The National Council for the Social Studies is pleased to announce the selection of Larry Paska as its new Executive Director. Dr. Paska will fill the vacancy created after the departure of long-time Executive Director Susan Griffin. He earned a B.A. in History and an M.A.T. in Social Studies from Union College (NY) and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University at Albany (NY). Larry began his career as a middle school social studies teacher and later served in multiple roles at the New York State Education Department (NYSED) including as a P-12 state social studies specialist and establishing the Office of Educational Design and Technology in P-12 Education. Most recently, he served as the Director of Professional Development for the Southern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Larry also served as the 2015-16 President of the New York State Council for the Social Studies and as the NCSS House of Delegates Chair of the Resolutions Committee.
New Jersey Annual Conference Vendors

- American Revolution Authors (Rob & Bob Skead)
- Benchmark
- Caspersen School of Graduate Studies at Drew University
- Crossroads of the American Revolution
- DBQ Project
- Edible History
- Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
- Hindu American Foundation
- Historic Cold Spring Harbor
- IEEE History Center at Stevens Institute
- Living Voices
- New Jersey Center for Civic Education
- New Jersey Council for Economic Education
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William R. Fernekes, Rutgers University

Eric Garner. Tamir Rice. Terence Crutcher. Michael Brown. These are only a few of the African-Americans whose lives were lost during the recent past due to confrontations with law enforcement, and despite efforts to change the pattern, it seems that very little time passes before the next tragedy occurs. In response to this wave of violence, the social movement Black Lives Matter emerged, originally formed in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in 2012. As another chapter in the historic pattern of African-American resistance to oppression, this national movement opposes what they argue is “the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society” (blacklivesmatter.com 9-23-2016) and the movement has been an eloquent and forceful presence in confronting anti-Black violence since 2012.

The violence perpetrated against members of the African-American community by law enforcement and related government agencies, which Black Lives Matter argues is “state violence” is not a new phenomenon. Beginning with the earliest importation of African slaves to the Western Hemisphere, African-Americans have endured centuries of state-sponsored and state-supported violence. Brutal slave codes, Jim Crow segregation, rapes and beatings, lynchings, mob violence and police brutality have victimized the African-American community and sought to dehumanize African-Americans. These patterns of discrimination and violence persisted after the creation of the new United States of America in the late 18th century, and represented a massive contradiction to the democratic values embodied in the Declaration of Independence, and the rights guaranteed in the U. S. Constitution. Despite these contradictions, which Swedish scholar Gunnar Myrdal claimed in 1944 represented the “American Dilemma”, (Myrdal, 1944) African-Americans persisted in their struggle to fully realize the promises made in the Declaration and the Constitution, and many of them gave their lives in the process.

These historic efforts of African-Americans and other minorities of color in the United States to be granted the full range of fundamental human rights is often categorized in social studies curricula under the topics of “abolition”, the “Civil War and Reconstruction” and “the civil rights movement.” While helpful in identifying specific periods and events in U. S. History, the persistence of these topical categories limits understanding of the historic global struggle for fundamental human rights, a process in which African-Americans were major participants, and which continues today. Using a human rights perspective that by definition is global and universal, rather than an approach solely confined to one national historical narrative, helps students develop connections across time, space and cultures, illuminates connections between social movements and facilitates deeper understanding of the common aspirations of people seeking human dignity and justice.
What is Human Rights Education?

The United Nations (UN) defines human rights education and training as “all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviors, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights” (United Nations General Assembly, Dec. 2011). The content of human rights education and training includes:

a) Education about human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection;

b) Education through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners;

c) Education for human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others (United Nations General Assembly, Dec. 2011).

The content of social studies programs would fall within section a. of the UN definition, while the culture of schools and classrooms, as well as the pedagogy employed by teachers would constitute section b. Section c emphasizes the active engagement of both learners and educators to not only advocate and fulfill their human rights, but to take action to guarantee the rights of others at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Section c of the definition underscores the issues-based emphasis of human rights education, which requires educators to embrace pedagogy that provides students with the skills, dispositions and knowledge to engage in reflective social participation. Situating the study of African-American history within a human rights education framework requires that the historic and contemporary experiences of African-Americans be viewed as part of the broader struggle to secure the fundamental human rights guaranteed to all peoples articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with particular attention being paid to how African-Americans resisted oppression and sought to affirm their dignity as human beings.

Exploring the relationships between human rights and the African-American experience requires that we identify key attributes of human rights concepts. Nancy Flowers has identified four key attributes integral to understanding human rights, and which illuminate how the African-American struggle for human rights can be seen as part of a global movement. First, human rights are universal—as Flowers points out, they are “held by all persons equally, universally and forever.” Second, they are indivisible, meaning that no person “can be denied a right because it is less important or non-essential.” Third, human rights are interdependent, meaning that all human rights are part of a cohesive framework where one’s ability to exercise a specific right is dependent upon other rights (i.e., if you want to participate in governmental processes, you must have the right to freedom of expression, to education and to the basic necessities of existence.) Fourth and last, human rights are inalienable, and you “cannot lose these rights any more than you can cease being a human being.” (Flowers, What are Human Rights??, n. d.)
The historic development of the idea of universal human rights is founded in core ethical principles of major religions and philosophical visions rooted in ideas about human nature, natural law and natural rights. As Paul Gordon Lauren states, the religious visions which serve as a foundation for human rights share three key qualities: they articulated “timeless visions of ideals and normative standards”, posed “sharp contrasts between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be”, and helped develop “the concept of responsibility to act on behalf of others.” (Lauren, 2011, p. 10)

Complementing these religious visions were the ideas of moral and political philosophers from many cultures, who investigated topics such as the universality of fundamental principles, moral codes and responsibilities, the extent to which governments could exercise power over individuals, and the meaning of justice, liberty and tolerance. (Lauren, 2011, p.11)

Spurred on by the scientific revolution and the growing independence of inquiry from religious constraints, the codification of rights into binding governmental documents accelerated during the late 17th and 18th centuries, when documents such as the English Bill of Rights (1689), the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), and the U. S. Bill of Rights (1791) were written and proclaimed. Although individual rights included in these documents had far-reaching implications for the development of democracy in the modern era, the guarantees of rights they included were restricted to a narrow range of the population—typically European males who owned property. Women, people of color, indigenous peoples, groups held in involuntary servitude and those who did not own property often were denied these fundamental rights, which spurred the growth of social movements to end the contradictions between the ideals set forth in these documents and the reality of their implementation.

As a result, social movements emerged to challenge the denial of fundamental human rights and related injustices, and in the United States, many of those engaged in that struggle were African-Americans, other people of color, women and their allies.

**Human Rights and African-American History:**

**A Case Study**

Despite the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, the reality of life for millions of people in the United States in 1800 represented a huge contradiction to the democratic values and vision evident in those documents. Many of the leaders who helped to author these documents on behalf of expanding human freedom “were unwilling to make the principles applicable to all. Equal rights were actually denied to a majority of the population comprising women, slaves, domestic or indentured servants, laborers without property, indigenous peoples and children.” (Lauren, 2011, p. 35)

The most politically contentious and volatile of these contradictions concerned the institution of slavery and the prevailing economic and political influence which slaveholders held at all levels of government in much of the republic. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, two architects of the founding of the republic, were slaveholders, and the new U. S. Constitution sanctioned the dehumanization of slaves by counting them as only three-fifths of a human for purposes of apportionment in the House of Representatives. Few remedies existed for African-Americans who sought their freedom, and those who advocated slavery’s abolition were viewed by many as dangerous and threats to social order.

One approach to studying the long arc of African-American history using a human rights lens is to employ an in-depth case study, which can be
focused on a specific community, family or individual. This permits educators and students to study the details of African-American lives while relating those details to the larger trends in U.S. history and the history of human rights so that both levels of analysis (micro and macro) are addressed. In this essay, the case study subject is the great African-American athlete, singer, actor, scholar and social activist Paul Robeson. Three dimensions of Robeson’s life and career are explored through a human rights lens: his resistance to discrimination and violence during his youth and early manhood, the development of his ideas on African-American identity and the universal meaning of art, as portrayed in his stage, film and concert performances, and his activism on behalf of oppressed peoples, with particular emphasis on workers.

Born in Princeton New Jersey in 1898, Robeson was one of seven children of William Drew Robeson and Maria Louisa Robeson. William Drew Robeson had escaped from slavery in North Carolina as a teenager, later graduating from Lincoln University and becoming a minister in the Presbyterian church. His mother Maria Louisa (Bustill) Robeson had been a schoolteacher and was part of a family of free African-American abolitionists residing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Early in life, Paul Robeson witnessed the impact of prejudice when his father was dismissed from his position as the pastor of the Witherspoon St. Presbyterian Church in Princeton after 20 years of service by an investigating commission. Without a pulpit and congregation, William Drew Robeson became a carriage driver, and young Paul attended a segregated elementary school in Princeton. In 1906, William Drew Robeson changed his affiliation to the A. M. E. Zion Church and moved his family to Westfield NJ, where he presided over a small congregation and led a successful fund-raising drive to build a new church. In Westfield, Paul Robeson attended school with white children, since there were so few African-American students in the community. In 1910, the Robeson family moved to Somerville NJ, where there was a larger African-American congregation, and where William Drew Robeson would lead his last pastorate. It was in Somerville NJ where Paul Robeson’s talents as an athlete, scholar, and singer began to blossom. Although enrolled at the Somerville “colored school” until he graduated from eighth grade, Paul’s graduation oration, most likely the speech given by Patrick Henry in 1775, was lauded in the local press and presaged his future oratorical accomplishments. (Brown, 1998, p. 32)

At Somerville High School, Paul Robeson excelled as an athlete in football, basketball, track and baseball, was a member of the glee and drama clubs, and participated on the debate team. His grade point average was 98, and in 1915 he took an exam sponsored by the state of New Jersey that offered the possibility of a four year college scholarship to Rutgers College. Robeson achieved a passing score, was offered a scholarship to Rutgers and accepted, arriving on campus as a freshman in September 1915.

At Rutgers, where Robeson was only the third African-American student to attend the school since its founding in 1766, he quickly experienced the impact of racial discrimination and segregation. Forced to live in a single room on campus, Robeson stood out not only because of his skin color, but because he was one of only a handful of African-Americans who attended institutions of higher education that were dominated by whites. When Robeson tried out for the Rutgers football team, he brought his 6 foot 2 inch, 190 pound physique to the field along with a strong record of athletic
accomplishment in high school. But he was not prepared for what happened next, which Robeson detailed in a *New York Times* article in 1944.

“I was seventeen years old and I was a freshman trying to make the football team. Rutgers had a great team that year, but the boys—well—they didn’t want a Negro on their team, they just didn’t want me on it. Later they became my friends, but every word of this is true, and though they are my friends I think they won’t mind me telling it. On the first day of scrimmage, they set about making sure I wouldn’t get on their team. One boy slugged me in the face and smashed my nose. That’s been a trouble to me as a singer every day since. And then when I was down, flat on my back, another boy got me with my knee, just came over and fell on me. He managed to dislocate my right shoulder. (Paul Robeson, as quoted in Harris, 1998, p. 38)

Despite the violence perpetrated on Robeson to keep him off the team, he refused to quit, and with the support of his father and brother William Robeson, he overcame these obstacles and became a star on the Rutgers varsity, playing both offense and defense, and earning All-American honors in 1917 and 1918. By the time Robeson graduated in 1919, his athletic prowess in football, baseball, track and field and basketball had earned him twelve varsity letters, while his academic achievements included membership in Phi Beta Kappa, in the senior academic society Cap and Skull, and the Rutgers College literary Society, Philoclean, as well as being the recipient of prizes in both declamation and oratory at Rutgers. (Harris, 1998, p. 44) He also authored a notable senior thesis on the enduring influence of the 14th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, and was one of the student graduation speakers at the 1919 Rutgers College commencement.

Viewing Robeson’s early life from a human rights perspective, it becomes clear that his youthful encounters with segregated institutions, including both his pre-collegiate and university education, did not adhere to universal norms of justice or fairness. In that regard, his experience was quite similar to that of many other African-Americans in the U. S., who also attended segregated schools and had very limited opportunities to attend higher education. His experiences also highlighted the importance of viewing rights as interdependent, since his capacity to exercise his freedom of expression, both as an orator and singer, were developed only because he had been able to pursue an advanced education at Rutgers, where he was afforded opportunities to practice and refine his talents that many other African-Americans lacked.

Following graduation from Rutgers, Paul Robeson pursued an acting career in New York, began law school at Columbia University in February 1920, and married Eslanda Goode in 1921. Continuing to act in productions both in the U. S. and Great Britain, Robeson graduated from Columbia Law School in 1923, but left the practice of law soon thereafter as a result of the limited opportunities available for an African-American in the field, and the prejudice he encountered in his firm.

At this juncture, Paul Robeson began singing in public more regularly, and became acquainted with accompanist Lawrence Brown, with whom he established a long-term performing partnership beginning in 1925. Robeson’s dramatic performances of Eugene O’Neill’s plays *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* and *The Emperor Jones* brought increasing critical acclaim, and from this point onwards he dedicated himself to a career on the
stage as an actor and singer, with his vocal programs including a great many Negro spirituals, often in arrangements by Lawrence Brown.

But Robeson’s human rights remained compromised. When Robeson’s hand was kissed by female lead Mary Blair in a production of All God’s Chillun Got Wings in 1924, there was an uproar from audiences and critics, who were shocked at this “overstepping” of the color line on stage, as were the Ku Klux Klan, who threatened Robeson. (Stewart, 1998, p. xxvii) When on tour in the United Kingdom with Lawrence Brown in 1929, he and Brown were regularly refused admission to and service in hotels based upon their skin color, and Robeson publicly denounced the practice, which only changed in 1930. (Stewart, 1998, p. xxvii)

In the early 1930s, with Robeson now a major artist in demand for roles in film, on the stage and as a concert singer, he moved his family to Great Britain and became acquainted with emerging leaders in the anti-colonial movement such as Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah while studying languages and singing in London. These associations, combined with Robeson’s avid study of languages (he had already taught himself Russian) and world cultures, broadened his outlook and sparked his growing interest in Africa and its relationship to his African-American identity.

Robeson’s work as a concert singer allowed him to choose his own programs, and based upon his in-depth study of African languages and cultures during the 1930s, he developed a deep pride in his African heritage, while simultaneously expanding his repertoire to include the folk songs of other cultures and religious traditions, such as Russia, China, and Judaism. In doing so, Robeson combined his commitment to black nationalism with what Sterling Stuckey called “his ability to identify with oppressed humanity irrespective of color.” (Stuckey, 1987, p. 337). Robeson’s interest in establishing connections between black communities in Africa, the Caribbean, and South America through the study of art, dance, music and oral tradition also emerged and intensified as he became more overtly political in advocating for the liberation of colonial peoples across the globe and an end to economic and social oppression of people of color. Sterling Stuckey summarizes the consequences of this change.

“As he came to know the vast landscape of humanity, Robeson realized that, just as the oppression of people of color was a direct outgrowth of European aggression, the liberation of Afro-America was ineluctably tied to the disenthrallement [sic]of Afro-Asia: in this context, African ethnic allegiance, a tragedy in the world of colonialism, would be a tragedy after independence undermining the unity without which there could be no genuine freedom for African as a whole. The more he was exposed to people of color from various parts of the world, the more convinced he became of this. The success of colored people in one section of the world would remain in doubt as long as people of color elsewhere suffered on grounds of race and economic.” (Stuckey, 1987, p. 347)

The popular culture image of Paul Robeson in the United States during the period 1930-1942 often presents him as playing subsidiary roles to white actors in Hollywood movies such as Universal Studio’s 1936 film Show Boat from 1936 and Twentieth Century Fox’s 1942 film Tales of Manhattan, which was consistent with the stereotypical roles offered to African-American
actors during that time. In contrast, some of Robeson’s British films, where he was a featured star, presented him as a Pan-African leader who did not in any way match the racial stereotypes so prominent in European fascist propaganda and the representation of African-Americans in the United States. Films such as British Lion-Hammer’s 1936 *Song of Freedom* and Buckingham Studio’s 1937 *Jericho*, while still containing much imperialist content and displaying a condescending attitude towards indigenous African culture, also present Robeson’s characters as strong and assertive figures, which constituted “two of the first appearances of a pan-African hero in mainstream world culture.” (Reid, 1998, p. 176)

Viewed through a human rights lens, Robeson’s evolution as a concert artist and film actor in the 1930s represents the strengthening of his belief in the power of art to forge connections across boundaries, and that art can and should be used to articulate a political message that opposed colonialism and sought the end to class-based economic oppression. Robeson’s performances on the concert stage and in films demonstrate a clear commitment to embracing human rights as a universal imperative, while reinforcing the interdependence of rights claims, notably when Robeson sought to affirm the fundamental human dignity of people of color by upending and challenging stereotypes that had oppressed them for centuries.

By the late 1930s, Robeson’s concert programs, recordings and film portrayals clearly reflected his commitment to a political worldview that rejected imperialism, economic oppression and the subjugation of people of color and workers by governments and powerful economic interests. He gave a famous battlefield performance in support of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War along with benefit concerts in Spain and London to raise funds for the Republican cause and Spanish refugees. He expanded his concert repertoire to include songs from many cultures, such as the Spanish Republican song “The Four Insurgent Generals”, and “The Peat Bog Soldiers”, a song from German concentration camp prisoners, as well as songs from the Soviet Union and China. This broadening of Robeson’s concert repertoire was not simply a manifestation of his strong political convictions. As Sterling Stuckey points out, “when he [Robeson] caught the vision of the unity of mankind, he committed himself to the alleviation of oppression, irrespective of the race of the aggrieved.” (Stuckey, 1987, p. 348)

Robeson’s commitment to improving the condition of workers was evident on the concert stage, in films such as Ealing Studio’s 1939 *The Proud Valley*, and in his activism on behalf of labor unions both in Europe and the United States. With a story focused on a black ship stoker who leaves his ship in Wales, eventually becoming a hobo and then a miner, *The Proud Valley* (originally entitled *Dark Goliath*) reflected Robeson’s desire to “depict the Negro as he really is—not the caricature he is always represented to be on the screen.” (Paul Robeson, quoted in Robeson Jr., 2001, p. 329) During filming of the outdoor scenes in Wales, the cast lived in worker homes with families and Paul Robeson had descended into a mine, after which he recommended that the film title be changed, to the strong approval of the Welsh miners. The film’s overriding message focused on how unity among workers was the most important pathway to ending their exploitation by greedy capitalists, and Robeson’s participation in the film emphasized both his sonorous speaking and singing voice and his political commitment.
Two years before the production of *The Proud Valley*, Robeson had made clear his priorities in a speech given in London at a rally for Spanish refugee children. Although the main topic of the rally was the fight against fascism, not only in Spain but in China, Ethiopia and Central Europe, Robeson emphasized that the artist could not hold himself aloof from struggles dealing with human rights.

“The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative. The history of the capitalist era is characterized by the degradation of my people: despoiled of their lands, their culture destroyed, they are in every country, save one, denied equal protection of the law, and deprived of their rightful place in the respect of their fellows.”

(Paul Robeson, “The Artist Must Take Sides,” in Foner, 1978, p. 119)

Analyzing Robeson’s remarks reveals his commitment to influencing the public to take action on behalf of human rights; in this case, through his willingness to put his artistic talents in the service of a higher cause. This 1937 speech also makes clear that Robeson believed human rights were inalienable and that the world still fell short of providing both equal protection of the laws and respect for people of color.

In 1939 Paul Robeson and his family returned to the United States after World War II in Europe had erupted. Having spent considerable time in the Soviet Union between 1934 and 1939 performing, studying and developing friendships with other artists, Robeson’s socialist politics had been strengthened, as well as his commitment to international working class solidarity. It appears that Robeson’s interest in working class politics emerged from his youthful experiences as a worker in hotels, on docks and in other forms of manual labor, as well as from his contacts with the British labor movement in the 1920s and 1930s. (Naison, 1998, p. 180)

A very significant episode was his work on *The Proud Valley*, where Robeson’s relationships with Welsh miners evoked connections between their lives and his ancestors’ work in North Carolina tobacco plantations. As Robeson himself commented, “It’s from the miners in Wales…where I first understood the struggle of Negro and white together…when I went down in the mines with those workers, lived among them.”

(Paul Robeson, as quoted in Naison, 1998, p. 181)

Dedicated to advancing the cause of African-Americans and workers in the U. S., Robeson participated in labor organizing campaigns for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C. I. O.), which welcomed African-Americans as members, did not bar Communists from membership and emphasized the importance of worker dignity and civic engagement (Naison, 1998, p. 181). Robeson sang at concerts in support of C. I. O. unions, encouraged African-Americans to join the C. I. O., and advocated that they view the struggle of the labor movement as part of the larger struggle to secure human rights for all oppressed peoples. When the United States entered World War II, Robeson linked his commitment to labor rights to the struggle to defeat fascism, and did many performances on behalf of the war effort, viewing the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union as a positive contribution to advancing the cause of labor while simultaneously seeking to destroy the Axis.

The following passage illustrates how Robeson’s commitment to a universal conception of human rights was incorporated in his views on the relationship between capital, labor and democracy:
“It is well to remember that the American which we know has risen out of the toil of many millions who have come here seeking freedom from all parts of the world. The Irish and Scotch indentured servants who cleared the forests, built the colonial homesteads and were part of the productive backbone of our early days. The millions of German immigrants of the mid nineteenth century, the millions more from Eastern Europe whose sweat and sacrifice in the steel mills, the coal mines and the factories made possible the industrial revolution…the brave Jewish people from all part of Europe who have so enriched our lives on this continent; the workers from Mexico and from the East—Japan and the Philippines—whose labor has helped made the West and the southwest a rich and fruitful land. And, through it all, from the earliest days—before Columbia—the Negro people, upon whose unpaid toil as slaves the basic wealth of this nation was built! These are the forces that have made America great and preserved our democratic heritage.” (Paul Robeson, as quoted in Naison, 1998, p. 185)

With the onset of the Cold War after 1945, Paul Robeson’s commitment to labor activism was undiminished, but his socialist politics came under increasing criticism. Mainstream trade unions shunned his involvement in their cause, and the United Auto Workers, whose organizing activities Robeson had supported vigorously earlier in the 1940s, banned him from participating in its events. (Naison, 1998, p. 188). However, Robeson could still count on unions with largely African-American members, whose membership was largely Jewish, or whose ranks were composed of Latino and Asian workers, and throughout the period when he was effectively “blacklisted” by the U. S. government and could not secure concert bookings, these unions welcomed Robeson as a friend and offered him concert venues when few others were available. His concert programs included songs such as the famous labor ballad “Joe Hill” and the paean to populist democracy “The House I Live In”, both of which envision an America freed from capitalist exploitation and racial division.

Conclusion

Paul Robeson’s life and career demonstrate how his efforts to battle the discrimination, violence and dehumanization encountered by African-Americans in the twentieth century reflected not only a struggle against racism in the United States, but the global movement to secure fundamental human rights for all people. Beginning as a young man, continuing through his university and law school educations, and developing even further as a mature concert singer, film actor, public speaker and author, Paul Robeson’s efforts to combat racism, advocate for the rights of people of color and workers, and employ music as a powerful tool to promote universal brotherhood are synchronous with the growth of the international movement to develop a set of fundamental human rights. With the creation and approval of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, many of the rights which Paul Robeson had advocated up to that time, and which he would continue to promote for the remainder of his career, were enshrined in a major international declaration that has become the bedrock of the international human rights legal framework. By examining Paul Robeson’s life and career within a human rights education context, his struggles and achievements as an African-American leader during the first three quarters of the twentieth century can be viewed as a precursor of contemporary movements seeking racial justice and the strengthening of human rights guarantees.
References


John Dewey and his Evolving Perceptions of Race Issues in American Democracy

Charles F. Howlett & Audrey Cohan, Molloy College

Although the election of America’s first African-American President offered a glimmer of hope, change, and potential for social justice issues to impact diverse minorities in America, the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement continues to resonate among people of color who believe that the promise of American democracy has yet to be achieved. Over one hundred years ago, the nation’s most famous philosopher, progressive educator, and strongest advocate for the democratic way of life, John Dewey (1916), briefly addressed the matter of race in what many consider his most famous work, *Democracy and Education*. “An undesirable society”, he wrote,

…is one which internally and externally sets up barriers to free intercourse and communication of experience. A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. (p. 99)

Dewey elaborated, “[I]f democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded from all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all. The separation of the two aims in education is fatal to democracy; the adoption of the narrower meaning of efficiency deprives it of its essential justification” (Dewey, 1916, p. 122). Despite Dewey’s own firmly held beliefs influenced by the time period in which he lived, he was nonetheless conscious of the disconnection between racial prejudice and the true nature of American democracy. How did Dewey come to grips with this social inconsistency and what advice did he give to his readers?

Dewey’s Activism on Behalf of African-Americans

Dewey’s concern for African-Americans dates back to the early years of the 1900s. The denial of Blacks to access for basic civil and political rights, along with lynchings in the South as well as inferior educational facilities, did not reflect his conception of democracy. In February 1909, Dewey, along with sixty noted African-American and white leaders signed a manifesto written by Oswald Garrison Villard, the grandson of the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, calling for a National Negro Conference. This “Call for the Lincoln Emancipation Conference” occurred on May 31 and June 1st, at the United Charities Building in New York City. Along with Villard, Dewey joined with W.E.B. DuBois, William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., William English Walling, Mary White Ovington, and Anna Garland Spencer at this National Negro...
Conference address calling for equal opportunities for all African-Americans. Dewey noted:

All points of skill are represented in every race, from the inferior individual to the superior individual, and a society that does not furnish the environment and education and opportunity of all kinds which will bring out and make effective the superior ability wherever it is born, is not merely doing an injustice to that particular race and to those particular individuals, but it is doing an injustice to itself for it is depriving itself of just that much of social capital. (Dewey, 1909, pp. 156-157)

The audience nodded in agreement with Dewey’s (1909) argument regarding social heredity when he insisted that “there is no ‘inferior race,’ and the members of a race so-called should each have the same opportunities of social environment and personality as those of a more favored race” (p. 156). What really mattered, Dewey proclaimed, is that it is “the business of society as a whole today, to see to it that the environment is provided which will utilize all of the individual capital that is being born into it” (p. 156). The outcome of this conference led to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) a year later.

His commitment to educational equality was further expressed in 1913, when working with the National Kindergarten Association. In this instance, a bid for funds from the General Education Board in the amount of $10,400 was requested in order to support a “Colored Demonstration Kindergarten in each of the 13 southern states” (Stack, 2009, p. 20). The appeal for funding was denied. Such rejection came following the activism of Dewey’s wife, Alice, and her attempts to invite African-American women to her home in order to encourage them to join the women’s suffrage movement—shortly after the establishment of the NAACP. When the building’s owner of Dewey’s residence in New York City found out about the gathering he quickly forbade any other integrated meetings.

The war experience, along with his journey to Japan and China further sensitized Dewey’s interest in the psychological, political, social and economic causes of racism, which in the 1920s he characterized as a “social disease.” Scholar Thomas D. Fallace’s article (2010) notes that prior to this decade Dewey could be classified an ethnocentrist because he considered Americans of color to be biologically equal to Caucasians but socially deficient. Although he did not tie skin color to cultural development, Dewey, like most of his contemporaries at the time, had ignored the cultural contributions of non-White societies. His appreciation for non-White cultures changed dramatically in the very early years of the 1920s as he would no longer make “reference to the psychological and/or sociological stages of development.” “After the First World War,” Fallace (2010) points out, Dewey “focused more on reflective thinking, interaction, and plurality as major components of his educational vision.” As Dewey further considered issues of culture and sociology, he “expanded his view into a pluralistic appreciation of cultures as different, equally valid ways of looking at the world. His subtle revision of his earlier views on culture represented a significant
addition that allowed his work to remain relevant well into the 20th century and beyond” (p. 476).

Fallace’s (2010) observation is reflected in a lengthy paper Dewey (1922a) presented before the Chinese Social and Political Science Association and subsequently published as “Racial Prejudice and Friction.” Dewey (1922a) proclaimed that “Race prejudice is a deep-seated and widespread social disease” (p. 243). Although most of his remarks were directed at attempts to limit immigration and nativist intolerance towards foreigners, he also chose to address the issue of racial discrimination as it affected African-Americans. “[A]ny people held in subjection and at great disadvantage economically and politically,” he states, “is bound to show the consequences. It is kept back while the other people go ahead. Then the dominant group finds plenty of facts to quote in support of their belief in their own superiority” (p. 248).

Dewey’s shift in beliefs was solidified during this bureaucratic movement in which administrative progressives tested for “intelligence” and kept detailed records of this in the armed forces. His observations noted the bureaucratic complexities of the time and were clearly articulated as he remarked,

In the psychological tests given American conscripts during the late war, the Negroes as a group ranked low. This fact might be seized upon to prove their case by those who hold to inherent inferiority. But unfortunately for the argument, the Negro group from the northern states, where the Negroes though not fairly treated receive better treatment, stood distinctly higher than the southern in the intelligence tests, thus proving the effects of environmental opportunity. (Dewey, 1922a, p. 248)

Such an example, coupled with nativist attitudes toward minority groups, convinced Dewey that a societal mindset of understanding about equality of races would take time to achieve. He noted, “Individuals here and there achieve freedom from prejudice and rational control of instinctive bias with comparative ease.” Moreover, when inequality was examined from a societal perspective, he further commented, “But the mass cannot attain it until there has been a change not only in education, and in the means of publicity, but also in political and industrial organization” (Dewey, 1922a, pp. 253-254).

Between the World Wars, Dewey strongly addressed the issue of racial prejudice in America as he believed far greater energy had been expended by the entrenched interests of social reformers than in the condemnation of obsolete customs and institutions. In Human Nature and Conduct, he pointed out that “The primary accusation…must be directed against those who, having power, refuse to use it for amelioration. They are the ones who accumulate the wrath that sweeps away customs and institutions in an undiscriminating way” (Dewey, 1922, pp. 167-168).

His concern was certainly justified in light of the nativist impulse taking hold in the postwar years. The rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan with its dislike towards immigrants, Jews, Roman Catholics, and African-Americans could not be taken lightly; it posed a threat to Dewey’s understanding of democracy as community:

I need not speak of the growth of religious and racial tolerance, evidence of which is seen in this country under the form of the Ku Klux Klan movement. That is not a thing that we can laugh aside or deal with simply as a separate movement. It has a greater significance in that it is a symptom of a
spirit manifested in so many other
directions. (Dewey, 1923, p. 514)
With a stern admonition he continued, “It is this
particular situation—we all hope it is temporary, but
at the same time it exists—that the educators of the
community and those who are in sympathy with the
work the teachers are doing in various lines of
social work need to recognize openly and frankly
(p. 515).
Furthering the cause of African-Americans at the
height of the Great Depression witnessed Dewey
addressing the twenty-third annual conference of
the National Association for the Advancement of
Colored People in Washington on May 19, 1932.
His words were as sincere as they were determined.
He tailored his address not to a race of people but to
citizens of one nation.
Doubtless you are the first on the whole to
lose employment and the last to be taken on.
You are quite likely the last to get an equal
opportunity to share in whatever measure of
relief or constructive public work…but
nonetheless, the cause from which all are
suffering are the same…and so the thing that
I should like to say to you tonight are the
same sort of thing that I would say to
representatives of any white group that is
also at a disadvantage politically in
comparison with the privilege few. (Stack,
2009, p. 23).
By the end of the decade the realities of another
World War began to take hold. Military
dictatorships and their expressed hostility towards
religious minorities and people of color strengthen
Dewey’s convictions regarding the necessity of
democratic tolerance. In a powerful presentation,
“The Basic Values and Loyalties of Democracy,” he
observed that:

Our anti-democratic heritage of Negro
slavery has left us with habits of intolerance
toward the colored race—habits which belie
profession of democratic loyalty. The very
tenets of religion have been employed to
foster anti-Semitism. There are still many,
too many, persons who feel free to cultivate
and express racial prejudices as if they were
within their personal rights, not recognizing
how the attitude of intolerance infects,
perhaps fatally as the example of Germany
so surely proves, the basic humanities
without which democracy is but a name.
(Dewey, 1941, p. 277)
Democratic loyalty, he forcefully maintained, “is
the will to transform passive toleration into active
cooperation.” Fraternity, the willingness to work
together, “is the essence of cooperation” and “has
never been widely practiced, and this failure is a
large factor in producing the present state of the
world” (p. 277).

The Case of Odell Waller
Yet, nowhere were his actions more pronounced
than in the case of Odell Waller. Waller was a
young African-American sharecropper from
Virginia who killed his landlord, Oscar Davis, in
July 1940. Waller, at his trial, testified that an
argument ensued over crop shares and that Davis
threatened to kill him and reached into his pocket
for a gun. Claiming self-defense, Waller shot Davis.
However, an all-white jury, including ten planters,
condemned him to death. Those defending Waller
claimed that the majority of county residents were
sharecroppers and were excluded from jury duty
because they were unable to pay Virginia
cumulative $1.50 poll tax. Dewey, along with a
number of social justice supporters, whom included
Alfred M. Bingham, George S. Counts, Paul
Kellogg, A. J. Muster, and A. Philip Randolph,
signed a letter on behalf of the Workers Defense
League in New York City, asking for a $100 contribution to help supplement Waller’s appeal. The Workers Defense League’s appeal letter, a communist-backed organization (despite Dewey’s own disdain for communists his concern for racial justice took precedence over political disagreements), was carefully crafted “to help preserve the American principle of justice for all.” A stay of execution in December 1940, and in early 1941 had already been granted as the Virginia Court of Appeals issued a writ of error thus opening the door for the appeal. Nevertheless, the true intent of this letter was to highlight in a wider fashion racial discrimination and economic injustice in the United States:

In 1856[,] Dred Scott became a symbol for the abolition of slavery. Today another unknown Negro, Odell Waller, like that runaway slave, has in our time become the rallying point for those who would abolish the poll tax and the injustices of the sharecropper system….Not only is Odell Waller on trial for his life, but his case highlights one of the weakest links in American democracy. Ten million Negroes and whites—79 per cent of the adult citizenry in eight Southern states—are shut out from democratic processes by the poll tax…. (John Dewey to whom it may concern, April 7, 1941).

Despite this initial effort, the appeal ultimately failed. Subsequent attempts were made to reach the highest court in the land. However, in May 1942, the United States Supreme Court refused to hear the case thus prompting Dewey and a host of other supporters of justice to sign another Workers Defense League Appeal seeking additional monies on behalf of Waller’s defense:

The United States Supreme Court just refused, without opinion, to review the case of Odell Waller….as the enclosed leaflet makes clear, this is a case of deepest concern to every person interested in maintaining American democracy. The jury that tried Waller was composed entirely of white poll tax payers. (John Dewey to whom it may concern, May 15, 1942)

Noting that the governor of Virginia, Colgate W. Darden, Jr., granted a stay of execution to June 19th so that the Supreme Court could act on a petition for rehearing, the letter stated that “…Odell Waller’s life must be saved. The United States Supreme Court must be persuaded, if possible, to decide squarely whether a trial by jury of his peers is the constitutional right of every accused American citizen” (John Dewey to whom it may concern, May 15, 1942).

A month later, prior to the execution date—and after the Supreme Court refused to hear oral arguments—a letter signed by more than forty supporters of Waller, including Dewey, was sent directly to President Franklin D. Roosevelt asking for his intervention in the case:

We respectfully urge and petition you to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the case of Odell Waller, Negro sharecropper of Gretna, Virginia, sentenced to die June 19. We exercise this sacred right to petition, because the welfare of our beloved country is involved. The morale of our Negro fellow citizens, already badly shaken, was given another shock by the
second silent refusal of the Supreme Court to review the case of one who, as Miss Pearl Buck says, ‘has become a personification of all those to whom democracy is denied in our country.’ Here is further evidence for America’s enemies, who seize every opportunity to hold[ sic] up American democracy to scorn before the colored races of the world.… We believe it will be a national calamity if Waller goes to his death, when millions of his fellow citizens are convinced that he was not tried by a jury of his peers. Your intervention will help restore the badly shaken faith of our Negro minority in American democracy. (John Dewey to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 15, 1942)

As this letter was being sent to the President, Dewey also made his own appeal to the public in a letter he sent to the *New York Times*. In his *Times* letter, Dewey systematically pointed out the inconsistencies in the evidence presented against Waller while drawing wider attention to the complexities and tragedies associated with racial prejudice in the United States. In part, his letter stated:

Once more our colored citizens, already deeply aroused over discrimination against them in the armed forces and defense industries, have been presented with a grievance…. Colored people regard this unexplained refusal [for Waller to get his fair share of the wheat crop] as just one more evidence that when white people speak of fighting to preserve freedom, they mean freedom for their own race.… And now a word about the social and humanitarian aspects of this case. It is clear from the record that both the slayer and the slain were victims of the economic forces which for some decades have exerted terrible pressure on both white and colored farmers. The white man was a debt-ridden renter; the colored a destitute sharecropper.…

In dealing with this profoundly tragic issue we must invoke something better than an ‘eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ It calls for compassion—for mercy.… (Dewey, 1942, p. 9).

Dewey’s personal efforts, along with those of the Workers Defense League, the NAACP, the American Civil Liberties Union, novelist Pearl S. Buck, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and even President Franklin D. Roosevelt own private appeal on Waller's behalf to Virginia Governor Colgate Darden did garner several postponements of the sentence.

Despite these heroic attempts, however, Waller was finally executed on July 2, 1942 (Sherman, 1992). Although the case failed to overturn the poll tax, Waller’s case did lead to an overhaul of Virginia's penal system. Subsequently, new and more vigorous efforts would follow to address racial injustice in American society as the civil rights movement would take precedence in the years following the conclusion of World War II. After the Waller case and at the end of World War II, Dewey was responsible for promoting the American Federation of Negro College Students and even induced Eleanor Roosevelt to chair the organization’s Advisory Council. That would be his final public act on behalf of racial justice. Although not an active participant in the modern civil rights movement since he died in 1952, Dewey’s definition of democracy as a way of life defined by equality and justice provided the intellectual rationale in the battle against segregation and discrimination.
What is most important for Social Studies teachers to examine more closely is the relationship between democracy and education and the role history plays in it. What Dewey pronounced a century ago is as relevant today as when he wrote it in 1916: “[T]o ‘learn history’ is essentially to gain in power to recognize its human connections….So history as a formulated study is but the body of known facts about the activities and sufferings of the social groups with which our own lives are continuous, and through reference to which our own customs and institutions are illuminated” (Dewey, 1916, p. 210). It’s time we took Dewey’s message to heart when addressing the issue of race in our democratic society.

References


Using John Lewis’s *March* Graphic Novel Trilogy in Middle School

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Many adolescent learners' knowledge of the history comes from their social studies textbook. Misco (2014) posited that the organization of social studies content must encourage the students to engage in reflective learning activities that they can connect to real world experiences. Ogawa and Kusahara (2011) acknowledged that teachers often glean a significant part of their understanding of the social studies content from information in textbooks. Loewen (2008) pointed out that history is a collection of fascinating stories and suggested that telling the stories of the past could ignite the sense of wonderment in adolescent students that are absent in many students. Loewen felt the problem was the format of social studies textbooks. Textbooks often struggle to not only illuminate the past, but they fail to use history to put contemporary issues into context. Despite middle school students’ lack of motivation to read social studies textbooks, most adolescents are proficient in using an array of multimodal texts such as the movies, comics, and various internet sources (Draper & Reidel, 2011). Using graphic novels in middle school social studies classes is a successful way to invigorate instruction. Serchay (2008) described graphic novels as nonfiction or fiction books that follow a similar format as comic books and typically tell a story from start to finish. Draper and Reidel (2011) explained that graphic novels engage middle school students by combining visual and verbal elements to bridge the gap between content from social studies and multimodal texts that students use outside of school. Using graphic novels as instructional tools could promote engagement during literacy-based activities. Graphic novels have emerged as an in-demand format with today’s adolescents due to popular cable series like *The Walking Dead* and movies like *V for Vendetta*. According to The Lexile Framework for Reading (2012) combining art and text helps engage struggling readers. Cromer and Clark (2007) noted that contemporary graphic novels’ imagery and first person accounts differ from traditional historical narratives third person. Graphic novels that focus on social studies content provide a narrative approach to social studies education that is more engaging to adolescent learners.

Graphic novels are useful resources that allow students to contextualize the information in the text. Contextualization refers to the student going beyond just comprehending the actual words found in the text to making connections to the historical period depicted in the graphic novel. This contextualization leads to a richer understanding how the events result in awareness of the historical period (Britt & Aglinskas, 2002). Boennan-Cornell (2015) made the contention that instructing students how to read a variety of primary and secondary texts using multiple approaches prepares them to analyze texts more critically. Zammit (2007) was in agreement with Boennan-Cornell’s belief that using graphic novels prepares students to analyze texts more critically and added that it also enabled students to create similar documents to apply the higher level application skills to they gained from critically analyzing graphic novels.

With the emergence of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) teachers have to reevaluate their teaching practices to ensure that they are making the appropriate instructional shifts that
make students college and career ready under the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. Lee and Swan (2013) identified two types of literacy instruction that attempt to address the instructional shifts that promote literacy in social studies; these areas are content area reading and disciplinary literacy. Social studies teachers are well positioned to put texts into the context of the content area. Social studies instruction focuses on many primary and secondary sources, so refining students’ content literacy skills are crucial. Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) characterized disciplinary literacies as incorporating literacy skills that are critical to creating, communicating and comprehending academic knowledge. Each of the areas of social studies has different literacy skills that are necessary to analyze texts that are appropriate individual topics such as history, economics, and geography.

There have been multiple studies that examined the impact of using graphic novels in social studies instruction. Bosma, Rule, and Krueger (2013) conducted a study of 25 suburban middle school students who were studying the American Revolution. The activity divided students into four groups, and each group was instructed to read one book on the American Revolution over the span of four consecutive 40 minute periods. Students engaged in the reading exercise before receiving instruction on the American Revolution. Students in two of the groups read graphic novels about the Boston Massacre and Patrick Henry and read illustrated nonfiction texts on Paul Revere and the Boston Tea Party. The other two groups read graphic novels about Paul Revere and Boston Tea Party and read illustrated nonfiction books about the Boston Massacre and Patrick Henry. At the end of each day, the students answered a survey on a scale of one to ten to report how much they enjoyed the book and to measure their general interest in the topic. After two weeks, students compiled a list of five things they remembered about the book that their group read. That data obtained from the surveys suggested that shows students were able to recall more concepts and generalizations when reading graphic novels than to illustrated nonfiction texts. The findings also showed that students reported more enjoyment and interest were when reading the graphic novel as opposed to the illustrated nonfiction books.

Hawkins, Lopez, and Hughes (2016) discussed how to teachers in Illinois incorporated John Lewis’s *March Books One* and *Two* (Lewis, Aydin& Powell, 2013, 2015) into two United States History mixed ability courses. The learning segments included pre-assessments that measured the students’ background knowledge about the civil rights movement and posttests that measured the impact the graphic novels had on student learning. The pretest revealed the students’ apparent lack of knowledge about the pioneers of the civil rights movement and the struggles that Americans faced in their quest for civil rights. The students in both classes read *March Book One* and *March Book Two* in conjunction with classroom notes and instruction. The teachers used the graphic novels to scaffold instruction on literacy skills while addressing the historical content. One class used a guided learning packet that stressed vocabulary associated with the civil rights movement such as segregation, civil disobedience, March on Washington, and Freedom Rides. Instructed to define the words using context cues and direct quotations from the graphic novels. The final part of the activity was student generated projects about the civil rights movement using evidence from the graphic novels as well as other primary and secondary sources. The students synthesized the information from multiple sources
to demonstrate their knowledge of the civil rights era after reading the graphic novels.

The second United States History class read excerpts from both graphic novels as a supplement to classroom instruction and analyzing various primary and secondary sources. The students read March Book Two independently and noted key themes using a graphic organizer. The students noted the chronology of the events in the book and then worked in small groups to discuss why the book started and ended the way that they did. The second group also compared and contrasted the different perspectives from other primary and secondary sources on the civil rights era.

After the unit on social change was completed students completed the same questions about their knowledge of the civil rights movement. The students’ level of content knowledge of about civil rights era was increased dramatically after being exposed to March Book 2 and the other sources. The teachers saw the benefit of taking the instructional time to teach students how to read graphic novels because the use of graphic novels invigorated the instruction on racial justice (Hawkins, Lopez, & Hughes, 2016).

The New York City Department of Education has announced that the March trilogy (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2013, 2015, 2016) will be used to teach about the civil rights movement. Many strategies could be implemented using the March trilogy. Loewen’s (2008) critique of textbooks suggests that books do not put contemporary issues into context to make the information more compelling to adolescent learners. Using the C3 Framework could make the problem of civil rights more compelling. The C3 Framework includes four elements: 1) Developing questions that act as the basis of historical inquiry, (2) Applying content reading and disciplinary literacy skills, (3) Evaluating and gathering evidence (4) Making evidence-based claims and taking informed action (The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards retrieved from http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf). Before students begin studying the civil rights movement, the teacher should do a pre-assessment to measure what they know about the civil rights movement. A KWL chart would be a useful tool for determining what background knowledge students have about the civil rights era. Once students fill out the K column the teacher would present the class with current events related to civil rights. The current events for this portion of the activity could include stories involving protests by Black Lives Matter activists and Colin Kaepernick, voter identification court rulings, gerrymandering and police violence against black people. Discussing contemporary issues related to civil rights will put the struggle for civil rights into a context that student could relate to everyday life. Class discussions about contemporary issues might lead to questions about civil rights.

Students would come up with questions they would like to know about civil rights in the W column of the KWL chart. Compelling questions are questions that students use as the basis of their inquiries. If students can participate in the formation of the compelling questions employed in historical investigations, they may be more motivated to find answers that will answer their questions by using evidence-based claims.

Once students complete the K and W of their KWL chart, students would work in three groups. Each group would be assigned either March Book 1 (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2013), March Book 2 (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2015) or March Book 3 (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2016). The students will discuss the questions they generated in the W column of their KWL chart to find any commonalities that exist. The groups will select one
compelling question that will act as the basis for their historical inquiry and select supporting queries which support the compelling questions. Rothstein and Santana (2011) discussed the Question Formation Technique which helps students generate questions, refine their questions to make them more open-ended, prioritize the queries and formulating a plan to answer the questions.

The teacher would supply each group with supporting documents for each graphic novel. For example, additional primary and secondary sources related to sit-ins would supplement March Book 1 (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2013). Sources about the Freedom Rides would strengthen March Book 2 (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2015). Documents relating to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would supply additional information for March Book 3 (Lewis, Aydin & Powell, 2016). The teacher would provide scaffold questions for the supporting documents and a graphic organizer to record evidence to substantiate the claims they would make at the end of the inquiry. Students in each group would answer the scaffold questions and discuss the responses in their groups to determine how the answers fit into their set of questions. Students in each group would read their assigned graphic novel and create a timeline to make a precise sequence of events. One the scaffold questions, graphic organizers, and timelines are complete; students discuss the evidence they gathered from all the sources. The group would answer their compelling and support questions and then create their graphic novels that address their compelling questions.

Each group would present their graphic novels to the other two groups in the class. After all of the student-created graphic novels are presented, the students will fill in the L column of their KWL charts. If any questions remain unanswered after the presentations, they could be addressed in a class discussion. At the end of the March trilogy unit, students would brainstorm actions to improve civil rights in contemporary America.

Using the March trilogy in social studies classes when addressing civil rights in the United States could invigorate instruction by combining words and visuals to examine key events in the civil rights movements. Seeing images and text help motivate students to be more engaged because the story comes alive in a way that does not occur in traditional textbooks. Loewen (2008) felt that textbooks failed to address the fascinating stories that exist in United States History. The March trilogy tells John Lewis’s fascinating stories, and brings the conversation on civil rights into a real-world context for the 21st-century learner.

References


critical literacy in social studies classrooms. *Ohio Social Studies Review, 47*(2), 3-12.


**Web-Based References**


During the summer of 2015, Governor Nikki Haley had the Confederate flag removed from the South Carolina state capitol. The removal of the Confederate flag became a flashpoint event for attempting to remove other Confederate monuments throughout the South. The Southern landscape is dotted with Confederate monuments that were mainly erected directly after the U.S. Civil War and during the 1920s. The motives for creating these sites varied from preserving the history of a region to celebrating the Confederate cause to honoring the service of local veterans (Loewen, 2000). Regardless of how one constructs an argument to discuss the U.S. Civil War, there is one underlying truth about the event: the South was fighting to preserve a system that used African-Americans as slaves. This reality has caused certain groups that want diverse voices to be heard and valued in contemporary American society to push for expunging Confederate monuments from the public space. This can be seen with the recent controversy in New Orleans to remove the Robert E. Lee monument (Pompilo, 2016). There are several states in the South that have taken steps to make the elimination of Confederate monuments difficult. This effectively shuts down the conversation about the issue. In a democratic society, citizens cannot run away from controversy but must instead embrace these discussions (Hess, 2009).

In this article, we explore how to teach about Confederate monuments, in this case Stone Mountain, by using the Inquiry Design Model Blueprint (IDM). The IDM Blueprint provides a way to organize classroom instruction to carry out the inquiry arc in the C3 Framework by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). We start by setting up a research activity for high school students to explore diverse perspectives about the Stone Mountain monument. Students then do a writing activity describing how they would resolve the controversy with this monument. Our goal in this article is to demonstrate an approach to use for exploring controversial historical monuments while also modeling the potential of the IDM Blueprint for classroom instruction.

**To Remove or Not to Remove**

Stone Mountain is arguably the most well-known and visible Confederate monument in the South. It depicts arguably the three most famous men associated with the Confederacy: Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson. Many Confederate monuments like Stone Mountain engage in a level of hero worship for these celebrities of the Lost Cause. This site, like other controversial Confederate monuments, has the potential to foster more in-depth class discussions through teacher and student-generated questions (Waters & Russell, 2012). The teacher may start by providing a compelling question. One compelling question could be “How would you resolve the controversy surrounding Confederate monuments like Stone Mountain?” It would be advisable for the teacher to also give students supporting questions that could be examined. For example, the Stone Mountain monument attracts a lot of tourists each year; what are the economic ramifications for the city if this monument were to be removed? From a
social and cultural perspective, what are reasons that some groups might find this monument offensive? These supporting questions enable students to scrutinize the complexity of the topic as well as the ramifications for keeping, altering, or removing the monument.

## Research Framework

Our activity implements a three-step research framework that incorporates inquiry for students to investigate various perspectives surrounding controversial monuments. The articles and videos suggested for student research about Stone Mountain can be found on the example activity seen in Figure 1. The example activity utilizes Grant, Lee, and Swan’s IDM Blueprint (Grant, Lee, & Swan, 2016). The first step is for students to answer supporting questions provided by the teacher. This enables students to create their own point of view about the topic being explored (Hofer, Swan, & Zuber, 2014). The teacher needs to move around the room to answer any questions and support students during their research. It would behoove the teacher to create a list of websites about the controversial monument before having the students complete this activity. In this case, the teacher may also give excerpts from seminal works about Confederate monuments to strengthen students’ knowledge about this topic (Janney, 2008; Mills & Simpson, 2003).

### Figure 1: Stone Mountain Inquiry Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compelling Question</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>How would you resolve the controversy surrounding Confederate monuments like Stone Mountain?</td>
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<th>Standards and Practices</th>
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<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
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<td>People, Places, and Environments</td>
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<td>Civic Ideals and Practices</td>
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<tr>
<th>Staging the Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students examine various articles and videos on the perspectives and economic impact of the Stone Mountain monument. They will analyze these sources and use them to discuss best options for the Stone Mountain monument.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Supporting Question 1</th>
<th>Supporting Question 2</th>
<th>Supporting Question 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the economic ramifications for the city if this monument were to be removed?</td>
<td>From a social and cultural perspective, what are reasons that some groups might find this monument offensive?</td>
<td>From a social and cultural perspective, what are reasons that some groups might find this monument appropriate?</td>
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<th>Formative Performance Task</th>
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Initially, create a list with a partner of the monument’s economic benefits for the Stone Mountain community. Once the pairs have completed their list, the teacher with the students’ help creates a classroom list.

Create a three column t-chart that identifies social/cultural groups, their reason for finding Stone Mountain offensive, and where you found this evidence.

Create a three column t-chart that identifies social/cultural groups, their reason for finding Stone Mountain appropriate, and where you found this evidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Featured Sources</th>
<th>Featured Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source A:</strong> The CBS.com article Planned MLK tribute on ‘Confederate Mount Rushmore’ stirs controversy is a resource for all three supporting questions.</td>
<td><strong>Source A:</strong> The CBS.com article Planned MLK tribute on ‘Confederate Mount Rushmore’ stirs controversy is a resource for all three supporting questions.</td>
<td><strong>Source B:</strong> The Los Angeles Times article NAACP wants Confederate carving removed from Georgia's Stone Mountain can be used to gather information for both those offended by the monument and those defending the monument. <strong>Source C:</strong> The Video Plans for MLK monument in Georgia sparks debate provides history and reasons on both sides as to why the MLK monument should or should not be added. <strong>Source D:</strong> The four minute video Outkast To Be Added To Confederacy Monument In Stone Mountain, Georgia? is a discussion geared towards teenage viewers looking at racism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summative Performance Task**

**Argument**

Using evidence from the featured sources, students find solutions for the controversy of the Stone Mountain monument by choosing one of three options: get rid of monument and propose an alternative monument, leave the monument as is, or develop an alternative to these choices. For each choice, they defend why that is the best choice through acknowledging the alternatives, explaining with evidence why the alternative choices are not as appropriate, and identifying how this choice could impact the community economically.

**Extension**

Have students investigate controversial monuments in their state or region.

**Taking Informed Action**

**Understand** the various social and cultural perspectives that underlie reasons some find this monument offensive and others find it appropriate. **Access** weigh the extent to which perceptions have been impacted by the reasons that have led to finding the monument offensive or appropriate. **Act** write a newspaper editorial, make a school campus poster, or write a letter to the local district Congressional representative that supports the option the student choose for the
The next step is for students to evaluate sources. The first article, *Planned MLK tribute on ‘Confederate Mount Rushmore’ stirs controversy*, can be used for each supporting question. For example, in the economic question, it can be utilized to point out that millions of people visit the site each year. The second article, *Stone Mountain Park Owner: ‘We’re 50% bigger than 10 years ago’* can be used with supporting question one to outline the economic impact that the monument and the park’s various activities provide for the community. The second supporting question (“From a social and cultural perspective, what are reasons that some groups might find this monument offensive?”) allows students to build on their understanding of the monument’s economic value by exploring reasons people find the Stone Mountain monument objectionable. The students analyze two articles and watch two short videos (See Figure 1). The *Planned MLK tribute on ‘Confederate Mount Rushmore’ stirs controversy* article points out that a vast majority of the county’s residents are African-Americans and makes an argument that this tragic historical past should be buried.

The *Los Angeles Times* article, *NAACP wants Confederate carving removed from Georgia’s Stone Mountain*, discusses the monument being a symbol of white supremacy. Additionally, it makes the point that none of the men depicted on the monument are from Georgia. Students can use this article to contrast those opposed by pointing out tax dollars are not used for the upkeep of the monument.

Students may view a couple of short videos to gain alternative perspectives on Stone Mountain. In *Plans for MLK monument in Georgia sparks debate*, an argument to get rid of the monument is that the South has over 200 years of history, and the Confederacy was there for only four years. The fight for civil rights has been around much longer. The second video, *Outkast to be added to Confederate Monument in Stone Mountain, Georgia?*, discusses the petition to put the rap group Outkast on the monument alongside the Confederate heroes because of the band members’ local roots in Atlanta.

Students begin contrasting those opposed to the monument through the third supporting question, “From a social and cultural perspective, what are reasons that some groups might find this monument appropriate? Similar to the second supporting question, they have been presented two articles and videos to analyze (see Figure 1). One of the arguments from *Planned MLK tribute on ‘Confederate Mount Rushmore’ stirs controversy* for keeping the monument includes that state law requires this to be maintained as a Confederate memorial. In the initial video discussed in the previous paragraph, *Plans for MLK monument in Georgia sparks debate*, reasons for keeping the monument are also provided. A compelling reason used by many in the area is that it is a symbol for Confederate heritage. In the last video, *USA: Pro-Confederate protesters rally against proposed MLK monument*, students see visuals of people wearing Confederate shirts and waving Confederate flags at the monument site. Additionally, protesters are interviewed and articulate why Dr. King should not be on the monument. A common idea stated is that the protestors have nothing against the Civil Rights
Movement, but this monument was established to specifically honor Confederate heritage. This step increases the complexity and depth for students scrutinizing this Confederate monument by further exploring each side’s position.

Assessing the Research
The lesson’s final stage is for students to articulate solutions for the controversy of the Stone Mountain monument by choosing one of three options.

1. Get rid of the monument and propose an alternative monument.
2. Leave the monument as is.
3. Develop an alternative to these two choices.

In order to build students’ critical analysis skills and an understanding of multiple perspectives, they should defend why their option is the most appropriate through acknowledging alternatives, explaining with evidence why the alternatives are not as appropriate, and identifying the ways in which their option impacts the community. The final product could be a newspaper editorial, school campus poster, or letter to the local district Congressional representative (For an example product see Figure 2). By having students create a product that is voiced in a public arena and has to be articulated through a critical analysis process, they are truly learning to take informed action.

Figure 2: Student Newspaper Editorial Example

Complement Confederate Images with Civil Rights Images
The images of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson on the Stone Mountain monument are considered to be controversial, and many people want them to be removed. While those who want to keep these Confederate heroes have reasons, I agree with people who want it removed. I believe the reasons to remove are more humane, but a compromise is the best choice. One of the most common reasons given for keeping the monument in its current form is that the state law requires it to be a Confederate monument. Another reason is that it is a symbol of Confederate heritage. While these may seem like fair points for keeping the images, for humane reasons, I argue that it is not. I believe glorifying the leaders of a movement that supported enslaving fellow human beings is inappropriate. Regarding the argument that the Stone Mountain monument is a symbol of Confederate heritage, it is important to remember that the Confederacy only lasted four years. Minorities have been advocating for civil rights in Georgia and the rest of the Southern United States for more than 200 hundred years. Therefore, there is a much greater civil rights heritage in the South than Confederacy heritage. Additionally, the monument is on state property, which means the state should attempt to be fair to everybody. For these reasons, my solution is to compromise by keeping the Confederate images and complementing them with images of Southerners who have advocated for civil rights in the South. This would also continue to sustain the economy by continuing to employee local residents and providing a new monument that honors our country’s continuous attempt to improve the lives of all Americans.
Conclusion

Confederate monuments by their very nature are controversial, and the Buddha provides wise counsel on how we should handle controversy. “In a controversy the instant we feel anger we have already ceased striving for the truth and have begun striving for ourselves.” The Buddha’s approach to controversy reflects that of the C3 Framework. Students need to examine conflicting evidence and weigh the different perspectives about the Confederate monument objectively before taking action. These processes inspire informed and thoughtful political action on the part of our students. Our social studies classrooms should be places where students grapple with contemporary civic issues that are vexing American society (Ochoa-Becker, 2007). After all, our students will ultimately be responsible in the near future for addressing and solving these societal issues. The Inquiry Design Model Blueprint can be used to set up learning experiences for students to explore divergent perspectives about a controversial topic like Confederate monuments.

References


Using Lessons from Psychology to Foster Historical Empathy Regarding Conformity in the Past

Evan Long, North Carolina State University

One of the most difficult challenges in teaching social studies is helping students to empathize with historical figures without succumbing to presentism. This can be particularly true when students study the use of propaganda in the past in which large groups of people are seemingly duped by political leaders and led to passively accept or participate in nefarious activities. When I first taught such lessons I would often hear students make comments such as “how could people be so gullible” or “I could never be manipulated like that.” This attitude can be dangerous if students believe themselves to be completely immune to social persuasion. Despite my best efforts, I often failed to get students to bracket their judgmental attitudes until I started reflecting more deeply on the nature of conformity and some of the lessons I had learned in college in psychology classes. I began incorporating this introductory lesson in my unit on World War II and found that students were approaching the past with more objective and empathetic lenses. Although it was designed for a WWII unit, it can be used to stage any unit or lesson regarding the nature of conformity.

**Step 1:** Select a good-natured student volunteer who you know is not easily embarrassed and find an excuse to have them leave the room for a few minutes. For instance, you can have them run a fake errand to the office. You may want to obtain verbal permission from the parent of the selected individual beforehand prior to using this activity.

**Step 2:** While the student is out of the room, explain to the rest of class that you are all going to essentially be pulling a prank. However, this prank also happens to model a historic experiment in psychology called the Asch Experiment. Ask students if they have ever been in a situation where they were the only person in a room to think or answer a question in a certain way. If so, ask them whether or not that made them change their minds and to reflect on how the whole situation made them feel. Then explain the basic premise of the study and the prank you about to pull. As you are explaining the premise, project or draw on a whiteboard the Asch Experiment lines as seen in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Asch Experiment Lines

![Asch Experiment Lines](image-url)
Ask students which line on the right is the same size as the one on the left. After students say it is “C” tell them that they are correct. Then instruct them that when the student volunteer re-enters the room you will be asking the class again, but that they should all answer “B” to try to confuse the volunteer and get him or her to copy the wrong answer. Have students practice their “wrong answers” and remind them that the more natural they act when he or she re-enters the room, the better the chance of pulling off the prank.

Step 3: After the volunteer returns to the classroom state “we were just talking about the importance of paying close attention to details.” Then ask students to raise their hands to answer which line on the right is equal in length to the line on the left. After about 5 students say “B” the student will likely start to look confused. Ask about 5 more before calling on the student to get a response. After he or she answers you can reveal to him or her what was actually going on and ensure him or her that most people in their situation will succumb to conformity and answer “B”. In my own experience about 75 percent of middle school students will say “B”; however, even if they don’t you can still explain that in research settings most people will succumb to conformity.

Step 4 (optional): Discuss with students other instances in which people have succumbed to conformity in history, in research settings (e.g., Stanford Prison Experiment, Milgram Experiment) and in classroom settings (e.g., Brown Eyes Blue Eyes Experiment). Teachers may want to show appropriate video clips of one or more of these experiments, which can all be easily accessed easily on YouTube, and have students pose emerging questions as they watch the clips.

Step 5: Discuss historical empathy with students and explain the difference between empathizing with people in the past versus justifying all actions of people in the past as valid. This can be important because teachers do not want students to develop relativistic notions of historical figures in which they are not allowed to make any moral judgements on historical events.

As an example, you might discuss the issue of founding fathers owning slaves and whether or not we can use that fact to judge them as undeserving of any accolades. Of course, the answer here is nuanced, and I tell students that they could make an argument for or against the founders if they wanted to. I then compare the issue of fairly judging the founding fathers negatively to the case of Bull Connor- the notoriously racist sheriff during the Civil Rights Movement. I ask them if we can judge his actions as immoral using the value system of the people of the time, and the answer is an absolute yes. This comparison helps students to understand that historical empathy is not about excusing every single nefarious action in history, but rather taking a more nuanced perspective.

Step 6 (optional): Have students complete a Frayer vocabulary chart like the one shown in Table 2:
Table 2: Historical Empathy Frayer Vocabulary Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition (in own words)</th>
<th>Why does it matter?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>ILLUSTRATION/Symbol</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-EXAMPLES</th>
<th>QUESTIONS YOU STILL HAVE</th>
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*Step 7:* In small groups have students discuss the following questions:

1. What is historical empathy and why is it needed?
2. What are other historical and contemporary examples of groups of people being manipulated to conform?
3. What are some techniques that individuals or groups use to manipulate the behaviors of others?
4. Are all people capable of being manipulated into passive onlookers or active participants in atrocities? If so, how do we hold people (past and present) accountable for their actions?
5. How do we prevent people from being manipulated by nefarious forces?

*Step 8:* Have students write a 3-2-1 exit ticket in which they record 3 things they learned, 2 things they found interesting, and 1 question they have left over regarding conformity and/or historical empathy.
On March 28, 2016, I was in my classroom, setting up my materials for the day. My phone vibrated, signaling that I had received an e-mail. I had been expecting to hear about the status of my application to the Library of Congress Summer Teacher Institute—something that has been a dream of mine for a very long time. Well, on that day, my dream came true. I was offered a spot in the Session 4 cohort to study at the Library of Congress for a week in the summer. I would be studying, working with and learning to further incorporate primary sources in my classroom. I started planning my trip on March 28th (yes—I was that ecstatic!) and as soon as I knew it, I was in Washington, D.C., it was July 18th at 8:30 A.M. The first day of the institute was here!

When I first decided to create this article, I was going to go through a day-by-day list of the rich activities the facilitators of the institute involved us in. Instead, I am going to talk about it through three themes: diversity, interactiveness and opportunity.

Diversity

When first arriving at the Library’s Madison Building, I was greeted by fellow early-bird colleagues outside the entrance. I was so happy to be meeting my fellow participants. The hello’s continued as we made our way upstairs into the building. Everyone I was meeting was outgoing and thrilled to be there.

On Day 1, the facilitators of our session had us walk through a room that had three or four very large tables filled with different primary sources. Upon instructing us to choose the one that stood out the most for us, we were then prompted to stand up and introduce ourselves. This introduction included: your name, where you are from, and what you teach/what grade level you are. What a pleasure it was to learn just how diverse all of us participants were. I was so lucky to learn that I was working with a handful of exceptional teachers and librarians from throughout the whole country, including New Jersey, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Washington—just to name a few. Throughout the course of the week, the diverse environment enabled us to have many different ideas from numerous perspectives.

I worked with a reading specialist from Virginia on our Library of Congress (LOC) Primary Source Activity Plan, which was to be presented on our last day of the program. Then, there was a Library Coordinator from Oklahoma with the greatest sense of humor I have seen in a long time. We were neighbors in the Main Room of the Montpelier Room and she always had something nice to say. I learned to take things more lightly because of this participant. Who can forget the Music Teacher from New Jersey, with probably the greatest laugh in the world! All in all, it was truly a treasure to learn and experience just how diverse our cohort was. It made for a week full of melting pot ideas.

“Interactivenss”

Throughout the course of the week, our facilitators were exposing to us countless strategies on how to
creatively use primary sources in our own classrooms. However, one thing that truly made me learn as a teacher was my involvement in one hundred percent of those strategies. Each and every participant took part in the strategy themselves to learn about and see the effectiveness of the strategy. During the program, we received the opportunity to work hands on with many of the Library’s primary sources. Using a magnifying glass to help analyze the content, there were times where we worked alone, with a partner and even as a group. Having the participants roll out the activity themselves instead of having one of our lovely facilitators merely talk about it made all the difference. Tom, Anne and/or Michael did not hesitate to put us to work—and it benefitted us tremendously.

By completing these activities myself, I better learned how exactly I would incorporate the strategy effectively in my classroom. “This would be perfect!”, or “I can add even add this to better fit my students’ needs!” often went through my head as I took on a LoC primary source. Being that all of the activities that the Library had for us were hands on, the dynamic of my students screamed out to me “this would totally work”. I work in a school that specializes primarily in automotive trades, where my students enjoy hands-on activities. The Library’s strategies exposed to us participants would most definitely have our students learning by doing.

One strategy jumps out at me continuously. On the second day of the Institute, my fellow participants and I completed a model map analysis to which the Institute facilitators introduced us. In brief, this strategy included each participant receiving a picture. On a post-it, we were to write what we think the purpose of the picture was and place the note on any evidence of the picture that gives us our answer. Then, we were told to turn over our picture where we would find a letter. After finding your letter, you were to go to a group labeled with the letter you have. It turns out that the rest of the members of the group with the same letter as you makes up a whole map and you only had one little piece of it! (A table full of sophisticated adults and our minds were blown.) I loved this for many reasons, including:

1. Two words: hands on.
2. Team building- the group was responsible for putting together the map, making it almost like a puzzle activity.
3. Our opinion of the “picture” changed drastically when we put together the whole map–this would have my students hooked.
4. Meeting those CCLS- having students make an argument based on evidence–in the coolest way possible.
5. Creativity- coming up with a title of the map as a final assessment. This leaves much room for discussion in my classroom as I, the facilitator of the lesson, can ask groups “Why did you choose that title?” to further elicit student answers from their analysis of the map.

I liked this strategy so much, that I used it for my own Primary Source Activity Plan that was asked of us to present on our last day of the Institute. I used the same puzzle strategy and instead of breaking a map into pieces, I brought it further to breaking up a painting of The American Progress, 1873. Thanks to the Library, I learned that this strategy can be used with just about any of their primary sources.

**Opportunity**

My fellow participants and I even received the opportunity to meet with the experts of the Library at an Open House event where we would get the best resources for our students. I received the opportunity to talk with many experts that make an
impact on me personally. A wish of mine came true when one expert showed me, up close and personal, a written journal entry by Susan B. Anthony. We participants also received the opportunity to be given a private tour of the Library’s Main Reading Room.

As I mentioned earlier, it was always a dream of mine to study at the Library of Congress. Receiving the chance to do so was something I will be forever grateful for. Being given the opportunity for so many things—such as representing my school and district in such a monumental way, being able to share new ideas with my colleagues and implementing new strategies for my students to get the most out of primary sources is a treasure that I brought back home to New York with me. I thank the Library for giving a teacher who was teaching for one year the chance of a lifetime. The Library of Congress truly understands and acknowledges that no matter how long you have been teaching, your passion and commitment to having students learn with primary sources is just as strong. Thank you, fellow colleagues who have taught me so much in a week’s time, and thank you to the Library of Congress for this once in a lifetime opportunity.
Figure 1: Final Group Project, LOC Teaching With Primary Sources Summer Teacher Institute

Figure 2: Project primary document: John Gast, "American Progress,” 1872
Historic African-American Cemetery in Bergen County

Karthik Aggarwal

This article was originally written for The North Jersey Record (http://www.northjersey.com/community-news/local-cemetery-has-its-share-of-great-stories-1.269147?page=all), and is reprinted with permission.

Gethsemane Cemetery in Little Ferry is the final resting place for 515 people. It is located west of the Hackensack River in southwest Bergen County, NJ. The historic site, founded more than 150 years ago as a burial ground for local African-Americans, tells the stories of lives gone but not forgotten. The cemetery was first founded in 1860 and had three original Caucasian trustees, Arnold Brown, the cemetery’s historian said. “It seemed that the African-American community had difficulty finding a burial ground for their people. The Hackensack burial ground would not permit African-American burials,” he said. “These three men—two of them happened to be trustees at that cemetery—had this ground here purchased.” The plot is approximately one acre. “It was for the burial of the residents of the village of Hackensack—the colored population,” Brown said.

Figure 1: tombstone for “Cora” at the Gethsemane Cemetery in Little Ferry, NJ.

It wasn’t until 1901 that the cemetery got its African-American trustees. “The old trustees had passed on, so the African-American community took the title to it and incorporated it,” Brown said. They incorporated it as the Gethsemane Cemetery Association. Prior to the African-American trusteeship, it was known as the Hackensack Colored Cemetery, the Colored Cemetery at Hackensack, San Hill, Sand Hill, Moonachie Colored Cemetery, Monarchie Colored Cemetery and Little Ferry Free Colored Cemetery. Over the years, less than 50 gravestones have survived. The materials used for gravestones include marble, granite, slate and sandstone, according to Janet Strom, historian for the county’s Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.

The last documented burial there was in 1924. Laborers at brickyards, porters, farmers, domestics, barbers and beauticians are among those buried at the cemetery, Brown noted. Some of the individuals buried at Gethsemane include black entrepreneurs, such as Elizabeth Dulfer. Born a slave in 1790 and given her freedom in 1822, Dulfer created a successful clay business from land she owned along the Hackensack River. Civil War veterans are also buried at the cemetery, including Peter Billings and Silas Carpenter. Both served in the 29th Connecticut Volunteer Regiment, an infantry unit for African-Americans in the Union Army, Brown said.

When Samuel Bass, a sexton at the First Baptist Church in Hackensack, died in January 1884, his
family could not bury him at the Hackensack Cemetery because he was black. He was then buried at Gethsemane. A controversy ensued, and then-governor Leon Abbett got involved. As a result, the Negro Burial Bill, which prohibited discrimination in burials based on race, was passed in March, 1884. Bass’ body was later moved to Philadelphia, according to Brown.

Figure 2: the historical plaque at Gethsemane Cemetery, Little Ferry, NJ.

Evidence of West African burial practices was discovered at businessman Samuel Porter’s family plot. Specifically, terracotta pipes were found suggesting a link to Congo traditions, Brown said. “What they would do is put broken terracotta clay pipes in the ground so the deceased could communicate with the upper world,” he said. “To have maintained an African custom over all these years in the burial is amazing. [Porter] could afford a granite stone for a gravestone, but he reverted back to his African roots and came up with the pipes.”

In 1985, the county acquired Gethsemane, located on Summit Place, after years of neglect and vandalism. The county at the time began research and restoration work. The cemetery was entered in 1994 into the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. In 2003, four contemplation areas were dedicated. Restoration is currently ongoing, Strom said. “You never preserve something and walk away,” she said. “Preservation is everyday.”

For Brown, the legacies of those buried at Gethsemane lives on. “There’s a deep appreciation for cemeteries, especially for African-American cemeteries in our community,” he said. “It’s important to maintain your history and your roots. It’s a matter also of having respect for those who have passed on.”
Promoting Genocide Awareness and Historic and Media Literacies through Film

Lisa K. Pennington, Texas A&M International University

Within the past several years, numerous Hollywood blockbusters depicting historical events or biopics such as *Selma* and *Bridge of Spies* have debuted in theaters. Period television shows such as *Downton Abby* are wildly popular. Even Netflix has ventured into the foray with the docudrama *Narcos*. Such media portrayals do introduce the larger public to history with which they may be unfamiliar. However, the representation of historic events or figures in a way meant to engage and entertain also highlights the fact that the public at large frequently bases their historic knowledge around popular media portrayals. Herein lies a danger when the public believes they have learned historic content from dramatized representations. Students in particular, with limited media and historic literacy skills, may believe the Hollywood versions of history are accurate.

With the popularity of film, particularly amongst students, it is not surprising that many social studies teachers incorporate that medium into their classrooms. Often it is to increase relevancy and student interest in the material. Michalczyk and Helmick believe that film is “a medium of unparalleled power” and that “used with passion, conviction, and honesty, it can be among the most significant forces to educate the public” (2013, p. xvi). Stoddard and Marcus (2010) agree, recognizing that film is an important tool in the classroom precisely because it is where much of the public learns its history.

However, in order to use film appropriately in the classroom and allow students to develop a critical lens through which to view film, a considerable commitment by the teacher is required. Teachers not only need to background knowledge to provide context for students, but the willingness to help students engage with the film, and view it in terms of the “arguments or interpretations of the past” which should be analyzed and debated, and not simply as a story enjoyed in “passive isolation” (Metzger, 2007, p. 73). This requirement often influences teachers to fall back on teacher-centered methods using film, resulting in avoidance of addressing historical literacy competencies (Metzger, 2007). These safe techniques will not prepare students to be critical historical consumers of film, and practices such as these could have a detrimental effect on students and the public at large who rely on popular media to gain historical knowledge.

It is also important to consider the “burden of historical representation” (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006, p. 27) in film. Stoddard and Marcus define the burden of historical representation as the portrayal of underrepresented groups in film in “a way that allows the viewer to understand their points of view, history, and language” (p. 27). Frequently, the portrayals of underrepresented groups in media leave lasting impacts on audiences, even if the audience is aware the portrayal is inaccurate. This creates the danger of reinforcing or creating potentially racist and harmful views of marginalized groups (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006), making it necessary to address the inaccurate representations.

When using film that focuses on sensitive topics such as genocide, it is especially important to take
into consideration the portrayals of marginalized groups, particularly how the victims of genocide are portrayed. It is imperative that students are provided the tools to comprehend the complex issues presented as genocide studies gains a greater foothold in schools (Cohan and Sleeper, 2010; Keller and Manzo, 2007). Genocide is a global issue, and one that has occurred multiple times in the 20th century, even after the Holocaust when many countries vowed “never again.” It is a topic that should be taught in classrooms around the world. The idea of using film to promote historical literacy and genocide awareness relates to civic education in several ways. Genocide education focuses on topics such as human rights, international cooperation, laws, and political organizations, and covers multiple NCSS themes. Understanding the discrimination and prejudice that accompanies genocide can make students more aware of the impact of their actions and prepare them to be more tolerant global citizens. The use of film to teach historical literacy, combined with the study of genocide can provide students with a better understanding of mass atrocities and promote discussion about a topic that has occurred in every decade in the 20th century (Michalczyk and Helmick, p. xxi).

**Historical and media literacies**

There is debate over what the term historical literacy, or those related to it such as historical understanding and historical thinking, actually encompasses. Frequently these terms focus on skills student should possess, such as the ability for interpretation, inference, understanding differing perspectives, and analyzing primary sources (Donnelly, 2014). For the purposes of this paper, the term historical literacy will be used and will focus on the “attempts to analyze understandings of history’s nature” (Donnelly, 2014, p. 5).

Media literacy on the other hand, focuses on “critically analyzing media messages, evaluating sources of information for bias and credibility, raising awareness about how media messages influence people’s beliefs, attitudes and behaviors and producing messages using different forms of media” (Kubey, 2004, p. 23).

Both of these forms of literacy require students to be critical consumers of sources. By combining these two types of literacy, students engaged with a historic film would not only be able to critically analyze the film for credibility, bias, and intended message, but also understand how the history portrayed may have been altered to present a certain viewpoint, for entertainment value, or to convey particular ideas.

**Genocide education**

Genocide studies, like many historical topics, is one surrounded by disagreement-from which mass atrocities should be deemed genocide to the very definition of the word genocide itself. It is a fairly recent field, and in the United States little attention has been paid to genocides other than the Holocaust in school curricula. The emergence of the Holocaust in American schools began as a grassroots movement in the mid-1970’s when several teachers in the northeastern part of the country began to include it in their curriculum (Fallace, 2008).

Up until the late 1970’s however, for most of the United States, the Holocaust was virtually unknown. It wasn’t until the 1978 NBC miniseries *Holocaust* that the genocide made its way into the American consciousness. The miniseries prompted a general interest in the event among the American public, and created a push for inclusion of the Holocaust in schools (Fallace, 2008).
As the Holocaust began to grow in popularity states began to mandate the inclusion of the Holocaust within the curriculum, making the Holocaust the most frequently taught genocide in schools. However, the intense focus on the Holocaust and exclusion of other genocides can lead students to believing that the Holocaust is the only genocide to have occurred. While Fallace (2008) says that no atrocity or genocide can simply be substituted for the Holocaust as long as the end goal of student growth is the same, he also states that teaching the Holocaust with “unique reverence” or as requiring its own special understandings is disrespectful to other genocides. Totten takes this argument further and states that teaching only the Holocaust in schools can actually be harmful to students, who may not realize that other genocides have been committed since the Holocaust (Totten, 2001). This is not to discount the Holocaust or its importance in history, but to expand student knowledge of human rights violations and show that even with awareness of the Holocaust similar events continue to occur around the world.

Though they were early advocates for comparative studies of genocide, such as Friedlander (1979) and Huttenbach (1988), for the most part the Holocaust was and remains a separate and distinct event, distanced from other genocides by the Holocaust uniqueness factor. However, in recent years, others have joined Totten in the push to at least include other genocides in the curriculum. Keller and Manzo (2007) and Cohan and Sleeper (2010) provide evidence of growth in genocide related topics taught in schools or presented during conferences, with Cohan & Sleeper (2010) linking the rise in genocide education to contemporary events in Darfur.

With the growing inclusion of other genocides into the curriculum, it is important then to consider how to introduce the topic to students, what skills students need to examine mass atrocities, and how to prepare students to confront the portrayal of such events on film. In addition, teachers should also consider how to treat the topic with sensitivity, while helping students to understand the discrimination and prejudice that accompanies genocide, making them more aware of the impact of their actions and preparing them to be more tolerant global citizens.

Films about genocide

There are many films focused on genocide that may be incorporated into the classroom. Michalczyk and Helmick’s Through a Lens Darkly: Films of Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Atrocities (2013) is a useful resource for educators who wish to use this medium to discuss genocide with their students. Suggested films cover multiple mass atrocities such as the treatment of Native Americans in the United States (Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,); the Armenian Genocide (Everyone’s Not Here: Families of the Armenian Genocide); Rwanda (In the Tall Grass); Darfur (The Devil Came on Horseback); and Srebrenica (Srebrenica: A Cry from the Grave). The variety of films on which to draw highlights the reoccurrence of genocide through history and into the modern day, helping students to realize it is an ongoing problem.

Using films to teach historical and media literacies

Hobbs (2006) found that teachers often use film in non-optimal ways such as using film to control behavior; as a break for the teacher; as a hook rather than an instructional tool; or as a reward. In addition, teachers may not have clear instructional goals or not pause to review the film (Hobbs, 2006). Therefore, when using film to teach about genocide or any topic, it is helpful to pre-determine which
skills and literacies students may either gain or improve during viewing in order to have a clear purpose.

Discussion: Discussion is the most straightforward method of using film and can occur before, during and after a viewing. Discussion questions could be written that focus on both historical and media literacy skills, as the class could talk about the message of the film, but also analyze it’s content. Additionally, opportunities to discuss student interpretations of films during class helps to ensure that “students do not make naïve conclusions or have a strong emotional reaction to a film without the opportunity to express it” (Stoddard, 2014, p. 221). It is critical for teachers to engage with students about a film not only to aid students in making sense of what is viewed but also to help them apply a critical lens toward the film (Stoddard & Marcus, 2010). For example, when viewing Hotel Rwanda, pre-film discussion may focus on the events that led to the Rwandan genocide or the international response to the genocide to ensure students have a strong grasp of the background needed to understand the events depicted. During the film, discussion might revolve around content, wherein students provide examples from the film to support statements made during the pre-viewing dialogue. Finally, after the film students might examine news articles about Paul Rusesabagina, which state he actually extorted money from Tutsi hiding in the hotel in exchange for rooms and food. While Rusesabagina undoubtedly saved the lives of the Tutsi sheltered in the hotel in 1994, presenting another perspective could help students to critically examine the events as they were portrayed in the film, and lend itself to classroom debates over whether Rusesabagina should be hailed as a hero.

Identifying and analyzing main ideas, arguments, and bias: Descriptive pyramids offer an opportunity to help students determine the main idea or argument in a film. Descriptive pyramids help students to identify the setting, a participant, a point of view, an event, and the message conveyed by the film. Identifying these key pieces of information could help students better grasp the content and perspective presented in the film. In Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee for example, students might pinpoint discrimination against Native Americans during Westward Expansion as the message conveyed by the film. Understanding this message, students are better prepared to examine Westward Expansion from the perspective of the Native experience, which may be unfamiliar to them. To further examine these ideas, students might complete an inquiry chart, which moves students from identifying key points to examining how those points are presented, who created the message, and why it is presented in such a way. By considering these questions, students may come to understand the message of the film is to convey the discrimination and prejudice against Native Americans during their forced removal, while the purpose is to depict how tribes were mistreated during this era.

An additional step is to have students build on the information they have identified to determine bias. With a bias or error analysis worksheet, students identify the bias within the source and pinpoint how they identified it. Students might determine that Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee focuses explicitly on one massacre of Native Americans, while ignoring multiple other examples as a bias or error. It also avoids in-depth exploration of Sitting Bull’s character, and portrays natives in a simple manner. A discussion of why some tribes fled while others fought to stay on their land is also lacking. Though the film does portray mistreatment of Native Americans at the hands of
the United States government, it does not fully explore those atrocities (Street, 2013). These three activities, used to build on one another, are useful in helping students identify key information, before moving onto higher order media literacy skills. Multiple examples of descriptive pyramids, inquiry charts, and error analysis charts are available online.

**Multiple perspectives and challenging narratives:** A skill with which students often struggle is understanding multiple perspectives in history (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). Films may provide a visual to show students how groups they may have previously overlooked were impacted by an event, contributed to an event, or even how they understood and reacted to an event. While it is important to discuss the victims of genocide, and there are many films that present this viewpoint, it is also important for students to understand the involvement of other groups during mass atrocity. Introducing films such as *The Act of Killing* or *Enemies of the People*, both of which showcase perpetrators in Indonesia and Cambodia respectively, may aid students in understanding that there is no easy explanation for why an individual participates in mass slaughter. Likewise, it is difficult to explain why others risk their lives to stand up to their oppressors or save the lives of those being persecuted. However, films such as *Defiance* or *Uprising* can show students that Jews were not passive victims during the Holocaust, but fought back against the Nazis. Similarly, *Saviors in the Night* could help students to realize that not all Germans were complicit in the Holocaust, and some risked their own safety to save Jewish lives. Such films may help students expand their thinking beyond that of the victim, to understand that there were other groups who participated in enacting genocide, and others who resisted, while challenging commonly held narratives such as the passive Jewish victim. Learning that commonly believed narratives are historically inaccurate can help students reconstruct their understanding of events, and better recognize the complexities in the decision making and actions of multiple groups involved in genocide.

**Historical accuracy:** Since film is geared toward entertainment, it is a useful tool to help students consider historical accuracy by critically examining films for accuracy in the portrayal of historic events. Viewing a film for accuracy also allows the teacher to bring in additional primary sources for comparison purposes. As previously mentioned, a viewing of *Hotel Rwanda* and parallel examination of news articles reporting that Paul Rusesabagina extorted money from Tutsi sheltered in his hotel would allow for a discussion of the accuracy of the film, and help students understand that certain aspects of the story were dramatized for entertainment value. A similar activity could be carried out with a viewing of *Schindler’s List*, and an examination of Oskar Schindler’s role outside his factory and his relationship with the Nazis. Likewise, firsthand accounts could be used alongside films such as *Shake Hands with the Devil* (Rwanda), *Sometimes in April* (Rwanda), *The Killing Fields* (Cambodia), *Katyn* (the Holocaust), or *The Devil Came on Horseback* (Darfur) in order to help students determine what information is presented accurately, and what information is dramatization. Providing primary sources to compare to films may help students to visualize information within documents, and act as a starting point in determining where the firsthand accounts differ from the visual representation. Students could then re-write scenes based on the primary source accounts, with the goal of creating more realistic and accurate film representations of events.
Conclusion

There are multiple ways to incorporate film in the social studies classroom. However, when choosing to use film, it is key to pre-determine which activities students will complete and which skills will be practiced through the use of film, as suggested by Stoddard and Marcus (2010), to avoid lapsing into non-optimal uses as described by Hobbs (2006). While the successes or shortcomings of film in the social studies classroom has been examined in several studies, this article seeks to provide suggestions on using thoughtfully planned film activities to not only strengthen students historical and media literacies, but also to introduce a topic with which students may be unfamiliar. In the process, students may gain a greater understanding of the topic of genocide and mass atrocities and understand that it is a global and reoccurring issue that did not end at the conclusion of World War II.

References


Media Coverage of the Origins of the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter movements

Jonathon Dragon, Drew University

This lesson plan is designed to help students examine media biases in the coverage of the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter movements. This will be done using news accounts of two pivotal events, Rosa Park’s arrest and Trayvon Martin’s murder. This lesson includes original photos, two sets of contrasting newspaper articles, and a document analysis sheet.

Ever since the Civil Rights movement began in 1954, the media has covered the major events in civil rights history. Sometimes the coverage has been biased or only told a part of the story. It is important to make sure that more than one source on a subject is read before deciding whether the statements contained in the article are true. This article describes the use of four articles on major events from civil rights history. The first two are about the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the second two are about the shooting of Trayvon Martin. Teachers can use these documents to answer essential questions about civil rights in America: what do these four articles tell us about the media coverage of civil rights activism? Do you think that the way that the media has portrayed civil rights activism has changed between the time of the Civil Rights movement and today’s Black Lives Matter movement?

Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3**
  - Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

  - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1**
    - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

  **Hook: How do different photos shape the way you view people in the media?**

  The teacher should show students the contrasting images of Rosa Parks and Trayvon Martin. Then, ask the students, how do the different images shape how you feel about these people? How do you think words can have the same effect?

  **Historical Background—Rosa Parks**

  Rosa Parks, an African-American woman who lived in Montgomery Alabama, was arrested on December 1st 1955. She was arrested because she refused to give up her seat at the front of the bus to a white man. At that time in Alabama, African-Americans were required by law to take the space at the back of the bus and leave the front of the bus to the white people. When Rosa Parks refused, she was arrested and would eventually be fined $14 for her actions. This sparked outrage in Montgomery and was one of the events that sparked the Civil Rights movement. Rosa Parks’ arrest led to the Montgomery bus boycott.
Figure 1: Rosa Parks
(http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/01/living/rosa-parks-anniversary-feat/)

Figure 2: Rosa Parks
(http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/01/living/rosa-parks-anniversary-feat/)

Figure 3: Trayvon Martin

Figure 4: Trayvon Martin
(http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20581404,00.html)
Buses Boycotted Over Race Issue
Montgomery, Ala., Negroes Protest Woman’s Arrest for Defying Segregation

A court test of segregated transportation loomed today following the arrest of a Negro who refused to move to the colored section of a city bus. While thousands of other Negroes boycotted Montgomery city lines in protest, Mrs. Rosa Parks was fined $14 in police court today for having disregarded last Thursday a driver’s order to move to the rear of a bus. Negro passengers ride in the rear of the bus here, white passengers in front according to a local law…

An emotional crowd of Negroes, estimated by the police at 5,000, screamed approval tonight at a meeting to continue the boycott. Spokesman said the boycott would continue until people who rode buses were no longer “intimidated, embarrassed, and corrected.”

Word Bank
Negro: An African-American person.
Disregarded: Ignored.

5,000 At Meeting Outline Boycott, Bullet Clips Bus
Source: Montgomery Advertiser, By Joe Azbell
December 6, 1955

An estimated 5,000 hymn-singing Negroes packed the Holt Street Baptist Church to its outer doors and spilled over into three streets blocking traffic last night as they voted to continue a racial boycott against buses of the Montgomery City Lines Inc. Meanwhile, (...) the manager of the Montgomery City Lines, reported that a bus driven by driver B. S. Johnson, apparently was fired on by a person with a .22 caliber rifle in the Negro Washington Park area.
The continuing boycott grew out of the arrest and conviction of Rosa Parks, 42, 634 Cleveland Ave., Negro seamstress at a department store here, on a segregation violation. The conviction of the Negro woman may cause a court test on segregation of Negroes and whites on Montgomery Buses (...).

Word Bank
Negro: An African-American person.
Hymn-singing: A hymn is a song sung at church.
Montgomery City Lines Inc.: The bus company.
Rosa Parks Articles Follow Up Questions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>New York Times Article</th>
<th>Montgomery Advertiser Article</th>
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<td>Focus of the Article</td>
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<td>List key words or phrases used to describe the people at the church.</td>
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<td>List key words or phrases used to describe Rosa Parks.</td>
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<td>How do the different words used in these articles paint different pictures?</td>
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**Historical Background—Trayvon Martin**

Trayvon Martin was a seventeen-year old boy who lived in Sanford, Florida. He was shot and killed by George Zimmerman, a member of the neighborhood watch, on February 26th, 2012. Zimmerman claimed that he shot Martin in self-defense, and the police report did confirm that he was bleeding from the nose and back of the head. Zimmerman was
eventually charged with murder, but was found not guilty on all counts.

**Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death**


Nearly three weeks after an unarmed teenager was killed in a small city north of Orlando, stirring an outcry, a few indisputable facts remain: the teenager, who was black, was carrying nothing but a bag of Skittles, some money and a can of iced tea when he was shot. The neighborhood crime watch volunteer who got out of his car and shot him is white and Hispanic. He has not been arrested and is claiming self-defense.

Beyond that, however, little is clear about the Feb. 26 shooting death of Trayvon Martin, 17. As criticism of the police investigation mounts, so too do the calls for swift action in a case with heavy racial overtones. Protests grow larger each week, and lawyers for the family are now asking the Department of Justice to intervene. The case also brings into sharp focus Florida’s self-defense laws, which give people who feel threatened greater latitude in defending themselves than most states.

The police in of Sanford, where the shooting took place, are not revealing details of the investigation. Late Friday night, after weeks of pressure, the police played the 911 calls in the case for the family and gave copies to the news media. On the recordings, one shot, an apparent warning or miss, is heard, followed by a voice begging or pleading, and a cry. A second shot is then heard, and the pleading stops.

**Word Bank**

*Outcry*: Public upset.

**Indisputable**: Cannot be argued with or proven false.

**Crime Watch Volunteer**: Someone who volunteers to keep a look out for crime in a neighborhood.

**Trayvon Martin: New photos, details spark online debate**

Source: *Orlando Sentinel* by Jeff Weiner March 27, 2012

For weeks now, in Sanford and elsewhere, crowds have rallied around the phrase "I am Trayvon Martin." But an background of controversy has surrounded a related question: Who was Trayvon Martin? New reports of bad behavior at his South Florida high school, and new photos of the teen have emerged online. Since the controversy began, some bloggers and many website commenters have questioned why the primary images of Trayvon in the media have shown him younger than he was when he was killed at age 17. One new photo, which was the profile picture for a Twitter account linked to the teen, appears to show him closer to that age.

The photo was picked up this week by Yahoo! News and the Drudge Report, among others. It has also been posted to various online forums and blogs, under headings such as "the real Trayvon Martin." The image shows the teen wearing what appears to be gold on his teeth. Others online show a pair of tattoos; one says "Sybrina," the first name of Trayvon’s mother. Supporters of Trayvon’s family say the images, and reports about the teen’s school misbehavior, are irrelevant to the shooting. Others, including some in the blogosphere, say the facts emerging contradict the clean-cut image of Trayvon his family has presented.

**Word Bank**

*Bloggers*: People who blog online.

*Commenters*: People who comment on online blogs.
Trayvon Martin Articles Follow-Up Questions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>New York Times Article</th>
<th>Orlando Sentinel Article</th>
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<td>How do the different words used in these articles paint different pictures?</td>
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Integrating New York History Into the Grade 4 and Grade 7-8 Social Studies Framework

Bruce W. Dearstyne, University of Maryland

Teaching social studies in New York these days presents many exciting opportunities and also some challenges. Our social studies frameworks are designed to align with and implement a recent, ambitious national Common Core standard, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf). In this article, we will focus on New York's K-8 Social Studies Framework (https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-k-12-social-studies-framework), issued by the State Education Department a few years ago, because of its inclusion of New York history at the Grades 4 and 7/8 levels. The Framework labels Grade 4 "New York State and Local History and Government" but its historical coverage in reality ends with the early 20th century. Grades 7-8 are dedicated to "History of the United States and New York State." U.S. history is covered well but coverage of New York history is very modest. For instance, the Grade 7-8 framework doesn't mention a single New York governor, company or writer. Neither Grade 4 or 7/8 covers local history despite that term appearing in the title of the Grade 4 document.


**Flexibility and enrichment through local history**
The Framework documents, Field Guide and Toolkit set expectations and provide guidance. But individual schools and teachers have some leeway in how they actually teach the courses. There are, currently, no state exams in Grade 4 or Grade 7/8 Social Studies, giving teachers discretion and flexibility in what they cover. In fact, the first page of the Grade 7/8 Framework invites imagination in integrating state and local history in the courses: "Teachers are encouraged to incorporate local features of state history in the course, such as the Dutch in the Hudson Valley, the Germans in the Schoharie Valley, the French in the Champlain Valley, Fort Niagara, the Brooklyn Naval Yard, the Seneca Falls Convention, Underground Railroad locations, war memorials, and other features in their community."

That expansive view seems appropriate for our state. New York is, arguably, the nation's most historically significant and influential state. For many years, we were the most populous state. New York does things on a grand scale. Often, our state operates ambitiously, impatient with delay. New York is a historical leader in business, commerce, social reform, education, literature, and many aspects of culture. Developments that have started here have often spread to the rest of the nation, which followed New York's example.

Covering New York state and local history introduces students to nearby history and inspires civic pride in the state and its communities. It
enables teachers to make descriptions of grand events and trends at the national level come alive, and enables students to make connections through vivid stories of exciting New York people and events at the local level.

How to capitalize on our robust New York history and bring it into the classroom? The remainder of this article suggests several strategies.

**Consider the role of history in social studies**

Reading all the documents noted above is a good first step. They convey a sense of expectations and objectives, but also some of the complexities and a sense of where history fits in. Social Studies in the Common Core educational framework include not only history but also geography, economics, literacy, and analytical abilities. Teaching history in Social Studies courses requires teaching, and getting students to remember and understand, facts - what actually happened in history, when, and why. Those fundamentals are essential. But Social Studies, and history within it, are part of a higher and richer educational purpose, which complicates our work but also makes it more exciting. The Field Guide, cited above describes, the broader context of an "Inquiry Arc" in Social Studies that is intended to build literacy, discernment, analytical ability, and critical thinking, through four objectives: (1) Developing questions and planning inquiries; (2) Applying disciplinary concepts and tools; (3) Evaluating sources and using evidence; and (4) Communicating conclusions and taking informed action. The Field Guide indicates a shift in approach that affects how we teach history:

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<tr>
<td>Breadth of topics</td>
<td>Depth within topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>Transfer and connections</td>
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<td>Teacher as</td>
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**Tap into five essential sources**

New York's history is long and complex, but there are five very helpful sources to aid understanding. The *Encyclopedia of New York State* (2005) and the *Encyclopedia of New York City* (2010) are indispensable authoritative sources and also invaluable for their references to other resources. The journal *New York History*, published by the New York State Historical Association, is an excellent source for the best scholarship on state and local history topics and reviews of new books. It is now available online to subscribers (http://www.nysha.org/nyscha_3). The *New York History Blog* (http://newyorkhistoryblog.org) often carries essays on interesting historical topics and is a good place to keep up with new publications and historical exhibits and other programs. The *New York History Net* (http://www.nyhistory.com) is an excellent source that also links to other sources and historic sites.

**Check out books and journals**

Of course, published books and journals are excellent sources for state history and for identifying historical trends and events that dovetail with the events and developments in the Framework. Books for students are helpful, but at the 7/8 level many cover U.S. with little on New York. Rosen Publishing is issuing a series of books and interactive e-books on New York history for students in their "Spotlight on New York" series (http://www.spotlightonny.com). The school's librarian or media specialist should be consulted for
advice on books and journals as well as online sources. The local public or college/university library should also have a range of useful books and journals. The journal *New York History* and the *New York History Blog*, noted above, review new books as they come out. Here is a sampling of books that Social Studies teachers should find useful:


In addition to the journal *New York History*, noted above, there are a number of other history journals, including the *Hudson River Valley Review* (http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/review) and the *Long Island History Journal* (http://lihj.cc.stonybrook.edu). Some historical societies also publish their own journals.

**Work with officially designated local Historians**

New York is the only state in the nation that has officially appointed village, town, city, and county Historians. They are appointed pursuant to Section 57.07 of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, their work is coordinated by the State Historian in the State Museum in Albany, and you can identify them through the roster on the website of their association, the Association of Public Historians of New York State (http://www.aphnys.org). Not every locality has appointed an official Historian, and their work varies from one community to the next. Some carry out genealogical and family history research; others collect and preserve historical records; a number write local history columns for the press and publish histories of their communities; still others make public presentations on historical topics. But they all have two things in common: deep expertise in local history and an abiding commitment to preserving and disseminating it to the public. They know a great deal about local history and enjoy speaking and writing about it. They can relate local events to state developments and, in turn, to history at the national level, expertise and perspective that dovetail particularly well with the integrated New York/US theme of the Grade 7-8 Social Studies Framework. The local historian can be the Social Studies teacher's advisor and partner, for instance, in developing lesson plans, making in-classroom
presentations on community history, showing and leading the study of historical documents, and leading walking tours of community historical houses and sites.

Local historical societies and history programs
New York has over 600 historic sites, historical societies, history museums, and similar programs. Some are federal sites, administered by the National Park Service (https://www.nps.gov/state/NY/index.htm). The NPS also administers National Heritage Corridor sites, including the Erie Canalway (https://www.nps.gov/erie/index.htm). There are forty state historic sites, administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (http://nysparks.com/historic-sites). Most of the other historical societies and similar programs are owned by local governments or private groups, but almost all welcome school group visits. At all of these sites, students can see artifacts, archival documents, and historic buildings and hear presentations from historians and guides which teachers can use to illustrate and enrich textbook and classroom presentations. Some historical programs have particularly extensive programs for educators and students in addition to welcoming field visit groups. For instance:

- Albany Institute of History and Art (http://www.albanyinstitute.org/education.html) has a series of offerings to connect teachers and students with historical artifacts and materials.
- Brooklyn Historical Society (http://www.brooklynhistory.org) is a premier site for Brooklyn history. It offers field visits, publications and curricula, and professional development opportunities for teachers.
- Buffalo History Museum (http://www.buffalohistory.org) has assembled traveling History Kits with Framework-appropriate activities and real artifacts that students can handle.
- Genesee Country Village and Museum (Mumford) (https://www.gcv.org) is a "living history" museum that presents a rendition of life in 19th century New York.
- Museum of the City of New York's Frederick A.O. Schwartz Children's Center (New York City) (http://www.mcny.org/education) offers extensive programs for teachers and students on teaching New York City, state, and U.S. history, including resource guides, field trips, tours, professional development courses for teachers, and other services.
- New-York Historical Society (New York City) (http://www.nyhistory.org) offers an extensive series of exhibits, public programs, educational programs, and other materials that connect local, state, and national history. It has a curriculum library of resources that it shares with teachers. The Society even has its own Children's Museum.
- New York State Historical Association (Cooperstown) (http://www.nysha.org) operates the Farmers' Museum (on New York's early agricultural history), and the Fenimore Art Museum, is a great place for school groups to visit, and administers the National History Day contest for student research and writing. It offers educational seminars for teachers, and also has a rich research library.
- New York State Museum (Albany) (http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/education) has exhibits on all phases of New York history. It is particularly good for school groups and has a variety of educational offerings.
- Strong/National Museum of Play (Rochester) (http://www.museumofplay.org) is devoted to
the history and exploration of play. It is good history, and a fun place to visit.

Use online resources

There are many places to look for online curricular guides, syllabi, documents, etc., including a number of the programs mentioned in the previous section. A few examples:

- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Information on the historic canal and information about field trips for students: [http://www.erieconalway.org](http://www.erieconalway.org)
- Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. A rich source of materials for teaching U.S. history: [https://www.gilderlehrman.org](https://www.gilderlehrman.org)
- Hudson River Valley Institute, Marist College. Lesson plans and supporting materials for teaching about the Hudson Valley: [http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/learning](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/learning)
- Museum of the City of New York. Extensive online sources as well as the on-site sources noted in the section above. [http://www.mcny.org/education](http://www.mcny.org/education)
- New Amsterdam History Center. Lesson plans on teaching about the Dutch colony of New Netherland: [http://www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org/education/index.html](http://www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org/education/index.html)
- New York City Department of Education/We Teach NYC. Online library: [https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources](https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources)
- New York State Archives. Document sets, videos on teaching with historical materials, other educational material, and a publication, *Consider the Source: Historical Records in the Classroom*. The Archives also gives awards each year to students and teachers for imaginative use of historical records in research: [http://www.archives.nysed.gov/education](http://www.archives.nysed.gov/education)
- New York State Economic Development Corporation/Path Through History. Information on state historic sites, part of the state’s heritage tourism program: [http://paththroughhistory.iloveny.com](http://paththroughhistory.iloveny.com)
- New York State Historical Association/Farmers’ Museum. Educational materials on the history of agriculture: [http://www.harvestofhistory.org](http://www.harvestofhistory.org)
- Digital versions of selected state publications and documents: [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandocs](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandocs)
- Teaching the Hudson Valley. An initiative for educators focusing on the history of the Hudson Valley. Many lesson/activity plans that can be searched by grade, keyword, etc. Also links to historic sites and professional development opportunities and institutes that THV holds: [http://www.teachingthehudsonvalley.org](http://www.teachingthehudsonvalley.org)

**Capitalize on historical commemorations**
Every November is New York History Month, so designated by Section 52.02 of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law. This is a time to celebrate our state's history, recognize the work of its historians, and build student interest, for instance, through essay contests, study of leaders and re-enactments of dramatic historical events, and public forums where students can present their work. There are other historical milestones each year that teachers can use as a basis for study of an event in history and the people involved with it. The year 2017 promises to be particularly important -- it is the 240th anniversary of New York's birthday (with the promulgation of the first State Constitution in 1777), the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in our state, and the 200th anniversary of the beginning of New York's famed Erie Canal. There should be state commemorations of each of these. The website of the State Museum (http://www.nysm.nysed.gov) is a good place to check for state government's exhibits and other commemorative activities. But there should also be events commemorating these milestones in communities throughout the state that teachers can connect with and that may present opportunities for direct student involvement.

**Look to models beyond our state**

This article is about New York but of course all the other states cover state and local history in their public schools. Many have adopted the Common Core and the C3 framework and teachers in those states are also developing approaches to teaching state and local history that align with C3, paralleling what we are doing here in New York. California, for instance, recently adopted a History-Social Science Framework (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/sbedrafthssfw.asp) that is interesting for how it compares to ours (like New York, they cover California history in 4th grade). One of the most exciting initiatives in the nation is the California History-Social Science Project (http://chssp.ucdavis.edu), developed by a consortium of teachers and universities. They developed the Framework referenced above (which the state Board of Education adopted). They issue publications and organize seminars and other professional development opportunities to strengthen teachers' capacity to develop students' critical thinking, literacy skills, and historical content knowledge. Their online magazine The Source is a good place to look for innovative ideas and links to useful resources.

Several other sources are worth checking for ideas and insights, including:

- The Canadian Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness' Historical Thinking Project (http://historicalthinking.ca) provides a useful model for encouraging students to "think historically" built around six concepts: (1) Establish historical significance; (2) Use primary source evidence; (3) Identify continuity and change; (4) Analyze cause and consequence; (5) Take historical perspectives, and (6) Understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.

- The National Council for History Education (https://www.nche.net) offers an array of materials on effective teaching and promoting student interest and learning.

- The National History Education Clearinghouse (http://teachinghistory.org) is an excellent source for online materials and model programs and practices.

- The Stanford History Education Group (https://sheg.stanford.edu/htm) has guidance on how to get students to "think historically" and "read like a historian."
The Society for History Education (http://www.societyforhistoryeducation.org) publishes The History Teacher, a journal that describes model teaching techniques.

**Putting it together**

Integrating New York state and local history into Social Studies requires imagination and identifying events and developments that have local roots, statewide significance, but also national importance. Here are a few examples, discussed in my book The Spirit of New York:

- **New York State's founding document.** One of the goals of Social Studies education is to inspire civic awareness and participation. The Framework documents cover the U.S. Constitution. But the story of the New York State Constitution, promulgated on April 22, 1777 (New York State's birthday!) is as important to New York as the U.S. Constitution is to the United States. It was written on the fly by a convention of New York rebels who were on the run from the British, but was a brilliant document that got the new state off to a good start. It influenced the U.S. Constitution a decade later -- Gouverneur Morris, an important drafter of the New York document also wrote part of the U.S. Constitution. John Jay, the principal writer of the New York document, was a champion of adoption of the U.S. Constitution. Jay served as the first Chief Justice of New York, the first Chief Justice of the U.S., and New York's second governor.(Walter Stahr, John Jay: Founding Father [2005] is a good starting source.)

- **Crusade for women's rights.** Elizabeth Cady Stanton, New York's great women's rights advocate, was born in Johnstown, lived much of her life in Seneca Falls, and also spent time in New York City. She was the principal organizer of the famous 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention and spent much of the next 50 years fighting for women's equality, much of it here in New York State, speaking, writing, and lobbying the legislature for voting rights and other measures. (Lori Ginsberg, Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life [2009] is a useful starting point. Her marvelous autobiography, Eighty Years and More [1898], is available in print and free online [http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/stanton/years/years.html]. The Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls tells her story and that of other women's rights pioneers. [https://www.nps.gov/wo/index.htm]).

- **A leader in the anti-slavery movement.** The antislavery movement and underground railroad are key aspects of New York and U.S. history. An excellent, revealing case study is the rescue of a fugitive slave in 1851 by a mob in Syracuse from a U.S. Marshal who had come to arrest him...
and return him to slavery. (A useful place to start might be Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* [2002])

- **Leading in human rights.** New York has often been a leader in campaigns to secure protection of individuals' rights but our role is sometimes downplayed in coverage of national history. A good but not well known example is 1903 legislation to ban child labor from factories and require attendance in school. New York City political activists Lillian Wald and Florence Kelley were mainly responsible for the campaign that resulted in the legislation which, in turn, made New York a pioneer in this area and set a model for other states. (Beatrice Siegel, *Lillian Wald of Henry Street* [1983] and Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work* [1995] are excellent sources.)

- **First in aviation.** Most U.S. history books cover the Wright Brothers and their pioneering role in the development of airplane flights in 1903. But an equally interesting story is that of their contemporary and rival, Glenn Curtiss, from Hammondsport. Curtiss made the first airplane flight that was pre-announced, open to the public, and certified by an official organization, on July 4, 1908, in Hammondsport. He made the first Albany-to-New York City flight on May 29, 1910. He is known as the Father of Naval Aviation because of his work in 1911 that convinced the Navy of the value of combat aircraft. Curtiss is credited with over 500 inventions; some of his seminal innovations, with modifications, are still used in airplanes today. (Three useful sources are Seth Schulman, *Unlocking the Sky: Glenn Hammond Curtiss and the Race to Invent the Airplane* [2002]; Lawrence Goldstone, *Birdmen: The Wright Brothers, Glenn Curtiss, and the Battle to Control the Skies* [2015]; and the Glenn Curtiss Museum in Hammondsport, http://www.glennhcurtissmuseum.org).

- **Leading in civil rights.** New York's leadership in the civil rights movement is often underrepresented in historical accounts. Many of the leaders of the movement came from New York. The NAACP was founded in New York City in 1909. New York enacted the first state civil rights law, in 1945. But there are few more inspiring stories than that of Jackie Robinson, the first black man to play in major league baseball, beginning with his debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947. (Arnold Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* [1998] is excellent but the best book may be the one Jackie Robinson wrote with Alfred Ducett, *I Never Had it Made: The Autobiography of Jackie Robinson* [2003]).
Aligning the NYS Middle School ELA Modules and Social Studies Framework

Alan J. Singer, Hofstra University

A major criticism of the Common Core ELA Standards is that they do not reflect how people actually develop as literate and thinking human beings. The overwhelming focus in Common Core is on skill acquisition through a technical approach to reading and writing that often sub-divides learning and understanding into small, discrete, and disconnected tasks. Student interest has no place in Common Core reading and writing. Texts are assigned based on “lexile” levels of complexity determined by algorithms (mathematical models), not teachers. Analysis of non-fiction text is divorced from any understanding of historical context. It is as if primary source documents somehow emerged from cyber-space completely independent of events and people. But just because Common Core is laid-out that way does not mean we have to teach that way.

Whether or not you agree with high-stakes Common Core aligned testing, which I don't, teachers are obligated to prepare students for the tests. To support genuine student learning, as well as their performance on Common Core aligned sixth, seventh, and eighth grade English-Language Arts tests, ELA and social studies departments are going to have to cooperate. A big first step will be aligning the middle school EngageNY ELA Modules with the Social Studies Curriculum Framework. Both departments will have to make compromises. Because United States history by definition is chronological, the ELA Modules will need to be addressed out of the recommended (but not mandated order). Because the state ELA exams are administered in April, social studies teachers will have to spend less time on some preferred topics and go into the module topics in greater depth and in time for ELA teachers to prepare students for the tests.

I know this sounds like historical heresy, but in seventh grade the detailed unit on the United States Constitution and Government could be moved to the post-test period later in the spring semester. In addition, if 7th grade United States history is extended to cover the entire 19th century (or at least most of it), there will be more time in the eighth grade for in-depth units on World War II and the Civil Rights Movement, topics explored extensively in the eighth grade ELA Modules.

ELA text should also be shifted. Bud, Not Buddy, is about an African-American orphan living in Flint, Michigan during the Great Depression. Lexile level places it in the sixth grade, but the social studies content aligns with the eighth grade, where it would be a valuable literary support, especially for challenged readers. Similarly, Dragonwings could be shifted from the sixth grade to the eighth grade where students study about Chinese immigration to the United States.

Other fiction should be added to the ELA reading list to correspond with social studies curricula content. Sixth graders could read Heart of a Samurai by Margi Preus (Japan), The King of Shadows by Susan Cooper (England), Bound by Donna Jo Napoli (China), Shiva’s Fire or Shabanu by Suzanne Fisher Staples (India). They are all award winning books of historical fiction recommended for middle-level students. Chains, by
Laurie Halse Anderson is the story of a thirteen-year-old enslaved African girl in revolutionary-era New York City and her struggle for freedom. Its Lexile level is 780L. *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes is about an apprentice silversmith who participates in the earlier stages of the American Revolution in Boston. Its Lexile level is 840L. Both books fit within the difficulty range of other texts recommended for 7th grade students.

These are some of my specific recommendations for social studies/English-Language Arts curriculum alignment in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. According to the New York State Social Studies Framework, “Grade 6 Social Studies is based on the geography and history of the Eastern Hemisphere, including the development of cultures, civilizations, and empires; interactions between societies; and the comparison of trends in government and economics. It also incorporates some elements of other social sciences. The course begins with an examination of the Eastern Hemisphere today, using geographic skills. This provides the foundation for making connections between the past and the present throughout the course. The remainder of the course is divided into seven Key Ideas that cover a time span from pre-history into the 1300s.” Topics in sixth grade social studies include belief systems across time, the “foundations of democracy,” human origins in the African Rift Valley, early River Valley Civilizations that developed along the Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, Indus-Ganges, and Yellow-Yangtze rivers, Greek and Roman Empires, feudal society in Europe, Golden Ages in the Islamic world, Gupta India, China and the European Renaissance, and increasing regional interaction through cultural diffusion, human migration, trade, war, and the spread of disease. The units have a heavy comparative focus as students examine similarities and differences in religions, geographies, and civilizations.

ELA Module 1 explores myth with a particular focus on Greek myth and students read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan, a book in the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series. Other texts in this module include “The Story of Medusa and Athena,” “Prometheus and Pandora,” “Theseus and the Minotaur,” and a series of readings drawn from work by E.M. Berens. Writing assignments include a “My Hero’s Journey Narrative.” Logic dictates shifting this module to later in the fall semester when students are studying about Greek and Roman civilizations in their social studies classes. Meanwhile ELA Module 2A with a focus on “Rules to Live By” could line up with the development of law in River Valley Civilizations. Other sixth grade curriculum alignments are more of a stretch, but do make some sense. ELA Module 2B examines “Voices of Adversity” with a number of readings on medieval European society and ELA Module 3A introduces students to Lawrence Yep’s *Dragonwings* which opens in late 19th century China. ELA Modules 3B and 4 have an environmental focus that would be enhanced by parallel social studies and science units.

The 7th grade ELA modules and social studies framework lend themselves to two extended and
collaborative units in the first half of the spring semester, one on slavery in the United States and the other on the industrialization of the northern states. Because the slave system dates back into the colonial era I prefer that students address that unit first, but it could be done the other way as well.

7th grade ELA Module 3 - Slavery: The People Could Fly (Focus: Understanding Perspectives)

The enslavement of Africans in the British North America and the United States is covered at three points in the 7th grade social studies curriculum. While it should continue to be introduced in each of these eras, alignment with the ELA curriculum suggests an in-depth examination of slavery in the United States during a unit on sectional development. This unit could re-introduce the students to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, examine slavery in New York State during the colonial era and the early national period, analyze both New York State’s complicity with slavery and the role of New Yorkers in the abolitionist movement and on the Underground Railroad, explore the development of the plantation system in the American South and its role in national economic development, closely look at the impact of enslavement on Africans in the Americas, investigate African resistance to enslavement, and evaluate efforts to end slavery in the United States. It could also introduce students to current issues and themes examined in the eighth grade such as the continuing impact of racism on African-Americans and American society.

This module focuses on the autobiography of Frederick Douglass, with specific attention to understanding how he uses language in powerful ways and how he tells his story in order to serve his purpose of working to abolish slavery. Students begin by building background knowledge about Douglass and his historical context. They then read closely key excerpts from his Narrative, focusing on his message as well as the author’s craft. Finally, they select one episode from the Narrative and rewrite it as a children’s story, using *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery* as a mentor text.

Assignments:

- Using Evidence to Support Analysis: “Frederick Douglass,” short constructed response
- Reading Poetry: Analyzing Structure and Language in “We Wear the Mask,” selected response and short constructed response
- Analyzing Stories: Comparing Written and Oral Stories, and Analyzing Purpose and Craft in Douglass’s Narrative, selected response and short constructed response
- Essay: Analyzing Douglass’s Position in Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, on-demand essay

Texts:

- Biography: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Frederick Douglass; “Renaissance Man” by Scott Kirkwood (adapted by Expeditionary Learning); Texts from Freedom: A History of US Webisode 5, PBS; Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery, William Miller and Cedric Lewis.
7th grade ELA Module 2A - Working Conditions  
(Focus: Working with Evidence)

The sectional divide between the North and South as the North gradually develops new industries, attracts new immigrant groups, and develops a free labor system, becomes an underlying cause of the American Civil War. In this unit students would examine both the positive and negative impact of industrialization on life in the United States including early labor organization. An important lens into the process is the fictional story of *Lyddie, The Mill Girl* by Katherine Paterson that they would read in English classes.

Students explore the issue of working conditions, historical and modern-day. They analyze how people, settings, and events interact in literary and informational texts. Students first focus on Lyddie (about a girl who works in the Lowell mills); they write an argument essay about Lyddie’s choices around joining a protest over working conditions. Then they read a speech by César Chávez (tracing how the sections of the text combine to build central claims) as they consider the role that workers, the government, and consumers play in improving working conditions. Finally, a short research project explores how businesses can affect working conditions. As a final performance task, students create a guide to working conditions in the garment industry.

**Assignments:** How Working Conditions Affected Lyddie, selected response and short constructed response; Argument Essay about Lyddie, scaffolded essay; How Chávez Develops His Claims in the Commonwealth Club Address, selected response; Analyzing the Structure of Chávez’s “Wrath of Grapes” Speech, selected response and short constructed response.


The 8th grade ELA modules contain two themes that directly link to the social studies curriculum. “Taking a Stand” (2A) supports the study of the African-American Civil Rights Movement and Japanese-American Relations in WWII (3A) aligns with the social studies unit on World War II, especially with lessons on the “home front” and Japanese internment. Of course, if we take into account chronology, they should be flipped.

8th grade ELA Module 2A – Taking a Stand  
(Focus: Working with Evidence)

Students continue to develop their ability to closely read text while studying the theme of taking a stand. They read several speeches from real people who took a stand and then immerse themselves in a study of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. They engage in a character study of Atticus—
analyzing his actions and words, and what others say about him—to better understand his willingness to take a stand for others. Students also consider how the theme of “The Golden Rule” is rendered new in the novel, and compare and contrast the novel with poems that have this same theme. Finally, students form groups to create a Readers Theater montage based on key quotes from the text, and write an associated commentary to explain how and why their script remains true to but also veers from the original text.

Assignments:

- Analyzing Author’s Craft in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the Poem “Solitude”: Allusions, Text Structure, Connections to Traditional Themes, and use of Figurative Language, graphic organizer, selected response and short constructed response;
- Text to Film and Perspective Comparison of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, graphic organizer, selected response, and short constructed response;
- Argument Essay: Taking a Stand, scaffolded essay;
- Readers Theater Scene Selection: Justification extended response;
- Readers Theater Commentary, extended response

Text:

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee


8th grade ELA Module 3A - Japanese-American Relations in WWII (Focus: Understanding Perspectives)

Students study the important yet divergent experiences of war and conflict, specifically WWII as they read *Unbroken*, which tells the story of Louis Zamperini, an American POW in a Japanese camp, alongside an informational text about Miné Okubo, a Japanese-American who was interned in a relocation camp in the United States. To build background knowledge, students read primary source documents. They contrast FDR’s response to the Pearl Harbor attack in his “Day of Infamy” speech with the Japanese response in the “Fourteen-part Message.” Finally, students analyze how Zamperini and Okubo faced others’ attempts to make them “invisible” during their imprisonment or internment, and how Zamperini became “visible” after the war. For their culminating writing task, students write a research-based narrative that tells the story of how Okubo, too, regained her life and became “visible” again.

Assignments:

- Narrative Writing: Becoming Visible after Internment Presentation and Reflection, scaffolded narrative;
- Fishbowl Note-catcher: Understanding Perspectives on the Pearl Harbor Attack, graphic organizer with short constructed response;
Fishbowl Discussion: Comparing Conflicting Accounts of the Pearl Harbor Attack, discussion (using graphic organizer as speaking notes);
Evaluating and Classifying Primary Sources, graphic organizer;
Informational Essay and Commentary: The Invisibility of Captives during WWII, scaffolded essay;
Single-Draft Narrative Writing, on-demand narrative;
Analysis of Language Techniques, selected response and short constructed response.

**Texts:**

*Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*, Laura Hillenbrand;

**8th grade ELA Module 3B - The Civil Rights Movement and the Little Rock Nine (Focus: Understanding Perspective)**

Students study the U.S. civil rights movement, focusing particularly on the Little Rock Nine. They consider the question “How can stories be powerful?” as they learn about segregation, the civil rights movement, the Little Rock Nine and the role of the various mediums in shaping perceptions of events. As students read *A Mighty Long Way* by Carlotta Walls Lanier and a photo essay titled *Little Rock Girl 1957* by Shelley Tougas, they consider the different ways in which the story of the Little Rock Nine has been told. Students build background about the history of segregation and Jim Crow laws in the United States. They analyze the role of various mediums in depicting the Little Rock Nine. Students finish the module by considering what choices an author makes when telling a story. For their final performance task, students present and reflect upon a short narrative based on an informational text and a photograph from *Little Rock Girl 1957*.

**Assignments:**

- Narrative Writing: “Snapshot in a Journey” Presentation and Reflection, scaffolded narrative;
- Fishbowl Speaking Notes: Understanding “Separate but Equal” (The Court’s Decision and The Dissenting Opinion), graphic organizer with short constructed response;
- Fishbowl Discussion: Understanding Conflicting Claims on “Separate but Equal,” discussion (using graphic organizer as speaking notes);
- Evaluating and Classifying Primary Sources, graphic organizer;
- Informational Essay: The Role of the Media in the Story of the Little Rock Nine, scaffolded essay;
- Single-Draft Narrative Writing, on-demand narrative;
- Analysis of Language Techniques.
Texts:


Social studies teachers can also contour readings, questions, and writing assignments to better prepare students for the engageNY ELA exams. About 75% of the reading passages and questions from the April 5-7, 2016 exam were released by New York State on the engageNY website. On the sixth grade ELA exam students read an excerpt from “Kathleen: The Celtic Knot” by Siobhan Parkinson. It is about a young girl who represented her dance school at a recital in 1937. Every fifth line is numbered so the passage has 61 lines and is slightly less than 1,000 words. It is followed by seven multiple-choice questions that refer directly to the text. Students are asked to reference specific lines or phrases and identify the author’s purpose, the meaning of a word or phrase, information about the character, a central or main idea of the passage, relationships between characters, and the narrator’s point of view. The sixth grade exam also includes a poem with similar types of questions. Sixth grade social studies teachers can easily format activity sheets to conform to this format. Another reading passage, an excerpt from “Katerina’s Wish” by Jeanie Mobley, is about a European family from Bohemia that immigrates to the United States in 1900. Questions based on this reading require an extended response. In this case, students must identify “What is a central idea of ‘Excerpt from Katerina’s Wish’?” and “use two details from the story” to support their response. They also have to explain “How does Trina’s mood change from the beginning to the end of ‘Excerpt from Katerina’s Wish’?” and again use two details from the story” to support their response. Sample full-credit answers to the first question ranged from 70-95 words and to the second question from 100 to 145. The final extended response question asked students to compare the qualities of characters in two of the passages. Students were permitted to include the title of the passage and quotations in their answers. All of the reading passages come with critical or puzzling vocabulary footnoted, squeezebox, adjudicator, and Bohemia, and defined at the bottom of the page.

Songs:

Otis Redding, “A Change Is Gonna Come”; “Ain’t Nobody Gonna Turn Me Round”; “This Little Light of Mine.”

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The seventh and eighth grade reading passages and test questions are similar. The seventh grade test includes a passage from *Into the Unknown* by Walter Dean Myers about Captain James Cook’s 18th century trans-global voyage. It is accompanied by a world map showing his route. The questions follow the same format as those on the sixth grade test. In the extended writing section, students read an excerpt from *Shipwrecked Sailor* by John Ross Browne and have to explain how Captain Brooks and his crew used knowledge of the island to survive and how the attitude of crewmembers changed during the story. Both extended explanations require two details to support conclusions. Sample full-credit extended responses to the first question ranged from 85-100 words for the second question from 60-85 words.

On the eighth grade test students read two passages on the negative environmental impact of human actions on the oceans and they must identify how the author’s support their claims and evaluate the evidence used by the authors. Full-credit on comparison essays requires significantly longer student responses of approximately 300-400 words.

Re-alignment, or at least curriculum cooperation, can also support student performance on Common Core math tests and the eighth grade state science assessment. The math and science tests rely heavily on prompts that frequently include charts and graphs similar to those used in social studies lessons to examine change over time for population or the production of goods. Map study will help students using math grids. The 2015 eighth grade science test had questions where students had to compare images (of cats, species, and human body systems), hypothesize explanations, explain genetic inheritance through family trees, read maps, describe cause and effect, understand graphs, and gather data from simple charts, all skills developed or reinforced in social studies. Social studies, science, and math teachers should also share content and process vocabulary. These words appeared on the seventh-grade math test: scale, survey, pyramid, company, proportion, elevation, interval, rate of change, stock, advertise, random, approximation, data, dimension, business, savings account, expenses, recycling, annual, predict, discount, determine, contractor, blueprint, water tank, pier, estimate, reasonable, and processing fee.
Teaching Social Studies: An In-Depth Approach

Marlow Ediger, Truman State University

Social studies has been neglected in national standardized testing, in that what is tested is what will be taught. Being tested with NCLB tests also has its harmful effects due to factual items lending themselves to test-taking. Multiple choice test items in NCLB make for rote learning and memorization in reports from different school systems whereby teachers may spend weeks drilling pupils on subject matter knowledge and the art of test taking. Drilling pupils for taking a test does not make for enduring and thoughtful learning, but stresses regurgitation of subject matter which is of little possible use. Thus, unconnected bits of information accrue when pupils respond to multiple choice test items. Instead, social studies instruction must emphasize joy and excitement in learning. A relevant social studies curriculum involves making discoveries and identifying problems. Then too, learners need to make choices and decisions. Life consists of choosing from among alternatives (Ediger and Rao, 2012).

Developing the Social Studies Curriculum

Curriculum design in the social studies needs to be ongoing and continuous. Teachers and supervisors need to be on the lookout for ways of improvement in objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal procedures. To live in a technological age requires that individuals be knowledgeable, interested, and perceive purpose in improving society.

The author was born in 1927 when his family drove a Model A Ford with a starter when some used a hand crank to start the car. There were no heaters in these cars and the windshield wiper had to be operated by hand. They drove about 35 miles per hour and started to vibrate when driven a little bit faster. In 1937, my parents bought a Plymouth, and what a joy it was to have a heater in the car. The electric windshield wiper kept the windshield free from rain, and the maximum speed was 45-50 miles per hour. The car battery "ran down" very quickly when starting the car on a cold day. Our garage, attached to the barn, had a little hill, making it possible to push it downhill to “push-start” the car.

Compare the above with new car models which can drive well in excess of the speed limit and feature power steering, automatic transmissions, power brakes, and radios (our 1937 Plymouth had no radio; very few cars did at that time). All this says that the curriculum also must change in time. It has been several years since iPads became commonly adopted in many schools. My high school of graduation, Inman, Kansas (population 1100) purchased iPads for all students for the 2011-2012 school year.

With such knowledge available, pupils need guidance to focus on major ideas, not trivia nor irrelevant facts. Key ideas provide structure in learning as well as a framework for pupils studying each structure, carefully defined and developed, with intensified teaching. Supporting subject matter gives strength to each structural idea.

A variety of kinds of learning opportunities must be provided. Each activity reinforces those inherent ideas, making for in-depth teaching. Careful and meticulous sequencing provides opportunities for success in pupil achievement. New subject matter,
based upon what was taught previously, directly relates the new with the old in concepts and generalizations taught. Then too, learning by discovery makes for excitement as well as interest in achievement. Instead of lecture, pupil involvement invites learner questions and problem identification, which can occur across a wide variety of traditional and nontraditional activities (e.g., creative writing, poetry, class diaries, art projects, or visual arts) (Ediger, 2009).

Reading in the Social Studies

Students need to read primary sources. These are original in its entirety and written by an eyewitness account. One of the writer's graduate students brought to class a diary with the actual dated accounts of a Civil War relative. The handwriting was clear on the aged yellow pages revealing the style used at that time. Some of the content, the diary writer wrote, was in an abbreviated form, but was generally decipherable. This was read aloud by the teacher as students followed along on the screen. There was considerable excitement and interest in the diary contents. Several sessions were spent on its reading and discussion, along with other internet primary sources. Students learned how to integrate and relate primary sources with ongoing units of study.

Subject matter secured must be discussed in-depth involving critical and creative thought. Relevant subject matter and discussions provide a plethora of opportunities to utilize what has been learned. The total social studies curriculum must emphasize developing the good citizen. We can accomplish this with relevant matter knowledge, as well as the modeling of appropriate behavior in both classroom instruction and the school setting.

Evaluation of Achievement

Diverse procedures need to be utilized in in-depth unit instruction in the social studies. This is equally true of student assessment. Appraisal procedures should include the following:

- standardized tests which measure social studies achievement in subject matter knowledge as well as in thinking skills and in attitudinal development
- Diagnostic tests which assess where learners need more help in specifically.

All measurement devices need to be valid. Thus, standardized tests, for example to be valid, should measure salient achievement in social studies content and not in another academic discipline. It must not possess test items which contain highly complex words and thus become a test of reading abilities. To be reliable, the test needs to measure consistency of pupil test results. Both validity and reliability data are provided in the Manual for the adopted test.

Relevant facts, concepts and generalizations must be chosen as objectives for pupil achievement. Learning opportunities must be aligned with a variety of activities stresses in-depth teaching. Evaluation procedures should be varied and assist in ascertaining pupil progress.

References:


The Hidden Social Studies Curriculum

Elizabeth Bloom, Hartwick College

In 3rd grade I was a cast member in a Social Studies play reenacting the First Thanksgiving. I was one of the Indians and in that role donned a belted burlap sack, paper war bonnet and face paint. My classmates and I belted out:

We are red men tall and straight
In our feathers and our paint
Powwow Powwow
We’re the men of the old dugout
We are red men, feathers in our head men
Down among the dead men

Powwow!

Looking back, it is almost laughable to consider how the song, composed by my teacher, probably floated over the heads of our monolithically white audience. In those days, a similar performance could probably have been found in Harlem or Niagara Falls, N.Y. and was probably met with the same equanimity as it was in my small upstate town. It was just the way it was.

It would be natural to assume that times and history curricula have changed as the multicultural education movement has made a compelling case for rejecting bias in the name of inclusivity. After all, the U.S. education system promises to prepare all students for engaged democratic citizenship and what better way to start than according every child’s heritage dignity and respect?

Unfortunately, this is not the case. New York’s new K-12 Social Studies Curriculum is guilty of quietly sustaining what critical education theorists call the hidden curriculum; the implicit messages children get through schooling about the world and their place in it. Social Studies is still a place for spreading misinformation, promoting patriotism at the expense of unflattering facts and marginalizing students from non-dominant groups by rendering them invisible or sanitizing their history.

As a former middle school social studies teacher and current professor of education I attended a session at the New York State Association of Teacher Educators Conference in Saratoga Springs last fall where a NYS Department of Education spokesman rolled out the new K-12 Social Studies Curriculum, an effort underwritten with a three million dollar grant from the federal Race to the Top program. I was enthusiastic because, in my view, Social Studies should be in the center of the curriculum, not at the margins as it has been in recent years. After all, only a few children will grow up to be English professors or engineers, but all are expected to grow up to vote.

The new curriculum is touted as being distinctive because it pivots away from what most of us hated about the Social Studies in school—memorizing names, dates and places for multiple choice tests that we’d forget the minute we put down our pencils. The new curriculum is skills-based, meant to prepare young people to evaluate historical evidence, draw and communicate reasoned conclusions and take informed civic action. The beating heart of the curriculum, described on the EngageNY website as “Written by New York State teachers for New York State teachers,” is the eighty-two premade units of study, called Inquiries, grounded in compelling moments in American history. Inquiries, available for free on EngageNY, provide teachers with prepared lessons enhanced by open source primary documents.

While teachers are encouraged to alter or adjust the Inquiries according to their own expertise or the particulars of their students, the Inquires can be
used as is, which I suspect many, if not most, harried teachers will do, especially novices. After all, shouldn’t teachers be able to trust that what the state provides them with has been thoroughly vetted by experts immersed in up-to-date scholarship? Through no fault of their own, teachers will find themselves colluding in marginalizing their non-white, non-middle class students.

Given the confines of space, a couple examples must suffice. One Grade Seven Inquiry is titled with the Compelling Question, ‘Why Did the Pilgrim-Wampanoag Friendship Go So Wrong?’ In the introduction it says, “In this inquiry, students investigate one of the best known stories in American history—the interaction between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag that included the first Thanksgiving.” Never mind that Thanksgiving wasn’t declared a holiday until 1863 by Lincoln.

The fifteen open sources provided for investigation by students of the so-called ‘First Thanksgiving’ are misleading, biased or irrelevant and the supporting questions are leading. Just consider the opening salvo. Students view a painting titled, The First Thanksgiving, by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris in 1919 (see Figure 1):

![Figure 1: The First Thanksgiving, by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, 1919](image)

It depicts the event in warm, soft romantic tones, an idealized icon of Americana. One Pilgrim woman generously offers a platter of bread to seated Wampanoag men while another coaxes a shy Wampanoag woman by the arm from the dark forest into the idyllic light of the Pilgrim village. Students are left to conclude that a) The First Thanksgiving was actually happened, and b) the Pilgrims were generous and gracious. Nowhere are students invited to critically examine the painter’s intent or consider his historical context or the ways it might have impacted his audience. The authors pass it off as a factual representation of an actual event. That’s how twelve year olds will see it anyway.

For an activity, students are asked to describe the encounter between the two groups in a diary entry from either the Wampanoag and or Pilgrim perspective. However, they are only given sources that valorize the white point of view. The authors include diary entries from Edward Winslow describing the assistance given by Pilgrims to disease ravaged Wampanoag, but other eyewitness accounts that described food theft and grave robbing were excluded. White middle class children choosing to write from the Pilgrim perspective get to engage in an exercise reinforcing their rightful dominance. Those choosing the Wampanoag have little to go on. Given the documents provided, the Wampanoag look like “sore losers.”

For another glaring example, consider the 8th Grade Uncle Tom’s Cabin Inquiry. Apparently the authors could not find one source to address the compelling question on the issue of slavery, “Can words lead to war?” that did not come from the pen of a white person. It defies understanding that the writers wouldn’t have thought of Frederick Douglass. A Google search with the phrase, ‘Frederick Douglass on Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ yields a review of the book he wrote in 1852. Better yet, they could have used his autobiography instead of Stowe’s novel. It’s an open primary source that had an enormous impact in its day, the writing is stunningly clear and compelling and the author was a black man who endured slavery to become a pivotal voice for Abolition. Now wouldn’t that be inclusive and empowering for black and brown
children? Wouldn’t it be powerfully illuminating for middle class white kids too?

The source of the problem is that most of the writers of the Inquiries had no business writing them in the first place. Not one of the authors of the Pilgrim Wampanoag Inquiry is a subject matter expert. Not one. Of the six people responsible for writing and reviewing it, one was a middle school teacher and the other five were professors of education, one in special education, and another in adolescent literature. Apparently they were paid twenty thousand dollars apiece for the privilege. One can only conclude that the authors willfully cherry picked the documents to promote a particular point of view, or that they simply cut and pasted from old textbooks because they did not know any better.

Last year, at the Museum of the City of New York there was an exhibit on the Chinese American experience. At the entrance sat a cross-legged class of third graders whose teacher told me they were from Chinatown. The docent leading them began with this question, “What does an American look like?” The children enthusiastically raised their hands. The first child she picked said, “He has blue eyes!” The second said, “He has blond hair!” These little ones, presumably citizens themselves, had already internalized their outsider status. We can do better.
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