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88(7), 483-482.
- Mackenzie, R. J., & Stanzione, L. (1996). *Setting limits in the classroom*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Ornstein, A. C., & Levine, D. U. (2008). *Foundations of education*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Partners in Restorative Initiatives. (n.d.). *Introduction to peace circles*. Rochester, NY: PiRi.

- Pulliam, J. D. (1976). *History of education in America*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.
- Stateuniversity.com. (2012, December 1). *George S. Counts (1889–1974) - Sociology and education, social reform, political activism, contribution*. Education Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1891/Counts-George-S-1889-1974.html>
- TCTimes.com (2012, February 1). *Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it*. Tri-County Times. Retrieved from http://www.tctimes.com/columnists/ask_the_judge/those-who-fail-to-learn-from-history-are-doomed-to/article_c441f9cc-4ce0-11e1-a0ed-001871e3ce6c.html
- Wiggins, G. (1989, November). The futility of trying to teach everything of importance. *Educational Leadership*, 44 – 59.

References: Lesson Plans

- Kerley, B. (2009). *One world, one day*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.
- Polacco, P. (1988). *The keeping quilt*. New York, NY: The Trumpet Club, Inc.
- RSCD. (2012). *Introduction to the seven elements of culture*. [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from (M. Ketchum, personal communication, September 12, 2012).
- Youtube. (2007, November 29). *Ants create a lifeboat in the Amazon jungle*. BBC. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com>
- Youtube. (2012, January 30). *Nature footage: Cultures of the world*. The Nature Footage. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com>

Appendix I

Grade – 3rd Gen Ed

Content – Social Studies – Citizenship & Civic Life / Culture

Unit - Journey into Our Classroom Community: How do rituals, routines, rules and families' culture shape our classroom community?

Time – 4 Weeks

Essential Question(s)

Lesson 1

What is a community?

Why is it important to learn about communities?

Are there many types of communities or only one? If more, can you name them?

Can you or I be part of more than one community?

Lesson 2

What is a good citizen?

How can I be a good citizen?

What do good citizens have the right and responsibility to do?

Lesson 3

Why is it important to identify similarities and differences between ourselves and other students around the world?

What is culture?

What are the 7 elements of culture?

How do beliefs, customs, and traditions shape our families' and classroom culture?

What cultures do you share with others in your school, in your community, in the world?

Lesson 4

What are the 7 elements of culture?

How do beliefs, customs, and traditions shape our families' and classroom culture?

What cultures do you share with others in your school, in your community, in the world?

Lesson 5

Taking what you learned about communities, citizenship and cultures how will this knowledge change your actions in your classroom community?

Lesson 6

How did the knowledge Richard Wright gain from books change his outlook and attitude?

(Connecting with ELA and the impact / power of books and reading to increase knowledge)

Do we change our actions after we read a book?

Is knowledge supposed to change our actions, or should we remain the same?

Objective(s) & Standards

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place

Lesson 1 – Community and the Culture Within the classroom

Time - 1 hr

Anticipatory Set

Teacher: “Yesterday we had a mini-lesson about citizenship, can I have someone remind us what we learned and discussed?”

Teacher: “Take a thinking minute and then put your hand on your head when you think you have the perfect explanation.”

Student: Reflects on mini-lesson about citizenship.

Teacher: “Good! I’m glad to hear we remember the lesson and our role in the community as citizens.”

Essential Question(s)

What is a community?

Why is it important to learn about communities?

Are there many types of communities or only one? If more, can you name them?

Can you or I be part of more than one community?

Statement of Objectives

Today we will be starting our first big Social Studies unit on “communities.” You might be surprised to hear that a lot of the things we have been talking about if related to communities, and how each of us plays a big part in our community.

Objective(s) & Standards

Common Core & NCSS Standards (taken directly from the RCSD Unit Plan)

*Some standards not addressed in this unit

- Identify and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizens (through our role in our community)
- Ask and find answers to questions related to culture

R11: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place.

Purpose

Teacher: But why should we learn about communities? Why spend a whole Social Studies unit on this topic?

Conclude purpose

Teacher: We will be learning about communities to help us better understand ourselves, the world that surrounds us and how to successfully interact within these communities.

Input

Read: *One World, One Day*, by Barbara Kerley

Text/Pictures used to discuss the topic of “communities” and the similarities we share with others around the world

Teacher: How are we similar to the kids in these pictures? How are we different?

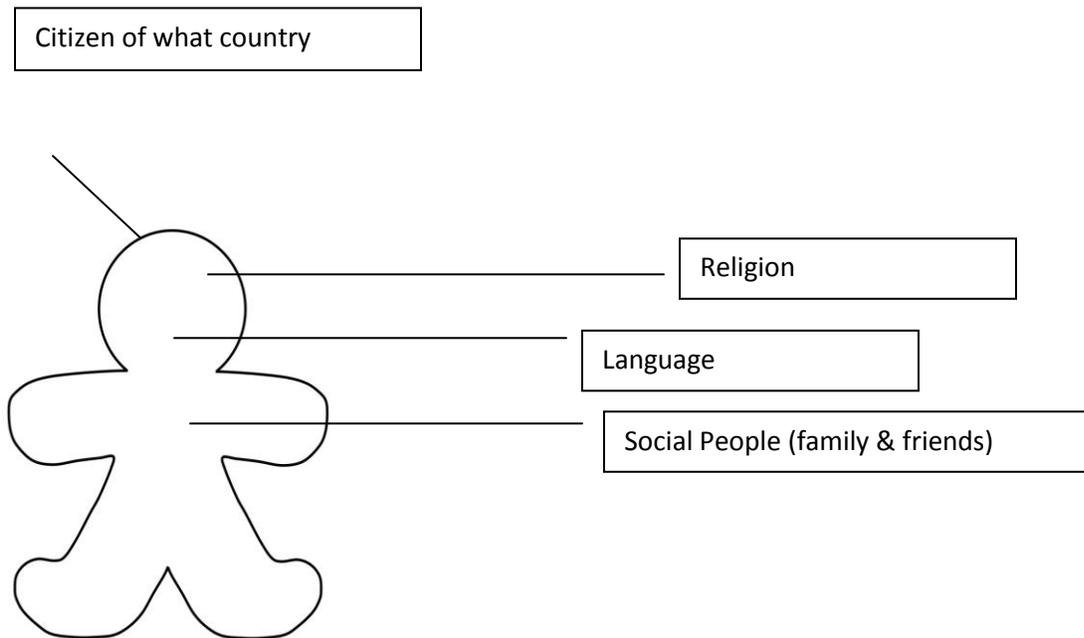
Vocabulary

- Community
 - A group of people living in one area
 - The area in which a group of people live
 - A group of people who have close ties and common interests
- Citizenship
 - The legal position of a citizen of a country, with the duties, rights, and privileges of this position

- The level of a person's behavior in a community: Their citizenship in school is very good
- Culture
 - The customs, beliefs, laws, ways of living, and all other results of human work and thought that belong to a people: In most Native American cultures, all land is thought of as common property.
 - The qualities of mind and the manners and tastes that result from learning about the arts, sciences, and history; education and refinement: Our teacher is a person of great culture who speaks three languages, plays the violin, and paints well.

Model

- Using chart paper, teacher draws an outline of self and shows examples of labels that relate to 4 of the 7 Elements of Culture (Social people, language, religion and citizenship)
- Explain to students this big Social Studies Unit will end with a big project at the end. We are starting to brainstorm ideas as we learn more about our own cultures and customs.
- Explain that by better understanding ourselves we can successfully interact with others and work in a positive way in our communities and world as citizens.



Guided Practice Activity

- Students sent back to their seats to complete activity
- Set the timer for 10 mins. Allow students time to label aspects about themselves on the outline model.
- Assign students to discuss their outlines with the person across the table.
- Student discussion 3 mins.
- Whole group discussion on a comparison between each other on the similarities and differences outlined. (Ask for 2 or 3 examples)
- Have students write their names on the top and collect sheets.
- Have students take out writing journals.

Check Understanding

*3-2-1 – Understanding Pathways Assessment (7 mins. to write)

List 3 things learned

List 2 things I still want to learn or have questions about

List 1 thing I will share with my family about what I learned in Social Studies today

*Ask for some feedback on what they learned, questions and will share.

*Modeling may be necessary (students have used 3-2-1 previously)

Evaluation & Closure

Teacher: We have four weeks of this Unit, so I want you to continue to think about communities, citizenship and culture.

Self-Assessment

Teacher: So how do you think you did in the Social Studies lesson today?

5-4-3-2-1?

Independent Practice

Teacher: Think about this when you are walking in the hall of school, on the bus, at home, at the grocery store, etc. Are you a part of more than one community, or just one?

Lesson 2 – Developing communities through good citizenship

Time - 1 hr

Anticipatory Set

Watch Youtube.com video: *Ants Create a Lifeboat in the Amazon*

Essential Question(s)

What is a good citizen?

How can I be a good citizen?

What do good citizens have the right and responsibility to do?

Statement of Objectives

As we continue our social studies unit on communities and citizens, we will look into how to be good citizens.

Objective(s) & Standards

Common Core & NCSS Standards (some standards not addressed in this unit)

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place.

Purpose

Teacher: Why are we looking at a video about ants during our social studies lesson? What connection can you make between ants and communities / citizenship?

We are learning how working together can build successful communities.

Conclude purpose

Teacher: We will be learning about communities to help us better understand ourselves, the world that surrounds us and how to successfully interact within these communities.

Input

Read: *Magic School Bus Gets Ants in its Pants* (optional)

SMARTboard Lesson: Citizen Rights and Responsibilities in Your Community

Vocabulary

- Community
 - A group of people living in one area
 - The area in which a group of people live
 - A group of people who have close ties and common interests
- Citizenship
 - The legal position of a citizen of a country, with the duties, rights, and privileges of this position
 - The level of a person’s behavior in a community: Their citizenship in school is very good

Model

Using SMARTboard

- Students brainstorm ideas about good citizenship
- Students discuss their responsibilities to building successful communities
- Teacher discusses what “rights” we have as citizens

Explain that by better understanding that we each have an important role within our communities and world as citizens.

Guided Practice Activity

Using SMARTboard

- Students list examples of good citizenship
- Students differentiate between what good citizens do and don’t do
- Students identify ways to help their community

Check Understanding

Think-Pair-Share

Students are asked: What lesson can the ants teach us about building communities?

Students will be able to identify:

- How the ants share work and responsibilities.
- See how the ants cooperate for the benefit of the entire community
- Discuss the jobs ants have: forager, queen, guard and builder)

Evaluation & Closure

Teacher: We have four weeks of this Unit, so I want you to continue to think about communities, citizenship and how it relates to our individual culture.

Self-Assessment

Teacher: So how do you think you did in the Social Studies lesson today?

5-4-3-2-1?

Independent Practice

Teacher: Let's think of ourselves as the ants and our classroom is flooded and we have to find away to survive through teamwork, cooperation, sharing and communication.

Lesson 3 – Introduction to Culture

Time – 40 mins.

Anticipatory Set

Refer back to book, *One World, One Day*, by Barbara Kerley. Ask students to relate the previous reading of this book with today’s earlier discussion in ELA Block about students around the world accessing books and reading.

Have students identify similarities and differences between themselves and schoolchildren around the world.

Essential Question(s)

Why is it important to identify similarities and differences between ourselves and other students around the world?

What is culture?

What are the 7 elements of culture?

How do beliefs, customs, and traditions shape our families’ and classroom culture?

What cultures do you share with others in your school, in your community, in the world?

Statement of Objectives

As we continue our social studies unit on communities and citizenship, we will learn about cultures, our own and cultures of others in our classroom community.

Objective(s) & Standards

Common Core & NCSS Standards (some standards not addressed in this unit)

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place.

Purpose

The student will ask and find answers to questions related to the seven elements of culture: social organization, customs and traditions, language, arts and literature, religion, government and economic systems.

Conclude purpose

Teacher: We will be learning about our individual cultures to help us better understand ourselves, the world that surrounds us and how to successfully interact within our community.

Input

Read: *Keeping Quilt*, by Patricia Polacco

PPT: Seven Elements of Culture

Vocabulary**Culture**

The customs, beliefs, laws, ways of living, and all other results of human work and thought that belong to a people: In most Native American cultures, all land is thought of as common property.

Model

Using PowerPoint

- Teacher identifies the 7 elements of culture
- Teacher & Students discuss examples of the 7 elements of culture

Explain that by better understanding ourselves and our culture we can relate and contribute to our communities.

Guided Practice Activity

Using book, *Keeping Quilt*, by Patricia Polacco

- Students name some of the customs & traditions they heard in the book
- Students describe some of their own customs & traditions

Check Understanding

- Discuss during both reading and PPT

- Homework

Evaluation & Closure

Teacher: As we continue our unit, I want you to pay attention at home. What are some of the customs and traditions you have?

Self-Assessment

Teacher: So how do you think you did in the Social Studies lesson today?

5-4-3-2-1?

Independent Practice

Students will interview a family member using 7 Elements of Culture Worksheet to learn more about their own culture and traditions.

Rubric

4	3	2	1
6 – 7 interview questions on the elements of culture are answered	5 interview questions on the elements of culture are answered	3 – 4 interview questions on the elements of culture are answered	2 and below interview questions on the elements of culture are answered

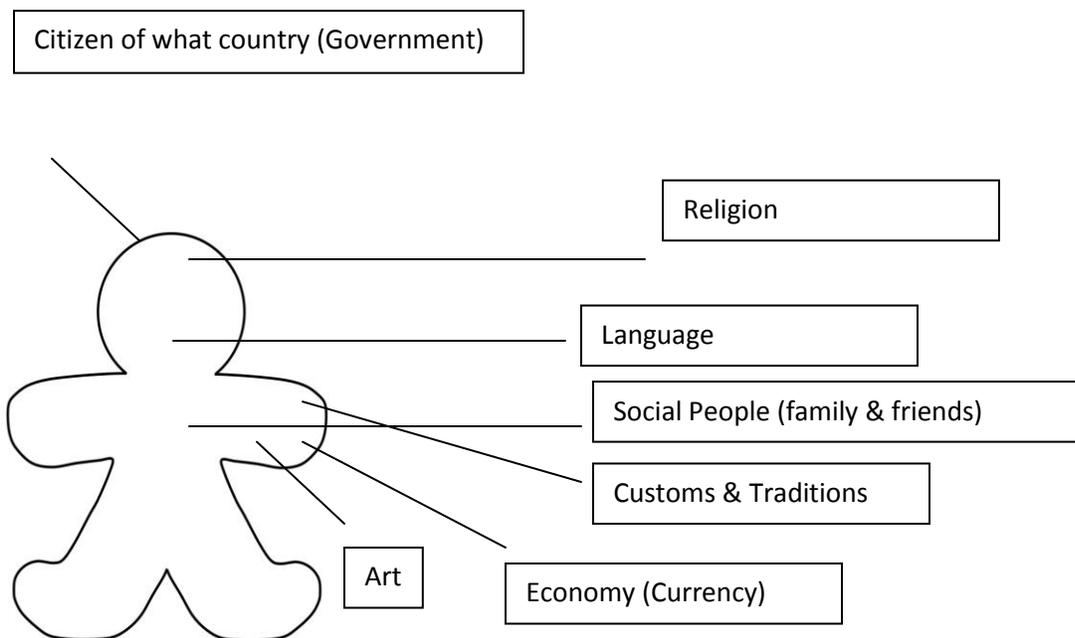
Lesson 4 – Who Am I – The Culture Within

Time – 1 hr.

Anticipatory Set (12 mins.)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTmZpBKw2wQ>

Using their completed interviews, students add more details to their individual outline worksheet by labeling all 7 elements of culture:



Essential Question(s)

What are the 7 elements of culture?

How do beliefs, customs, and traditions shape our families’ and classroom culture?

What cultures do you share with others in your school, in your community, in the world?

Statement of Objectives

As we continue our social studies unit on communities, citizenship, and culture we will discuss the similarities and differences between our cultures of others in our classroom community.

Objective(s) & Standards

Common Core & NCSS Standards (some standards not addressed in this unit)

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place.

Purpose

The student will identify with each other through the seven elements of culture: social organization, customs and traditions, language, arts and literature, religion, government and economic systems.

Conclude purpose

Teacher: Now that we have learned about our own culture, we are able to relate to others in our classroom community in a better way.

Input

Teacher circulates around the classroom and discusses with students what they discovered from their interviews.

Model (5 mins.)

The teacher creates a new outline of a person on the SMARTboard. This person will represent the classroom community.

Students give examples of the 7 elements of culture from their own outline to help create the classroom culture.

Guided Practice Activity

Students are given a passport.

Page 1: Students write about themselves and the 7 elements of culture in complete sentences.

Students are divided into six groups of four.

Page 2 – 4: Students take turns talking about their cultures while the others take notes in their passports.

Check Understanding

- Students are able to identify the 7 elements of culture
- Students are fluent in discussing their own culture

Evaluation & Closure

Teacher: Now that we have learned about the culture within our classroom community we are able to cooperate with each other knowing that we are different, but in a lot of ways we are the same.

The more we learn about the culture of others, broadens our understanding of the world around us.

Self-Assessment

Teacher: So how do you think you did in the Social Studies lesson today?

5-4-3-2-1?

Independent Practice

Be aware that our actions or the actions of others could be a result of their culture.

Rubric

4	3	2	1
6 -7 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet	5 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet	3 – 4 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet	2 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet
4 pages of culture notes completed in Passport from group	3 pages of culture notes completed in Passport from group	2 pages of culture notes completed in Passport from group	1 page of culture notes completed in Passport from group

work	work	work	work
6 -7 complete sentences describing the 7 elements of culture	5 complete sentences describing the 7 elements of culture	3 – 4 complete sentences describing the 7 elements of culture	2 complete sentences describing the 7 elements of culture
Cooperates & respectful group work with '0' reminders	Somewhat cooperative & respectful group work. 1 to 2 reminders	Needs to improve working in small groups. 3 – 4 reminders	Unsuccessfully worked in small group. 5 or more reminders

Lesson 5 – Community – Citizenship – Culture – Wrap-up

Time – 1 hr.

Anticipatory Set

Share the Passport creations with the class

Essential Question(s)

Taking what you learned about communities, citizenship and cultures how will this knowledge change your actions in your classroom community?

Statement of Objectives

As we conclude our social studies unit on communities, citizenship, and culture we have worked to build a classroom community that is safe, respectful, fun and yours.

Objective(s) & Standards

Common Core & NCSS Standards (some standards not addressed in this unit)

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place.

Purpose

The student will identify with each other through the seven elements of culture: social organization, customs and traditions, language, arts and literature, religion, government and economic systems.

Conclude purpose

Teacher: Now that we have learned about our own culture, we are able to relate to others in our classroom community in a better way.

Input

Teacher circulates around the classroom and discusses with students what they discovered from their interviews.

Model (5 mins.)

The teacher creates a new outline of a person on the SMARTboard. This person will represent the classroom community.

Students give examples of the 7 elements of culture from their own outline to help create the classroom culture.

Guided Practice Activity

Students are given a passport.

Page 1: Students write about themselves and the 7 elements of culture in complete sentences.

Students are divided into six groups of four.

Page 2 – 4: Students take turns talking about their cultures while the others take notes in their passports.

Check Understanding

- Students are able to identify the 7 elements of culture
- Students are fluent in discussing their own culture

Evaluation & Closure

Teacher: Now that we have learned about the culture within our classroom community we are able to cooperate with each other knowing that we are different, but in a lot of ways we are the same.

The more we learn about the culture of others, broadens our understanding of the world around us.

Self-Assessment

Teacher: So how do you think you did in the Social Studies lesson today?

5-4-3-2-1?

Independent Practice

Be aware that our actions or the actions of others could be a result of their culture.

Rubric

4	3	2	1
6 -7 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet	5 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet	3 – 4 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet	2 elements of culture labeled on outline worksheet
4 pages of culture notes completed in Passport from group work	3 pages of culture notes completed in Passport from group work	2 pages of culture notes completed in Passport from group work	1 page of culture notes completed in Passport from group work
Cooperates & respectful group work with '0' reminders	Somewhat cooperative & respectful group work. 1 to 2 reminders	Needs to improve working in small groups. 3 – 4 reminders	Unsuccessfully worked in small group. 5 or more reminders

Lesson 6 – Who we are can Impact Others and Ourselves

Time – 1 hr.

Anticipatory Set

Students share some of the knowledge they gained about each other through their passport creations.

Essential Question(s)

How did the knowledge Richard Wright gain from books change his outlook and attitude?

(Connecting with ELA and the impact / power of books and reading to increase knowledge)

Do we change our actions after we read a book?

Is knowledge supposed to change our actions, or should we remain the same?

Statement of Objectives

Now that we understand the importance of understanding everyone has differences but we also have similarities, we need to share this information with others that might enter into our classroom community.

Objective(s) & Standards

Common Core & NCSS Standards (some standards not addressed in this unit)

Cultures and civilizations

What is a culture? What is a civilization?

How and why do cultures change?

Where do people settle and live? Why?

People in world communities exchange elements of their cultures.

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies,

and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

People in world communities celebrate their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Communities around the world

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

Important events and eras of the near and distant past can be displayed on timelines.

Calendar time can be measured in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points.

All people in world communities need to learn and they learn in different ways.

Families in world communities differ from place to place.

Purpose

The student will create a display that demonstrates their personal relationship with the seven elements of culture: social organization, customs and traditions, language, arts and literature, religion, government and economic systems.

Conclude purpose

Teacher: Now that we have learned about our own culture, we are able to relate to others in our classroom community as well as those that may enter into our community.

Input

Teacher asks students to pick for elements of culture to be written in complete sentences on a

poster of themselves.

Model (5 mins.)

The teacher creates a new example of self to show the students what the final product will look like.

Guided Practice Activity

Students are given poster cutouts to personalize and write their four sentences.

Check Understanding

- Students are able to identify the 7 elements of culture
- Students are fluent in discussing their own culture
- Students understand the elements of a complete sentence (ie., capital letter & punctuation, and identify the element of culture they are discussing)

Evaluation & Closure

Teacher: Now that we have learned about the culture within our classroom community we are able to cooperate with each other knowing that the more we learn about each other the more we can adjust our behavior and learn to be accommodating to others.

Self-Assessment

Teacher: So how do you think you did in the Social Studies lesson today?

5-4-3-2-1?

Independent Practice

Be aware that our actions or the actions of others could be a result of their culture.