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**Why Didn't I Know This Before?
Psychoanalysis, Social Studies Education, and *The Shock Doctrine***

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Abstract

In this essay, the author employs psychoanalytic inquiry (Britzman, 1998; Felman, 1992; Lacan, 1988) to think about the relationships between pedagogy, trauma, and crisis in the contexts of social studies and teacher education. The paper explores a potential space in social studies education that can acknowledge the psychic consequences of encountering “difficult knowledge” where and when pedagogy and representations of trauma meet (Britzman, 1998). To do so, the author examines a question posed by his students – *Why didn't I know this before?* – describes the context that gave rise to it, and then demonstrates a way for social studies educators to think about the psychical demands inherent in learning about the world.

Curricular documents and scholarly work ask social studies educators to help students negotiate, among other priorities, multiple perspectives on historical events. Whether this encounter with competing accounts is actualized through the interpretation of primary documents to practice “historical thinking” (Wineburg, 2001), postmodern critique (Segall, 2006; Seixas, 2001) or critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2001), when done well social studies provides students opportunities to examine competing narratives offering differing readings of events and processes. (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011). Such a stance is a necessity that becomes clear as we consider The Cold War, Vietnam, the post-Cold War nation building projects, genocides in Rwanda and Sudan, the War on Terror, recent NATO military intervention in Northern Africa, and the global economic crisis are all historical events that are part of the purview of social education and that can each be accounted for in a number of different ways. They are also issues that, because of their accounting of violence and injustice, beckon the student toward a confrontation with potentially unsettling knowledge. What happens when the alternative narrative disturbs and provokes in students a crisis of learning?

Why didn't I know this before? is the question that often arises across sections of a social studies methods course in which I serve as the instructor. While this question might have arisen in response to any number of texts, in this case it was articulated in response to Naomi Klein's (2007) book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise and Fall of Disaster Capitalism*. This specific text was selected to invite students into conversation with an alternative narrative of events about which most students seemed to have prior knowledge. But the alternative telling, narrating, and framing of those events provoked students to ask questions of those events and their narration: Why didn't I know this before? is the hinge around which this paper moves.

The interrogative in this question is multi-vocal. As I discuss below, the question speaks to the content in *The Shock Doctrine* as it troubles what many students have encountered in their education. It also speaks about the ways that learning about crisis has lead to its own crisis; the confrontation with a learner's own ignorance (Felman, 1987), which in this sense is particular kind of relationship with knowledge rather than its lack. Further, the question speaks to and from an uncertainty about knowledge, particularly knowledge about social and/or historical trauma (Britzman, 1998; Farley, 2009; Matthews, 2009; Pitt & Britzman, 2003). It indicates that the use value of knowledge in the present indicts a past time when the knowledge either was not present or was differently narrativized so as to have quite different meanings. And finally this question reveals a complicated relationship between time, knowing, and pedagogy.

In this paper I use psychoanalytic inquiry to think about the relationships between pedagogy, trauma and crisis in the contexts of social studies and teacher education. The paper proposes and explores a potential space in social studies education that can acknowledge the psychic consequences of "difficult knowledge" revealed where and when pedagogy and representations of trauma meet (Britzman, 1998). Following Farley (2009), I consider social studies education as a "site of conflict rather than its solution" (p. 538). Whereas the predominant modes of thinking in social studies education are codified along either traditional collective story or disciplinary stances, a social studies education that "resists narrative closure" works to cultivate "a knowing that contains within it an inescapable and profound not-knowing" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 114). Social studies becomes, then, concerned with the status and activation of ignorance (Felman, 1987).

The question around which this paper revolves – *Why didn't I know this before?* – points simultaneously to various conditions of knowing and to not-knowing. Rather than attempt to answer this question, in this paper I theorize the conditions that give rise to its articulation. I begin by explaining the context in which the question was elicited. I will then move within the question by drawing from Lacan (1988), Britzman (1998), and Felman's (1992) work relating pedagogy with and within crisis – each of whom explore crisis encountered in trauma as an inherent component of learning. Finally, I will offer a discussion of why these issues are important for social studies educators and researchers.

Context(s) of Inquiry

What is it that students don't know?

In the social studies methods course that I teach, I often utilize *The Shock Doctrine*, whose thesis is that the major geo-political events of the last 50 years were not born in freedom and motivated by democracy. Instead, *The Shock Doctrine* holds that events that precipitate social breakdown, whether natural or man-made, were used to push through anti-democratic measures fitting in with a neo-liberal agenda of economic and political policy. Crises become opportunities to advance particular 'solutions' according to neo-liberal agendas. Most commonly, these solutions are comprised of elements of what Milton Friedman called "economic shock therapy": rapid privatization reforms and their concurrent cuts to social spending and welfare programs. The "shock" of the shock therapy is often massive unemployment, skyrocketing food prices, and massive protest. Then, another series of shocks are needed to quell dissent. This is where the shock of fear tactics, imprisonment, and even torture are brought become affective. Klein illustrates this set of practices in Argentina with the

U.S. backing of Pinochet's government, Iraq after the US invasion in 2002, post-Katrina New Orleans, post-Apartheid South Africa, and post Cold War Poland. In each of these cases, large crowds convened in protest of neoliberal policies and in each case such demonstrations were met by authorities with violence. In her thesis, a crisis is utilized not to invigorate democracy, as we are commonly told, but instead to implement unpopular free-market policies.

Three ideas come together to substantiate the thesis put forward in *The Shock Doctrine*. First is the idea that those in power have used that shock strategically to further cement their power and status. The second is that radical free market policies are so wildly unpopular that they can only be instituted when populations are in states of shock and presumably unable to resist. Finally, after the populations begin to resist, then the "shock" of war, imprisonment, and economic/political calamity take effect. *The Shock Doctrine* essentially states that only through often-violent enforcement of anti-democratic processes can the kinds of changes that we often are encouraged to celebrate as free and democratic actually take place.

The radical free market project described in *The Shock Doctrine* is to place as much of the state apparatus into the hands of private companies as possible. While the reader encounters documentation of mass protest, Klein, narrates the fact that such policies have always been wildly unpopular, as they result in high levels of unemployment and soaring prices. What the reader is asked to understand is that only in a post-crisis state of shock are such policies able to be implemented:

Take a second look at the iconic events of our era and behind many you will find [the shock doctrine's] logic at work. This is the secret history of the free market. It wasn't born in freedom and democracy. It was born in shock. (Klein & Cuaron, 2007)

The text takes the notion of shock, illustrates it as an archaic and misguided attempt at personal therapy, and makes it more frightening due to the way it was taken from the context of the clinic into the realm of political and economic policy making. There, the use of shock is deployed on the societal scale within the logics of neoliberal theory of the market. Instead of using shock therapy to take individuals into a regression such that they can be reprogrammed, it is used as a moment of implementation, one that lends itself to the unpopular programs of making every service a function of markets rather than governments or public institutions.

I use the text for several reasons. One is that it presents an alternative narrative to historical events. Alternative tellings, or multiple perspectives, are structured parts of the social studies curriculum. However, this alternative telling is not what students are used to when they think of multiple perspectives, which are most generally relatively "safe" (e.g. First Nations' peoples must have thought it was bad that Europeans were here, but the Europeans must have thought it was OK). *The Shock Doctrine*, on the other hand, is a complete re-organization of the events. It completely reframes the telling of the history through a different lens. The second reason for utilizing this text is that in reading it students are invited to learn about events about which they had little or no knowledge. However, the perspective it offers also constructs a different narrative, doing something different than adding another instance that easily fits existing narrative frameworks. For some students, then, the events seem new. Other students, though, are familiar with the geopolitical contexts of the case studies offered in *The Shock Doctrine*, but the different "emplotment" (White, 2001; see also den Heyer & Abbott, 2011) makes familiar events strange. That is, students may have had knowledge of the events but contextualized in starkly different plots that organize their existing narrative sense of geopolitics and history. Examples of this new content is the US support or direct involvement in the

overthrow of democratically elected governments in Chile, Argentina, and Guatemala and the record of U.S. foreign policy being often deployed in direct and knowable opposition to, rather than support of, democracy. These ideas seem curious, even troubling, to many students.

When students encounter this information, much of it what might be termed “difficult knowledge” (Britzman, 1998; Farley, 2009; Garrett, 2011; Matthews, 2009; Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Salvio, 2009) due to the violent and traumatic ways in which these processes have been carried out, they have several reactions. Many students disavow Klein’s thesis altogether as conspiratorial garbage¹. Others read the text as a measured analysis of world events and a helpful framing reference to understand our current geopolitical landscape. Despite the wide range of reactions, in my teaching of this text over several semesters there has been one common reaction that is articulated by at least one of the students at some point during our conversation of *The Shock Doctrine*: *Why did I not know this before?*

Why Didn’t I Know This Before? A Psychoanalytic Reading of the Question

What is the “this”?

What we find in this question, “*Why didn’t I know this before?*”, is a relationship between politics and pedagogy, crisis and learning. To exemplify this process of the changing structure of knowledge I will draw on the current financial crisis and how the text reconfigures dominant modes of inquiry relating to it. Every student understands that we are in the midst of a financial crisis. However, *The Shock Doctrine* helps students understand that such a crisis is being addressed in a way that has foreclosed upon the possibility of alternative courses of action. Such a stance counters dominant narratives most students find familiar. Furthering the thesis that the most widely circulated accounts of the financial crisis fail to address the issue from any other discursive location than from inside the logic of capital, Žizek (2009) writes “it is as if recent events were staged with a calculated risk in order to demonstrate that, even at a time of shattering crisis, there is no viable alternative to capitalism” (p. 16). Recall that rather than protecting those to whom the greatest material risks were posed with the immediate provision of state money, the US government gave hundreds of billions of dollars to the financial corporations themselves. Thus, moments of crisis are used to further entrench the same actors, policies, and processes that gave rise to the crisis in the first place. The students reading Klein’s text are confronted with the challenge of coming to terms with, what is for many, a new way of considering economic systems and the policies and ideologies that regulate them.

On an initial read, the students’ question could be an acknowledgement of what is felt to be “new information”. It seems apparent in the articulation of the question that there is information within Klein’s work (the “this”) that brings the free-market project into sharp relief in ways that reveals connection between economic policy and social reality. Students, we might say, have added some discreet bits of content knowledge to add to their arsenal. In addition to being a text that helps student acquire new content knowledge, *The Shock Doctrine*, as I mentioned above, also works to re-contextualize and reframe what many students already know or have at least heard of. There are, of course, many texts that operate along a similar axis of disrupting normative conceptualizations of a host of topics (e.g. Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*,

¹ It is the case that Klein’s thesis is presented as a universalizing one. This can be problematic in many ways and while I do not discuss these problems with the “master narrative” that is offered in this paper, I do take this issue up in class discussion.

Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*). Each of those texts work in relationship different narrative structures (slavery and colonialism, respectively). In the case of *The Shock Doctrine*, Klein provides an interpretive lens that will bring critical processes of democracy, marketization, neoliberalism, and corporatism into relief. In this sense, it is not necessarily the case that the student articulating the question of knowledge is not familiar with content, it is that the particular framing and narration of the content is felt as novel and, as indicated by the simple articulation of the question, important to have said out loud, in language, or in the psychoanalytic vocabulary "symbolized". If students already knew "this," they may not have known it in this particular way. It may be, in other words, that the student has changed not what they know but how they know it (see, for elaboration on learning as difference, Ellsworth, 1997, p. 60-61). As we pull the question back, we see that it indicates a change in the structure or emplotment, rather than the status or location, of knowledge.

Moving within the Question: Figuring crisis with pedagogy and learning

Put simply, in coming to terms with "the this", a student who articulates the question of knowledge may be in a struggle with accommodating what seems to be new information into old frameworks of knowing. Such an event, when read psychoanalytically, alludes to relationships between learning, crisis and trauma. For Pitt and Britzman (2003), the learning that comes from encountering representations of social and historical trauma – difficult knowledge – can instantiate a kind of crisis for the learner in that "questions of knowledge are made and broken" as old ideas are painfully confronted and as "beautiful substitutes" for that knowledge emerge (p. 761). This breaking of knowledge occurs in pedagogy when old stories are called into question, as I believe is the case here as signified by the question posed by students.

Further, there is an expressed desire codified in that question that points to an indictment of the state of prior not-knowing. In this sense the learning itself occurs in the trauma's wake (which is, again, the location of significance of trauma, the "afterwards" of it) and manifests itself as a crisis of encountering one's existing structure of understanding as insufficient. To put this differently, with Lacan (1991) we might say that "truth causes a collapse of knowledge" (p. 186; See also, Cho 2009). Truth, for Lacan, is not a static object of knowledge, rather it is a situation that results from a new awareness of old situations that, as he also writes, "creates a production" (Lacan, 1991, p.186, cf Cho, 2009; for truth as a production or generative process see den Heyer & Conrad, 2011). Klein's narrative may not be "the truth" as we traditionally use the term, but in relation to students' allusion toward the insufficiency of their prior understanding it may function as a Lacanian truth. The encounter is productive in that understanding might be differently structured; already known facts/events become 'new' as one's relationship to their previously taken for granted meanings change. Thus, we are presented with a theory of learning where history (personal, as in psychoanalysis, and social, as in social studies education) is made present through these processes of collapse and confrontation between old and new ways of experiencing and articulating what counts as knowledge and to know.

It is possible that what the students knew before as "history" is undergoing the kind of revision that psychoanalytic theory would refer to as deferred knowledge, or "the revision of experiences, memories, and impressions [that] are made to fit new circumstances" (Britzman, 2000, p. 30, see also Britzman, 2003). However, they might also be confronting a version of a "before" that lacks, at least immediately, a prior context. What a learner encounters upon their exposure to *The Shock Doctrine*, then, is not just another history lesson. It is the lesson of

another history altogether, one that places the events into a context provided by violence, not peace, and imposition rather than democracy. It may be that such learning is jarring due to the preponderance of messages that promote a narrative framing of Western democracies as being promoters of peace, democracy and justice². The learner, just as the citizen, is subjected to the inadequacy of dominant discourses and indeed the inadequacy of language itself experienced with the necessity to make new meanings possible through the alternative narrative framing of the familiar. The world, in this moment, in this particular pedagogical interaction, is not what the learner thought it was and are compelled to ask, “Why didn’t I know this before?” Quick on the heels of this is another question that may follow, what am I suppose to “do” with this knowledge (if) experienced as a potentially productive awareness.

Learning as Crisis when Learning about Trauma

Psychoanalytic thinking may help us think productively about the terrain around this question. In psychoanalysis learning is constituted “with the curious ways in which ideas and affect organize *and reorganize each other and attach themselves to new experiences*” (Pitt, 1998, p. 541). Many students react to Klein’s thesis, with disbelief, denial, and shock. *Why did I not know this before? Is this true? If this is true, then what else that I don’t know is true? What else is going on? What am I supposed to do about/with this? What now?* Such questions point us to the student confronting his or her own ignorance requiring both a recognition and reorganization of his or her history of knowledge. The student recognizes the absence of knowledge and then reorganizes the history in such a way as to condemn the same absence. Such questions indicate a relationship between trauma, pedagogy, crisis, and knowledge that Felman (1992) has theorized as being a crucial pedagogical moment.

Felman, a noted literary critic whose work fuses psychoanalysis with literature, examines a different crisis of pedagogy and learning, this time the crisis her students had of witnessing the testimony of two Holocaust survivors. She writes of how students were unable to “move on” in the face of their own pedagogical crisis of witnessing. Her students were thrown into crisis because of their shock at seeing what they could not put into language. The crisis is borne of a confrontation with representations of massive trauma. The crisis is made pedagogical which Felman (1992) takes note as she formulates a radical notion of pedagogy:

Teaching as such, takes place precisely only through a crisis: if teaching does not hit upon some sort of crisis, if it does not encounter either the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension, it has perhaps not truly been taught: it has perhaps passed on some facts, passed on some information and some documents, with which the students or the audience – the recipients – can for instance do what people during the occurrence of the Holocaust precisely did with information that kept coming forth but that no one

² One reviewer offered an alternative reading of this situation: “The key point here is that trauma – psychoanalytically speaking – is never “new information” but always the return of something old, and that has yet to be thought. Could the trauma of reading return to the student the feeling of helplessness of being born into a world organized in unequal ways by others? What if Klein returns the reader to the tyrannical mother, the baby’s first world, who decided when and where nourishment would come?” I refer to the primal scene below, but find it important to include here the reviewer’s interpretation.

could *recognize*, and that one could therefore truly *learn, read or put to use*. (p. 53, emphasis in original)

For Felman, then, crisis is something of a profound recognition without which the pedagogical act seems to lack efficacy. She presents us with a fundamental need for the instantiation of crisis in order to do any true pedagogical work. While *The Shock Doctrine* is an indictment of the manipulating of crisis and the uses of mass social trauma, Felman requires us to rotate our vantage point on crisis. Crisis now takes on a crucial pedagogical dimension and allows us to see the student crisis not only as disruptive, and perhaps felt to be dangerous or risky, but also as the prerequisite to the work of learning, the work of re-symbolizing.

Here, then, and read more psychoanalytically, the question of *Why didn't I know this before?* indicts my own knowledge, implicates my self and within the query places its indictment on the "I" instead of the "this": my worldview, my experiences, rather than the text or the messenger. The question is indicative of a force of turning focus back on a personal history in which what structured my knowledge is no longer adequate. Learning about crisis has hit upon yet another crisis, this time one in which the learner has no prior context in which to articulate or accommodate what it is that they are expected to learn other than the earliest of contexts; contexts where the radically dependent infant feels the pushes and pulls of helplessness (Farley, 2009) and fulfillment in a world not of his or her own making.

For a significant and productive learning encounter to take place, Felman (1992) argues, the pedagogue is in the business of writing an invitation to crisis. She writes:

To seek reality is both to set out to explore the injury inflicted by it – to turn back on, and to try to penetrate, the state of being stricken, wounded by reality – and to attempt, at the same time, to reemerge from the paralysis of the state, to engage reality as an advent, a movement, and as a vital, critical necessity of moving on. It is beyond the shock of being stricken, but nonetheless within the wound and from within the woundedness that the event, incomprehensible though it may be, becomes accessible. (pg 28)

Here we are asked by Felman to take the experience of being stricken by crisis as the object of inquiry, folding experience back onto itself in the hope of moving through modalities of understanding about the nature of the crisis itself. If we are expected to learn anything about the world, Felman teaches, we had better be prepared for the injuries that this learning might inflict. In the moments of that encounter with what Felman here is calling "reality" we are encouraged to recognize the ways in which we are made to feel paralyzed by it and to think about that moment as a moment of "becoming". Such a stance helps me wonder about the degree to which students asking 'Why didn't I know this before?' indicates the status of this particular engagement.

Discussion: Psychoanalytic Considerations in Social Studies Education

Lacan (1988b) acknowledged the ways that the very process of learning is a process of reconstituting what was known before:

When something comes to light, something which we are forced to consider as new, when another structural order emerges...it creates its own perspective within the past and we say – This can never not have been there, this has existed from the beginning. (p. 5)

In this paper, I have written about a time when for some students something new has come to the light of their attention. *Why didn't I know this before?* becomes a trace of that other structural order where the status of knowledge as it existed before the encounter is now rendered differently. It is now deficient, indicted. Thus, knowledge has been deferred.

What these considerations imply for social studies teachers is a consideration of the loose and nonlinear chronology of learning and knowledge combined with the dynamic nature of historical work and the manner in which students attach meaning to that work. In this process of deferred knowledge, the experience, a memory, comes to take new meaning in our lives. The psychoanalytic stance toward history privileges the reworking of our historical narratives (see den Heyer & Abbot, 2011 for an example of such reworking as the pedagogical opportunity necessary in learning to teach). In this sense, through the psychoanalytic idea of deferred action, history changes so that we, too, can change. It is, then, a position that includes the possibility for difference.

Knowing that students will in many pedagogical instances encounter and necessarily move within and through crisis need not necessarily make the pedagogue a sadist whose focus is on producing crisis for its own sake. Rather, the pedagogical implication of taking Felman (1992) seriously is to understand that in enacting a responsible pedagogy we ought to expect (though not force) students to encounter various states of crisis. This should be so particularly in social studies classrooms, where so much of the content consists of potentially traumatic knowledge. When a student asks, "*Why didn't I know this before?*" in response to reading *The Shock Doctrine*, their past knowledge is indicted as having always been flawed or incomplete, but that history of learning is only constituted in the very moment of learning articulated by that question.

While debate exists as to best approaches to learning in social studies education (Evans, 2004), there is often a general agreement regarding the "ideal" product of a social studies education: the productive citizen. As a school subject, history works most commonly as a vehicle for structuring a national identity by teaching not only the "right" version of the story, but the "right" way to think about it (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Seixas, 2001). Used in this way, working with (learning) history is used to "define who we are in the present, our relations with others, relations in civil society – nation and state, right and wrong, good and bad – and broad parameters for action in the future" (Seixas, 2001, p. 21). History is contentious, though, and so deciding on this best version will often require negotiating (or silencing) different social visions and agendas. History is always and already mapped onto and inscribed within broader social and historical processes as well as supposed outcomes, power relations, and competing discourses. In social studies education, the status of history is always at stake.

In psychoanalysis, the status of history is also at stake. There, we hear that learning history helps us understand our historical present in ways that allow us a more rich understanding of the conditions that give our lives context. History is understood as in flux and in motion through the transference, in fantasy work and associations. In analysis we are asked to play with history, symbolize our memories, affects, and experiences in order to associate around and through them. As history becomes tabled for examination, the analyst and analysand (patient) organize and reorganize the narratives that provide cohesion to the analysand's experience of self. History is less about the events as it about how events are narrated, ordered, and emplotted. What is more, those interpretations are always subject to undergoing further change and continued interpretation through the ongoing analysis. Or, as Lacan (1988a) warned: "to interpret and to imagine one understands are not at all the same. It is precisely the opposite"

(S I, p. 73). As such, the psychoanalyst might say to the history teacher that they have it somewhat wrong to say, “we learn history so that we do not repeat our mistakes” – a common parlance that I hear history teachers pronounce. Instead, the analyst (or, I think the psychoanalytically-informed history teacher) might point to our propensities for repetition, misrecognition, and other defensive postures in historical ruptures that feel unprecedented. This teacher might ask students to study the ways that, because we are human, we *resist* learning, and how learning might itself require resistance to begin.

Conclusion

With the purpose of multiple perspectives in mind, I selected Naomi Klein’s *The Shock Doctrine* as a course reading in the social studies methods courses that I teach. That the paper references and relies upon *The Shock Doctrine* is not to mean that I am suggesting wide adoption of the text for social studies teachers. I am, though, suggesting that challenging the narrative frames students bring with them to the classroom is of the utmost importance if we care to invite students into spaces in which creative and just social situations are to be cultivated. Because Klein’s narrative often disrupts their preexisting narrative understandings, students across sections of the course have responded to the text by asking: *Why didn’t I know this before?* Any text that counters the existing narratives frames students bring with them to the classroom could provoke this question.

In this paper I began by discussing the content of the text and why it may have seemed strange to some students. By drawing on psychoanalytic vocabulary, I read the question as being indicative of crisis, one that brings the relationships between chronology, learning, crisis and pedagogy to the surface. By taking multiple passes over the question around which the paper revolves, my attempts are aimed at a way to consider how we make sense of our selves, our students, and our modes of relating in pedagogy. Finally, I made an effort to bring the overlapping concerns between social studies education and psychoanalytic notions of learning into focus.

There are frequent and loud debates about the content that we offer in social studies education, and similarly contentious conversations about pedagogies and “best practices.” What I hope to have offered here is a way we can, as Segall (2004) writes, “blur the lines between content and pedagogy” and further illuminate the dynamics between them. Neither content nor pedagogy was at issue in the question students posed. Rather, the issue was about the ways in which the content was activated not only in a pedagogical relation, but also in a psychical relation with an already existing structure of knowledge. What taught, what gave the eliciting motivation to *Why didn’t I know this before?*, was something about which I am speculating. But in that speculation, I hope, is a productive way of looking and listening, of an attunement to the ways that students understand their relationships between each other, their students, and within the world. And as a social studies educator, that relationship between self and other and the ways that knowledge structures that relationship remains of primary concern.

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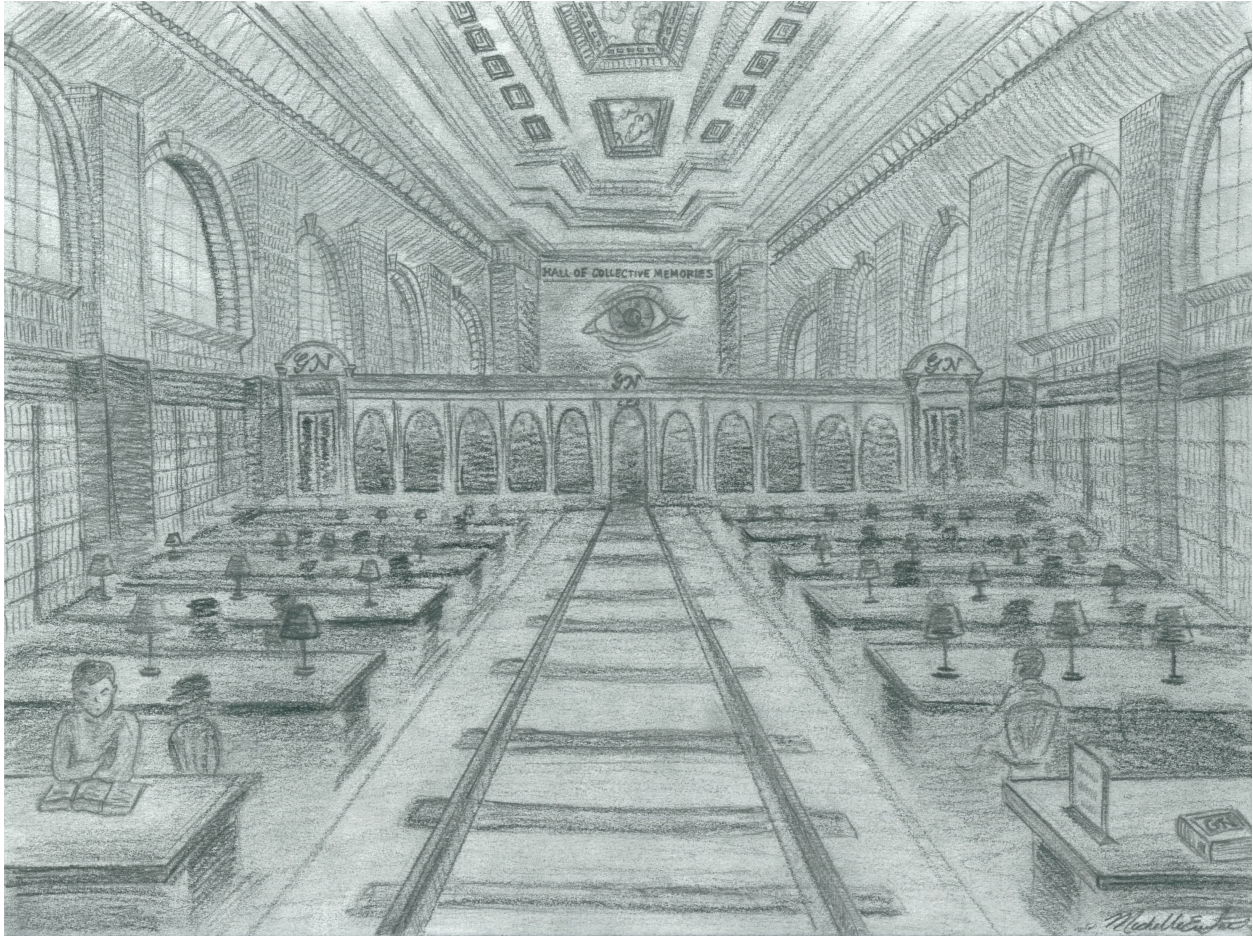
Restructuring the Historical Framework

Michelle Emi Smith¹

The current Alberta Social Studies curriculum places a strong emphasis on recognizing the importance of multiple perspectives in the interpretation of Canada's past. With the limited time and the multitude of historical perspectives that are vying for acknowledgement and attention, teachers have to deal with incorporating various historical interpretations, stories, and social issues which are all equally significant into their lessons. In order for teachers to deal with multiple perspectives, it is not enough for teachers to merely "add on" the alternative perspectives to the grand narrative, doing so will not "escape the framework of the grand narrative" (Stanley, 2006, p. 41). The main focus still remains on the Europeans, but with attempts to "multiculturalize" the story (Stanley, 2006, p. 40). Social Studies teachers should approach dealing with the various perspectives that compete for veracity by restructuring the historical framework in which multiple perspectives become embedded. Add-ons only allow for enrichment of historical content, but the embedding of multiple perspectives creates the tension of disrupted common sense thinking (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 566) as a requirement for the possibility of "narrative competence" – the ability to weave and learn from multiple story-ings of Canada's past (Rüsen, c.f. in den Heyer, 2005, p. 2)

The three drawings that I have created represent the progression from the overall arching grand narrative of Canadian history to the introduction and embedding of the multiple perspectives to aid the possible narrative competence of the student. The silencing of the "others" and their interpretations of the past are represented by the components of the first drawing which takes place in a study hall. This setting is important because it instils a sense of silence that prevails over the perspectives that struggle to be heard. The room is suitably named the "Hall of Collective Memories" because it represents what "we" have chosen to remember and what "we" have chosen to forget (Francis, 1997, p. 11). The Eurocentric perspective, characterized by the eye, maintains the focus of the drawing as the Canadian Pacific Railway, symbolizing the creation of myths, runs through the partitioned wall. The CPR creates the "invented image" of who is defined as a Canadian (Francis, 1997, p. 27), thus creating the insiders and outsiders of history. Outside the wall the voices of the others have become faint echoes that go unheard and are kept enclosed in the books, which are told through the perspective the "white man." The others' interpretations remain only as "side bars" (Stanley, 2006, p. 42) of the page, perpetuating the notion that, although incorporated in the grand narrative, they will always be outside and never included within the text of the grand narrative.

¹ Ms. Smith was a student in den Heyer's social studies curriculum and pedagogy course. This is a revised version of an assignment she completed for the course.



While silence prevails in the first drawing, the second drawing brings silence into the historical thinking of multiple perspectives. No longer does the silence prohibit the others' perspectives from creating the tension needed to allow students to break free from the grand narrative framework. Instead, the students are shown struggling with this notion and making attempts to escape from the "white box" that represents the curriculum and dominating Eurocentric view on history (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 562). Acknowledging these tensions, the created symbol of Canada in the background is depicted without a stem. This indicates that the restructuring of the historical framework has disrupted the foundation of the grand narrative which feeds the myths and stories that are perpetuated in Canadian history. The scene behind the sky is filled with birds representing the multiple perspectives that have been shut out from the telling of Canada's past. Lastly, the footprints represent the significance that an individual has on history. The individual is unable to see it now, but with the restructuring of the thinking process the individual will be able to realize that historical events that may seem insignificant now may actual be quite important later.



The final drawing represents the overall realization of the ways racism and race-thinking create the mythologically informed imagined community of Canadian insiders and outsiders. The individual is simply represented with a single outline; however the picture is filled in with words and sentences representing the fluidity of identities (Stanley, 2000, p. 95). The body is left blank to represent the process of unlearning what has been learned throughout the individual's schooling process. By restructuring the students' historical thought process, teachers are able to achieve three things: the exploration of one's own past (represented by the writings on the left section of the picture); the understanding of how people's histories are intertwined (represented by the collection of sentences throughout the picture); and the sense that the space in which we inhabit has been constructed by those who lived before us (represented by the quotes on the right side from Francis' article about the creation of myths) (Stanley, 2006, p.47). By achieving all three, individuals are able to develop a new set of understanding and historical thought process on the entire construct of historical interpretations.



Michelle E. Smith

By focusing on embedding multiple perspectives rather than simply adding on to the grand narrative, teachers are able to “make history visible in all their complexities” (Stanley, 2006, p. 47). Doing so allows students to understand the importance of epistemology and ontology when interpreting history. This approach creates a disruption in the students’ previous historical approach and enables them to connect the multiple perspectives of the past with the present (den Heyer, 2005, p. 2). This ultimately enables students to think about the complexities of the world in which they live in, where the embedded multiple perspectives in historical thinking allows them to better “make sense” of their world (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 576).

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Assessment and Evaluation: Exploring their Principles and Purposes in Relation to Neoliberalism through a Social Studies Case Study¹

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Abstract

This paper begins with a discussion of Canadian and international work that has identified a number of shortcomings with standardized assessments, which are framed within neoliberal ideology. It then explores the principles of good assessment and applies them to an analysis of British Columbia's standardized Social Studies 11 exam. It finds that the exam does not meet all of these criteria. This discussion includes the comments of British Columbian students and teachers on the exam. The paper concludes with a description of alternative assessment tools that are framed within four educational philosophies through which Social Studies can be understood.

A broad philosophic movement is sweeping into education from an increasingly prominent business ideology, and it has consequences for student learning and teaching practice. In the first section of this paper, the history and impact of neoliberalism are described. This ideology is immersed in power relations and expressed in varied knowledge forms, such as media (Foucault, 2006; Orlowski, 2011). After which, a case study exploration of a standardized exam in BC will be discussed.

Setting the Broader Context: Neoliberalism and Standardized Testing

Apple (2006) has written of a “power bloc [that] combines multiple fractions of capital who are committed to neo-liberal marketized solutions to educational problems” (p. 469) by using techniques such as accountability, choice, standardized testing, and public rankings of schools.² He describes these as having negative results on students in both the United Kingdom and the United States; rather than focusing on student learning, schools aim to improve their school's ranking by attempting to attract high achieving students and directing resources away from special needs students. Teachers teach to standardized, fact-based tests and so do not focus

¹ This manuscript was accepted by the previous editor of *CSS*.

² Neoliberalism is understood as a political ideology grounded in individualism, competition and free markets that is associated with globalization. Applying economic principles to education, it supports parental and student choice of schools, privatization, evaluating students using standardized assessments that test mostly factual recall, fostering competition through the public rating and ranking of schools, and forcing compliance through means such as accountability contracts and standards. It supports “human capital” development in schools. Much research evidence and theory argue for its damaging effects on student learning. See, for example, Mathison, Sandra and Wayne Ross (Eds.). (2007). *Neoliberalism and education reform*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press and Orlowski, Paul. (2011). *Teaching about hegemony: Race, class, and democracy in the 21st Century*. New York: Springer.

on developing important abilities such as critical thinking; creative and innovative teaching practice declines. Inequalities in schools rise, as students have varying amounts of capital with which to negotiate the system. These reforms ignore the larger social factors that cause inequalities in the first place (such as poverty). Government control through national standards and testing are a function of “a concern for external supervision, regulation, and external judgment of performance” (Apple, p. 478) that are undergirded by a devalued belief in the professional ability and judgment of the teacher.

These critiques often draw on the work of theorists such as Foucault (1980, 2006). Foucault (2006) writes of disciplinary power as having three tools: “hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination” (p. 120). Observation relates to the ability to see what others are doing in order to control their behaviours. Normalizing judgment refers to the setting up of a standard of behaviour or achievement that all students are expected to achieve, “so that they might all be like one another” (Foucault, 2006, p. 120). Students are classified as *good* if they meet the standard, and *inept* if they don’t, without any concern for their individual characters. Standardized exams use observation and normalization in the quantification and control of individuals. They have the effect of making each student “visible” while at the same time comparing them to a predetermined standard. They “constitute” the individual by assigning him or her a certain value. This standardized and rationalized approach is negatively influencing teaching practice, student learning, and institutional culture.

Performativity and its Dangers

Ball (2006) develops the concepts described by Apple and Foucault into a theory of performativity in which mechanisms of control, such as visibility and standards, are applied to behaviours in contemporary schools and society. He explains how control of individuals is achieved through means such as assessments and reviews that cause fear and uncertainty and thus result in particular behaviours—performances—from the individual and the institution. These fabricated behaviours, seen as necessary for security, result in the “possibility that commitment, judgment, and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression” (Ball, 2006, p. 695) and can result in feelings of hollowness. For schools and teachers, the aim is to fabricate the appearance of meeting their “clients” demands, for example, by strategically focusing on teaching to the exam, by providing extra help to students who are seen as possible candidates for achieving good marks on exams, by aiming to attract “good” students who will increase the school’s ranking, and by refocusing resources away from students with special needs. The aim is to appear successful through strategically developed websites and promotional materials and high standardized test scores that result in high school rankings on public scales (Ball, 2006, p. 699). Performativity changes behaviour and, thus, plays a role in re-constituting the self and the organization. It is what is seen to be done that is key.

Broadfoot and Pollard (2006) add that standardized testing is a form of assessment used to control teacher and student behaviour and is having serious effects on student learning as it is moving teaching from a progressive to a performative model. The progressive model is one in which professionalism and collegiality are key. Teachers are viewed as facilitators, who focus on student learning through student-based learning activities, such as projects, which result in deep learning and intrinsic motivation. Performativity, in contrast, develops from neoliberal standardized testing regimes and results in teachers as technicians who implement directives

from above. Strict control of content learning occurs through standardized assessment and is used to classify and differentiate students. The performative model results in superficial learning, extrinsic motivation or a complete loss of motivation and interest in learning. Despite rhetoric to the opposite, Broadfoot and Pollard find that students no longer become life long learners or collaborative citizens, for the focus of learning on competition for high grades providing access to more life options effectively quells a spirit of collegial and collaborative cooperation for the betterment of society, a major goal of citizenship education. Large numbers of students lose confidence in themselves as learners, often due to circumstances beyond their control rather than actual ability. Teachers become technicians whose teaching is geared to increasing test scores. Class, race, and gender differences escalate.

Increasing Inequities

Arnot and Reay (2006) describe how the move to national curricula with frequent standardized testing in the UK has had the unjust result of privileging middle class students who come from homes and backgrounds that provide them with the ability to maneuver the system with greater ease. They further describe how schools are attempting to manage these requirements in ways that heighten these injustices, such as by streaming students according to perceived abilities.³ They find evidence that students from working class or multicultural backgrounds are more strongly controlled than middle class students, as they are more likely to question the relevance of the prescribed materials they are required to learn through their behaviours. As the schools focus on controlling behaviour, students are thus provided with fewer opportunities to engage with the material and to be perceived as, or to perceive themselves as, successful learners. Irrelevant materials and strong control tactics function to disengage students from learning.

Gillborn and Youdell's (2006) findings are similar. They conclude that performativity culture favours middle class students and affects teachers' practice in schools. As the schools attempt to compete to get a higher ranking on public school rankings and to improve their internal accountability goals, teachers label students into bands (strands) and then focus on helping those who are seen to have a chance of passing. Students in the "C" group are given up on: They are perceived as failures upon whom resources such as time and money would be wasted. Unsurprisingly, many of these students are from the working class or from different cultural backgrounds. The authors liken the process to that of triage, where doctors make difficult decisions on whose lives to save during crises. As the researchers find clear evidence that students' class, race and/or gender affect how they are labeled, the streaming of students has much more to do with perception than it does with any "innate" intelligence or ability. Teachers feel pressure to be seen as successful and so they can engage in harmful and non-educational practices such as publicly posting students' names and expected grades in school hallways. The authors find that students are well aware of these processes at work, and that some actively resist these attempts at manipulation and control.

³ Some BC schools have a "regular" Social Studies 11 course as well as an "enriched" or "honours" Social Studies course for the "smart kids."

Loss of Teacher Professionalism

Standardized testing, in short, is part of a larger educational philosophy that is having negative impacts on student learning and exacerbating inequalities in society. Hargreaves (2006) also adds that it has a negative impact on teachers. He describes the history of teacher professionalism over the twentieth century as one that moved from a pre-professional view of the teacher as that of a technician who focused on teaching through “chalk and talk” methods to the development of teachers as collegial professionals, who were viewed to have expertise related to teaching methods and who worked collaboratively with their peers to enhance their practice. He argues that this status as a collegial professional is now under threat: standardized testing and the various reforms associated with the implementation of centralized neoliberal agendas devalue the role of teachers as professionals capable of making their own judgments on their students’ learning. Teachers are forced to “teach to the test” in order to be seen to be effective teachers. Performativity becomes key, as teachers are evaluated based on the publicly displayed marks their students receive on exams, both at the national and international level.

Increasing Stratification and Cultural Unfairness

Standardized testing unfairly benefits some students over others, for as Bourdieu (2006) theorized, students do not come to school with the same “capital:” generational inequalities continue in schools due to differences in early childhood education and the child’s family and environmental conditions (Carnoy, 2006; Esping-Andersen, 2006). Social justice theorists question whether students should be forced to compete as if they are equal by being compared to the same norm, when they are not all on equal playing grounds. If we want a collaborative society of citizens working together to improve our democracy, why are we fostering competition in order to stream students (by their final marks that determine access to higher education), partly in relation to socioeconomic or sociocultural factors?

Neoliberalism, in short, is influencing student learning and teaching practice in a number of negative ways. It is present in Canada as well.

International Trends in Canada

A review of Canadian educational research makes clear that the trends described at the international level are also occurring in Canada, and in BC. For example, in their study of educational reforms across Canadian provinces, Lessard and Brassard (2009) found the following: “In most of the provinces, school funding, curricula and testing have all become more centralized since 1990” (p. 263). They argue that these changes, which include increasing choice, centralizing curricula and testing, developing performance indicators and outcome-based measures (all features of neoliberalism), illustrate that Canadian provinces are implicated in the international globalization trends and philosophies described above. Vibert (2009) adds that more than a decade of research exists to demonstrate that standardized testing reinforces inequalities. Further, Ungerleider and Kreiger (2009) state that the BC government is implementing neoliberal reforms. BC’s liberal government views students as economic units whose “capital” must be developed in order to allow BC to compete on the global scale. These

individuals are to be shaped through policies that foster competition using means such as standardized testing, the public rankings of schools, parental and student (“client”) choice, and competition between students and schools. BC has a long history of neoliberalism.

Contextualizing BC: Social Efficiency and Neoliberalism

Standardized testing and accountability share many similarities with, and can be argued to be the modern manifestation of, the American Social Efficiency movement of the early twentieth century. This movement was influenced by Taylor and Bobbitt (Kliebard, 1998; Broom, 2007). Social Efficiency applied business principles to schools in order to rationalize processes, and included advocacy for streaming students through testing: students were to be placed in varying programs of study in order to prepare them for varying types of work (Callaghan, 1962).

BC’s Ministry of Education’s current interest in neoliberalism was nurtured, in part, by C. B. Conway, a statistician in the Ministry from the late 1930s to the 1970s, who developed standardized testing as a way for the Ministry to maintain control of what teachers taught (Fleming, 1996). Conway was a follower of the American *scientific measurement* (Social Efficiency) movement and was brought in as the head of new Department of Education Division of Tests, Standards, and Research, with the goal, as a statistical expert of “scientific measurement” to develop standardized testing (Fleming, 1996), an effective means of student and teacher control (Foucault, 2006). By the tenth year of the Division, Conway was able to comment that scaling was increasingly being accepted (Department of Education, 1955, ff143).

Conway built on earlier foundations. From 1900 to 1929, BC’s public school system was developed using a number of Social Efficiency principles such as establishing grades, professionalizing teachers, developing administrative structures, increasing vocational courses and streaming students using standardized tests (Dunn, 1980). Putman and Weir’s (1925) Royal Commission Report advocated, among a number of other Social Efficiency ideas, the use of standardized testing (Broom, 2007). The commissioners hired Peter Sandiford, a University of Toronto professor who advocated “mental measurement,” to carry out intelligence testing in BC (Fleming, 1996). Sandiford was educated at Columbia Teachers’ College and influenced by Social Efficiency ideas. He was Conway’s teacher.

In summary, standardized testing, choice, and other means of teacher control, such as accountability, school rankings, and standards are part of a neoliberal doctrine. This doctrine is the contemporary manifestation of Social Efficiency theory. Neoliberalism has (re)emerged in BC at the end of the twentieth century, as well as in a number of nations including the United Kingdom and United States as a hegemonic discourse. Much writing has occurred regarding its negative impacts on student learning. The next section will present a case study discussion of BC’s standardized Social Studies exam illustrating a number of the issues discussed and problematizing the exam’s reliability and validity. The paper ends with alternative means of assessing student learning.

Case Study: Standardized Exam in BC

The Ministry of Education introduced the Social Studies 11 exam in its 2004 Graduation Program. The exam aims to “certify the performance of B.C. students graduating from Grade 12” (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 1). A total of five graduation exams in the curriculum areas

of Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts/English (two exams) have been implemented. A grade 11 Social Studies course is required for high school graduation. Students can choose either Social Studies 11, Civic Studies 11, or BC First Nations Studies 12, each of which has a standardized exam at the end of the course. One of the most commonly chosen courses is Social Studies 11. The latter course is primarily a twentieth century history of Canada course, with additional units on Government and Human Geography. The discussion begins with a contextual review of the types, significance of, and means for evaluating assessment.

Assessment versus Evaluation and Identifying Evaluation Criteria

Evaluating students is of importance. The decisions made by teachers, or identified through standardized test scores, can influence the future career options of students (through access to further educational options) and may affect students' identities of themselves as learners. Much, then, has been written about assessment (Apple, 2006; Davies, 2007; Foucault, 2006; Kirman, 2008; Myers, 2004). For example, assessment has been compared to evaluation. Assessment is the investigation of learning, and evaluation is the making of judgments about that learning. It has also been classified into assessment *for*, *as*, *of* learning, or as formative and summative (Davies, 2007). Formative assessment is used to refine teaching practice, and summative assessment is used to identify what students have learned. Further, different evaluation systems, such as standardized evaluation and authentic assessment, have been developed. The former compares students' performances to standardized norms, while the latter aims to assess students against themselves as measures of comparison and shies away from large, standardized measurement tools such as exams and rubrics, preferring means such as portfolios.⁴ The latter is also related to performative assessment, a form of assessment in which students actively engage in completing an assignment, such as creating and performing a historical skit. Assessment and evaluation are complex and contested as they are rooted in varying philosophic interpretations of the meaning, purpose, and procedures of education.

Further, assessment methods and procedures can be evaluated using a number a criteria. Assessments ought to be of varied types, so that students are given a chance to illustrate their learning in a number of ways, such as portfolios, projects, and media presentations. Tests are not the only means of assessing student learning; however, when they are used they should be both valid and reliable (Kirman, 2008). That is, tests and exams should accurately illustrate whether or not students have learned course materials in a manner that is fair and consistent for all students, and they should test what students were required to learn. One popular type of test—particularly with neoliberals, is called a standardized test. It requires all students to write the

⁴ BC's Ministry of Education portfolio requirement in the Graduation Portfolio introduced in its Graduation Program of 2004 can be deemed a failure. Students were required to begin carefully-delineated portfolios in Planning 10, and were then supposed to work on them by themselves in grade 11 and 12. Sometime during their grade 12 year, they were to present these portfolios to a number of educational stakeholders in order to receive some graduation credits. Students complained vociferously, and ended up preparing and sending a petition to the government. The Ministry, as a consequence, backed down on requirements. The failure of the portfolio resulted from the strange combination of micro-management (by specifying in great detail what students had to include in their portfolios) and lack of support (by not providing courses/mentoring and so on for students as they worked through the process in grades 11 and 12). The portfolio is an effective assessment strategy when it is used by a teacher in one particular class and when it allows students to be the masters of the process by letting them select and organize work that is of significance to them in ways that are personally meaningful. Portfolios have been effectively used by many teachers, including by CAPP (Career and Personal Planning, the previous name of Planning 10) teachers, in the right circumstances and with the right guidance and support.

same test and be compared to an artificial “standard,” or norm. This test has been subject to a number of critiques in the literature. Apple (2006) and others (Kohn, 2000; Neil, 2003; Volante, 2004), as discussed above, have found evidence that standardized exams negatively affect student learning, particularly students from different cultural and class backgrounds, cause students anxiety, test a limited number of skills, and cause teachers to teach to the test.

In British Columbia, the standardized Social Studies 11 exam is worth 20% of students’ final grades. The next section of this paper presents the results of a content analysis of the exam and compares this to stated course objectives. The analysis is conducted from a progressivist, social justice, and democratic stance that is critical of neoliberalism. The study illustrates that the exam has some shortcomings in terms of its validity, as it does not test students’ knowledge of all course objectives or illustrate students’ developing citizenship, which is given as the aim of the course.⁵

The exam is also limited in the methods used to test student learning. The exam requires all students to answer the same questions and be compared to a standard or norm. Yet, from a social justice orientation, this is a questionable procedure, as students do not learn in the same manner and have different learning strengths (Foucault, 2006). According to Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory, students have varying intelligences (Mbuva, 2003). These include spatial, linguistic, artistic, mathematical, and musical intelligences. The exam focuses primarily on linguistic intelligence; thus discounting the abilities and strengths of many students and—if poor marks are received—possibly destroying the self-confidence of these students in themselves as learners. Furthermore, the process of standardized examinations does not take into consideration that students do not come to the classroom or the exam on equal footing. These issues require careful thinking about the aims of and for education in a democracy, which values all individuals and provides each with opportunities to find meaning and success in life, understood in Apiah’s (2006) sense of “capability building.”

Some students come from privileged homes, where parents can afford to provide healthy meals, learning time, and tutors if needed. Many other students come from homes where food or money is in short supply and students may need to help their families by working after school limiting their time to focus on academics. This is particularly the case in BC, which has the highest rate of child poverty in Canada (Kines, 2009). Students from these homes may not have the time to focus on studying that some other students may have. They may have trouble staying focused, as they are malnourished or tired. Further, they may not come to school with the same cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2006). Standardized exams may exacerbate social inequalities rather than nurturing opportunities for all students to be successful.

For some social justice theorists, then, comparing students’ individual performances on tests with an external standard (or norm) is considered problematic as students are not equal in terms of their interests, exposures to class materials, learning styles, or life situations (Foucault, 1980; 2006). Indeed, students and teachers who participated in a survey study of Social Studies in BC had much to say about their views on the unfairness of the exam:⁶

⁵ The author acknowledges the complexity of terms such as “education for democracy, good citizenship, and social justice” in the academic literature. Her use of these terms is framed within a progressive (Deweyian) lens. The first two terms relate to educational process that nurture students concern for and connection to others with the aim of further developing a democracy. The third term is linked to Post Modernism and Critical Theory and is understood as education that aims involve students in critical exploration of social issues and power injustices with the aim of transforming consciousness and thus society.

⁶ An anonymous survey study was conducted with close to 200 students and teachers in high schools in varied socioeconomic neighbourhoods across BC. The primary purpose of the study was to investigate student and

I think provincials are unfair for most of the student population. As a new immigrant, I only learned Canada's history for two years. I get really frustrated when I see questions and government history of Canada which I'm obviously unfamiliar with. In my opinion, one large test would not justify and represent everything that a student learned in a year. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

I think writing the provincial exam is unnecessary because it just shows how much we can study, not how much we can learn. We get stressed so much about the exam, and end up not doing as well as wanted and that ruins our marks which in turn affects our future. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

These comments illustrate that the exam is not an entirely valid measure of learning Social Studies 11 content and aims, if the prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) are used as a starting point.

Analyzing the Social Studies 11 Exam in Relation to Course Objectives

According to the Social Studies 11 Integrated Resource Package (IRP) (BC Ministry of Education [BC MOE] 2005), the government claims that the following principles are used to guide the development of the curriculum document:

Learning requires the active participation of the student. People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates. Learning is both an individual and a group process. In addition to these three principles, this document recognizes that British Columbia's schools include young people of varied backgrounds, interests, abilities, and needs. Wherever appropriate for this curriculum, ways to meet these needs and to ensure equity and access for all learners have been integrated as much as possible into the learning outcomes, achievement indicators, and assessment activities. (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 11)

However, the exam is not consistent with these principles. Students are asked to answer factual questions. The author conducted a content analysis of two exams (Ministry of Education, 2006–7; Ministry of Education, 2008–9). Factual questions were defined as recall questions that asked students to answer “what, when, where, which” questions. As illustrated in Table 1, which compares the 2006/7 exam with a more recent (2008/9) exam, the author found that 90% of the multiple choice questions on the exam were factual-based, ranked on Bloom's (1956) lowest level of critical thinking (factual recall). The other 10% of multiple-choice questions were at Bloom's lower levels (comprehension and application). Italicized words illustrate content that was tested on one exam and not on the other.

teachers' conceptions of the subject. However, students and teachers were both given an open-ended question for them to provide any general feedback they wanted to. Many students and teachers (by their own volition) chose to write comments on the exam. All of these comments were negative. Some of the typical comments given have been included here. The BC Social Studies Teachers Association (BCSSTA, 2010) has just posted its own survey of teachers' comments on the exam. It is available at: http://bctf.ca/bcssta/docs_forms/SurveySummary_Social_Studies11.pdf The teacher comments they include largely reflect the findings of this study: most of the respondents do not like the exam, state the exam is based on content-testing (not critical thinking), and that it is changing how teachers teach the course.

The last section of the exam was essay writing. On both exams, one essay asked students to “describe” environmental issues. “Describing” is placed low on Bloom’s taxonomy as it doesn’t require or promote critical thinking. The second essay in 2006/7 asked students to “evaluate” French-English relationships over the twentieth century, the only exam question that was at a higher level on Bloom taxonomy (application/analysis). However, the second essay in the last exam was a recall question that asked students to “describe” the development of Canadian autonomy over the twentieth century.

The exams tested particular areas in more detail than others. Twenty four percent of the multiple-choice questions (42% if one includes national and foreign government policy) tested students’ knowledge of definitions/details of a government term or process, such as:

6. Which of the following is a characteristic of a majority government?
 - A. The reading of bills by the Senate is not necessary.
 - B. It does not require Royal Assent for the passage of bills.
 - C. The approval of independent Members of Parliament is needed.
 - D. It is able to pass legislation without the support of the opposition parties.
- (Ministry of Education 2006/07, p. 2)

Table 1. Content Analysis of Two Social Studies 11 Exams. (Note that percentages are broken down by sections, and not as a total of each exam)

Exam Sections	2006/7 Exam	2008/9 Exam
<i>Multiple Choice</i> (Total out of 55, worth 70% of the exam)	Factual/Recall Questions (90%) Government-structures/terms/processes (24%) Government- national/ foreign policy (including Autonomy) (18%) WWI (4%) Labour unrest (2%) Great Depression (5%) Regional issues (eg. Quebec nationalism): (9%) WWII (5%) Other twentieth century wars/events (2%) UN peacekeeping (2%) <i>Cold War (4%)</i> Geography (population pyramids, “development”) (15%) Higher order thinking at lower levels (10%) Cdn national policy (application) (2%) Historical thinking (comprehension) (2%) Economic terms (comprehension) (2%) Geography (application) (5%)	Factual/Recall Questions (90%) Government-structures/terms/processes (22%) Canadian government- national/ foreign policy (including Autonomy) (16%) WWI (5%) Labour unrest (2%) Great Depression (5%) Regional issues (eg. Quebec nationalism) (5%) WWII (5%) Other twentieth century wars/events: (2%) UN peacekeeping: (2%) Geography (population pyramids, “development”) (20%) <i>First Nations issues (residential schools) (2%)</i> <i>Gender Equity, Human rights (2%)</i> <i>Economic processes (2%)</i> Higher order thinking at lower levels (10%) Cdn government (application) (2%) WWI- II: 2 (comprehension) (4%) Gt Depression (comprehension) (2%) Geography (comprehension) (2%)
<i>Essays</i> (2, worth 15% each)	Factual (15%) Geography (describe) Application/Analysis (15%) French-English relations (evaluate)	Factual (30%) Describe Canadian autonomy (recall) Explain global warming (recall)

The exams also focused on Autonomy/International Involvement and Geography. Some areas, such as World War II and social-justice issues, were barely tested on these samples. By

conducting yearly analyses of these exams, teachers should be able to develop some understanding of topics that are more likely to be tested and thus to strategically focus on these areas (in the two examples, presented here, Government terms, structures, processes, and policies over the century) with the likelihood of increasing their students' marks. As teachers are aware of the fact-based nature of the exam, they are refocusing their attention on teaching particular fact-based content to their students (BCSSTA, 2010). Teachers are teaching to the test, rather than focusing on assessment *of* and *for* learning.

As mentioned in the first section of this paper, Ball (2006) theorizes this as Performativity: how accountability measures such as standardized testing negatively affect teaching practice (p. 692-701). As students' marks are publicized and used to rank schools by the Fraser Institute in BC, teachers are, in effect, evaluated themselves.⁷ They thus have a vested interest in ensuring that their students do well in the exams and so evidence exists (as the BCSSTA survey illustrated) that teachers alter their teaching practices to focus on what is tested, and not what is of value to learn. Further, many teachers feel a sense of responsibility to their students to prepare them for the exam, as the grades received may have some influence on students' future life opportunities.

PLOs and the Value of Assessment

Table 1 indicates some reliability in terms of the content tested on both exams, although not a reliable sampling of all PLOs. As some PLOs were not included in some exams at all and some of these were considered key goals as expressed in the course description, aims, and objectives, the exam is problematic as a valid evaluation measure of the course. For example, the 2006/7 exam had no questions on First Nations events or issues over the Twentieth Century, which is a required course outcome. The following table (Table 2) summarizes the major Themes/PLOs for Social Studies 11 and the suggested assessment weightings listed in the curriculum document. The last column describes the content that was/wasn't tested on the exam and at what weightings, illustrating that not all content was equally tested.

The exams are based on multiple-choice questions and essay writing, affirming the focus on the two academic abilities of reading and writing. No questions allow students to demonstrate their learning in varied ways that draw on their strengths or to work collaboratively in addressing key social issues, a vital element of good citizenship. These were also identified as key principles underlying the curriculum guide, as described above. In addition, exam content does not include materials from the varied backgrounds of BC's students, and it does not match the stated rationale of the course which is given as: "The aim of social studies is to develop thoughtful, responsible, active citizens" (Ministry of Education, 2005, 11).

⁷ The Fraser Institute is a right wing Think Tank that publishes yearly statistics on school rankings based on aggregated course and exam results.

Table 2. Correlation between Social Studies PLOs, Suggested Weightings and the Exam⁸

Social Studies 11 PLOs	Suggested Weightings	Tested/Not Tested and at What Weightings
<i>Skills and Processes</i> (Critical Thinking; Research; Communication; Citizenship)	30%	Generally, not tested on the exam.
<i>Politics and Government</i> (Government structures and processes)	17%	Heavily weighted, (22-24% of multiple choice). If policy is included, this section is 38-42% of multiple choice.
<i>Autonomy and International Involvement</i> (Canada's development of Self-government; international role)	17%	Heavily weighted, but hard to separate as many questions are policy questions. With policy questions, 34-37% of multiple choice questions, plus 1 essay in each exam (worth 15%).
<i>Human Geography</i> (World issues related to population, environment, "development")	17%	More weighted. 20-22% of multiple choice. Plus 1 essay each in each exam (worth 15%)
<i>Society and Identity</i> (National- social change and issues)	19%	18-25% of multiple choice (but much overlap between Social policy-related questions and Politics).

The exam is questionable as a valid measure of such an aim. Answering a number of fact-based questions does not demonstrate that students are, or will be, responsible or active individuals, or that they will be "responsible, active citizens" (Ministry of Education, 2005, 11). In reality, forcing students to memorize a number of detailed facts related to the Canadian government that are to be demonstrated in a stressful and competitive standardized evaluation can have the damaging effect of destroying, rather than fostering, students' interest in being active citizens, as they may come to conflate the latter with the former. Indeed, many of the students commented on the fear and stress that the exam engendered:

The exam is the worst one out of all of them and I am not looking forward to it. (Student Comment, Broom, 2012)

I think we shouldn't have any more provincial exams because not everyone can do well because of the information that you learn. They become too stressful to study for. (Student Comment, Broom, 2012)

A better measure of students' developing citizenship would be to have students engage in active, community-based projects and then to reflect on these experiences. As one teacher commented:

Social studies needs to be about interacting with society and not be about the "test." Social Studies is the worst possible course to put a standardized test in. Grade 11s are

⁸ The Ministry of Education (2010) has a "Table of Specifications" for the exam on its website. For unknown reasons, they have identified different percentage values for the exam: Skills and Processes 30%. Politics and Government 15%; Autonomy and International Development 15%, Society and Autonomy 25%, and Human Geography 15%. They state that "higher mental processes" (presumably critical thinking, research skills and so on) are tested on the essay section of the exam. However, considering that three of the essays surveyed here asked students to "describe" or "explain" factual events or processes, this can be disputed.

responsible enough to be out in the community doing real learning.” (Teacher comment, Broom, 2012)

Whether students become “good citizens” will not be known until they are adults (Myers, 2004), but associating knowledge of government structures and processes with good citizenship is flawed: knowing and doing are very different processes. Further, what is meant by “active” citizenship is not defined. Is voting sufficient for being considered active? What if one votes but lives a dishonest life?

The curriculum IRP goes on to state its learning objectives. The first is that students are to be “able to acquire the requisite information” (Ministry of Education, 2005, 11). However, students are not asked to research information, or to demonstrate the procedures of good research, such as to identify authors and assess their biases, on the exam. This would be better assessed by having students engage in research projects that include a reflection component on the resources used. The IRP goes on to state that students will learn, “to consider multiple perspectives and to make reasoned judgments” (Ministry of Education, 2005, 11). Critical Thinking is considered an important objective of Social Studies. However, the exam is based on fact-based, recall questions that do not develop critical thinking. Most of the questions require students to select from pre-determined factual choices. Students are quite aware of this fact-based learning, and they do not feel that it adds to—or is a good measure of—their learning, or their development as citizens:


I will forget in 5 years anyways. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

I think provincials are not useful because we shouldn’t have to cram our knowledge together. (Student comment, Broom 2012)

I get really stressed out so I end up cramming it all and in the end I forget it all because I forced myself to memorize everything. I think that the provincial should be eliminated. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

Actually, most of us totally forget what we learned after doing the exam. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

Bloom (1956) developed the following model to illustrate levels of critical thinking. Beside each level are examples of activities that will foster them (Zevin, 2000).

Highest  Lowest	Bloom’s Levels of Critical Thinking and Zevin (2000)’s Activity Types
	<i>Judgment</i> (informed option), assessed through controversy (debates, issues-exploration)
	<i>Synthesis</i> (put ideas together), assessed through means like mystery (discovery learning)
	<i>Analysis</i> (consider options using learning), assessed through activities such as frames of References (presenting multiple viewpoints)
	<i>Application</i> (use learning), assessed through active means such as drama, role play, simulations
	<i>Comprehension</i> (understand), assessed through compare/contrast/classify worksheets
	<i>Recall</i> (remember facts) can be assessed through quizzes and tests.

Integrating Critical Thinking

As demonstrated above, the questions on the exam are largely at the bottom of Bloom's hierarchy: recall and comprehension questions dominate. Critical thinking could be tested. For example, rather than asking students to match given political orientations with their appropriate definitions, students could be asked to read a short extract of a speech from one political orientation, to identify the orientation it comes from and give examples of community actions it supports, and then to discuss whether they agree with the orientation or not and why. They could also describe how a supporter of this orientation would tackle a social problem (such as, rising health care costs), or write a political speech for parliament supporting (or opposing) a proposed policy. All of these activities could occur in class and be evaluated by teachers. Critical thinking could also be fostered by having students consider multiple viewpoints on an issue or engage in a discovery-learning project of the varying views of citizenship held in different countries that illustrates a range of ideological positionings. Students could engage in debates on issues, such as global human rights abuses. Students could read three viewpoints on Canada as a Human Rights leader, from the perspective of the Canada government and as written in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, from the standpoint of First Nations people, and from Amnesty International's view. They could be asked to identify the positions held by all the three, the possible biases or omissions in each, and then to argue which view they support and why. This would require both the use of knowledge or facts as well as higher order thinking.

Citizenship

The IRP goes on to state that:

Through their participation in social studies, students are encouraged to understand and prepare to exercise their roles, rights, and responsibilities within Canada and the world.... Social Studies 11 contributes to the important goal of preparing students for their lives as Canadian citizens and members of the international community. (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 11)

The exam does not include questions that provide evidence that students will exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. One student stated:

The provincial doesn't give a good judgment of what you know. (Student comment, Broom 2012)

As mentioned, good citizenship can really only be judged in the future (Myers, 2004), but attitudes that are more likely to support it can be explored. For example, students could be asked to explain whether they will vote or not and why/why not, or to describe an issue they are concerned about and how they would actively get involved to support it. The best ways to assess these sorts of learning are by the teachers themselves through a variety of interactive activities. Students themselves stated their views that the exam was not a useful method of evaluating their learning:

I think that a social studies provincial is quite unnecessary. We do need to know the subject and its many topics for they relate to our everyday lives and our future. However

not so much that we have to memorize every date and name in history. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

I feel the provincial exam isn't the best way to test the province's level of understanding of social studies. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

I believe that a provincial exam worth 20% of a students' grade is unnecessary. It can ruin a mark an overall be an unsuccessful way to gauge a person's knowledge of a subject. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

Placing assessment in the hands of teachers requires the Ministry of Education to trust teachers' judgments (Apple, 2006). If the Ministry of Education views teachers as professionals who are capable of assessing their students effectively through in class assignments, it will not need to have a provincial exam, as teachers can develop and use a variety of different assessments in their classrooms. Trust may be a major hurdle, yet students voiced the belief that teachers adequately assessed their learning:

The provincial exam is useless. We have studied the course all year and did multiple tests, quizzes, and projects. I believe we've done well for 10 months of taking this course. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

Other Departments/Ministries of Education across Canada, such as Nova Scotia and Ontario, value teachers' judgments by placing assessments and evaluations in teachers' hands. In Ontario, for example, teachers are asked to prepare a final evaluation worth 30% of the course that is appropriate to the content taught.

The curriculum IRP goes on to state that Social Studies 11 aims to have students, "develop an appreciation of democracy and what it means to be Canadian" (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 11). As students are expected to accept this value without critically thinking about it, this PLO can be considered a form of indoctrination. Indeed, the attempt to use education to foster values supportive of the nation state can be traced back to the foundations of public school systems in Prussia (Cordasco, 1976; Lauder et al., 2006). Further, students learn primarily about Canada in the twentieth century by studying the Canadian government and Canada's national and international policies over the century (Ministry of Education, 2005). Students are only briefly introduced to the Cold War, Human Rights, the United Nations and general World History, and this information is primarily presented as factual information for students to learn. One could argue that appreciating democracy and Canada requires more than being able to list a number of factual events. As students wrote:

I don't believe provincials are beneficial to my future. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

It's not fair to test students on everything they have learned in one year. The provincial is not a fundamental part of learning about social studies. (Student comment, Broom, 2012)

In summary, the Social Studies 11 exam is a poor measure of student learning and has validity issues, as it has been written in relation to the guiding principles that the Ministry of Education has identified for Social Studies. It privileges good memorizers and asks fact-based

(who, what, where, when or describe) questions. The questions are not focused on assessing critical thinking, nor do they value students' varying learning styles or allow students to demonstrate their learning in diverse ways. The exam does not consider the varying backgrounds students bring with them to schools. Finally, the exam does not meet the major course objective: its questions do not illustrate that students have met the course goal of good citizenship in terms of attitude and action. Students and teachers' comments illustrate awareness of these shortcomings. One could argue that a course with Progressivist roots whose goal is good citizenship as elaborated by Dewey (1916), does not need to have fact-based exams. The implication is that students who fail the exam fail them as *citizens*. Rather, course activities and assessments could be ones that allow all students to develop their awareness of the strengths and challenges of democracy and of the key role individuals with empathy and critical thought can play in nurturing a continually growing democratic society (see Dewey).

Conclusion

Standard testing is part of a larger philosophic orientation that is based in a neoliberal, marketized view of education. The research presented at the beginning of this paper shows that it is about control and classification and that is having negative results on student learning, teaching practice, and school culture. BC is following along in implementing this international ideology, as illustrated in the fairly new (2004), standardized Social Studies 11 exam. The exam affects students' well-being and school culture as the results are used by the Fraser Institute to develop public ratings that rank schools from excellent to poor. As these ratings are largely related to sociocultural background (that is, schools in wealthy neighbourhoods consistently get higher ratings), the rankings largely demonstrate that social background influences school success, rather than that wealthier students are *smarter*. However, schools (and thus students) that are rated as poor may suffer a loss of self-esteem that can affect their desire to do well in school (a self-fulfilling prophecy). Furthermore, as teachers are evaluated based on how their students do on these publicized assessments, their teaching practices may change to focus on exam preparation. The marks students receive on this exam (along with other graduation exams and when combined with class marks) become students' final course marks. Universities, and other post-secondary opportunities, select students based on these final grades students. In effect, the career choices of students who do not receive high marks on these exams may be affected, as students may be barred access to some forms of post secondary education.

The Social Studies 11 exam has validity issues, as it primarily tests factual content and does not align with Social Studies 11's main objectives, which are focused on Progressivist goals of developing critical thinking and citizenship—the later of which includes community building and group collaboration. Students and teachers' comments illustrate both groups to be aware of the exam's shortcomings and echo many of the findings of international researchers described above. Assessments that meet the PLOs can best be developed and used by teachers in their classrooms. Table 3 presents an example of various assessment options framed within varying conceptions of the course.

Table 3. Four Social Studies Frames and Associated Activities.

Perennialism/Classicism	Essentialism/New Social Studies	Progressivism	Reconstructionism
-Plato (1999), Oakeshott (1989)	-Bruner (1987)	-Dewey (1916)	-Freire (2000)/Foucault
Textbook Socratic Method Q and A Debates Guided Discussion Reading Worksheets Inductive and Deductive work	Inquiry Research Independent work Depth learning Scientific Method Historica Fairs Webquests Interviews Methods from different disciplines (e.g., Archeological dig) Simulating academic practices	Project method Cooperative work Peer based learning Problem solving Relevant issues Activities based Field trips Simulations Games Drama	Issues-exploration Action Self reflection Moral discussions Art Personal Biographies Curriculum from the ground up Picture/primary document analysis Journals Portfolios Stories Critical Thinking

Assessment will be enriched by using a variety of these measures as well as other measures that draw on varying student intelligences, including media projects, plays, and art walks. If teachers want to use tests to assess students' learning of course material, they should be carefully written to ensure that they are valid measures of PLOs.

Teacher-focused assessment requires that the Ministry of Education trust the professional judgment of teachers in assigning grades and that the Ministry refuse to buy into neoliberal views of education sweeping the globe.

If the Ministry has concerns that some course content is not being taught, or that teachers are assessing course content in varying ways, it can use other means to manage these concerns that do not penalize students or push teachers and students to focus on memorizing facts. These means include: 1) holding professional development days that illustrate how to teach the course with engaging lessons and how to assess fairly; 2) providing ready-to-use materials for difficult/unpopular teaching areas (such as government); 3) having teachers meet with principals/heads of department during the year to review what PLOs have been taught, and 4) establishing Social Studies "communities of practices" that allow teachers to share resources with each other and that give teachers time to do this.⁹ The Ministry could provide more demonstration lessons and free materials on the Ministry site from the money saved in not giving the standardized exam. It could also provide extra resources to support student learning in socioeconomically-challenged areas. For example, a popular fieldtrip for many Social Studies 11 teachers and students is to visit the provincial government in Victoria. However, less wealthy students cannot afford these trips. Providing funding for students to participate in such trips (or to aid them in visiting and exploring their local, municipal governments) can play a vital role in positively transforming students' understanding and value of government, a key component of

⁹ The BCSSTA is a good example. Its newsletter includes a number of engaging lessons that aim to develop critical thinking in students using varied, student-centred, and collaborative practices. Its last newsletter even had an example of how to teach students to think critically about history using errors found in one Social Studies 11 exam.

citizenship education. This may be more significant in the long term in developing students' citizenship than fact-based standardized assessments that create stress and fear in students. Nurturing citizenship—the stated goal of Social Studies 11—involves developing critical thinkers with empathy who work to improve their democratic society. Assessment means should match this goal. For growth in society to occur, each student should be given the opportunity to develop his or her potential in an environment where process matches aims.

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**Comparing Recent Canadian and American Social Studies Curriculum and Methods
Texts:
An Essay Review**

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Ross, E. Wayne. (2006). *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems and Possibilities* (Third Edition). Albany: State University of New York Press. 358 pp. ISBN 0-7914-6910-7

Sears, Alan & Wright, Ian. (2004). *Challenges & Prospects for Canadian Social Studies*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press. 312 pp. ISBN 1-895766-72-9

Typically one does not come across a book review that examines four books at the same time, especially considering the potential for confusion and expanse. As a high school social studies teacher, doctoral student, and educator of pre-service social studies teachers I am always searching for new social studies texts that are relevant to the diverse areas of social studies education I am involved in. In the last few years I have discovered four of the most recent Canadian and American books that were conceived and written with the intention of being relevant and instructive for a diverse audience of people in the field of secondary social studies education including pre-service and practicing secondary (high school) social studies teachers, social studies teacher educators, and curriculum developers. The four books include Alan J. Singer's *Social Studies for Secondary Schools: Teaching to Learn, Learning to Teach* (2009), Roland Case and Penney Clark's *The Anthology of Social Studies Volume 2: Issues and Strategies for Secondary Teachers* (2008), E. Wayne Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems and Possibilities* (2006) and Alan Sears and Ian Wright's *Challenges & Prospects for Canadian Social Studies* (2004).

I approach the critical review from three perspectives and lenses: a secondary school social studies teacher, doctoral student, and social studies educator. In order to critically evaluate each book from these perspectives, there are several important questions to ask: Does the book include chapters that attend to the breadth and depth of important and current topics in social studies education? What are the theoretical assumptions, claims to knowledge and underlying ideologies present in each book? Is the book relevant and instructive for a diverse audience of pre-service and practicing social studies teachers, social studies teacher educators, and curriculum developers in both the Canadian and American contexts?

The books I examine can be located in either the American or Canadian context of social studies education (this will be described in more depth later in the review), which to some might seem like an incompatible pairing. Many social studies educators and teachers in Canada and the United States are quick to dismiss each other's social studies curriculum and methods texts as being irrelevant to their country's educational, social, political, economic, historical and cultural realities. There is no doubt that there are some significant differences both historically and presently, however, social studies education in Canada and the United States are more similar than different. Because of these similarities, social studies educators in both countries have much to learn from each other's scholarship about methods, curriculum problems, responses, and future possibilities for social studies education in their respective countries. Learning from each other's work in social studies education has many benefits; social studies education in each country can be improved substantially while reducing the cost in resources and time that major reforms normally require.

While I strongly believe that all social studies educators should be expected to adapt ideas and concepts from a different context into their own, I am also aware that it is necessary to briefly discuss the context in which each book is situated. Singer's *Social Studies FSS* focuses exclusively on the American context and cites examples from American history and social studies curriculum throughout. More than any other book Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum* is the most balanced between American and Canadian perspectives. Ross refers in a general way to the "North American context" at different points in the book rather than directly mention Canada or the United States, and the book includes academic contributors from both Canadian and American colleges and universities (five Canadian and fifteen American). Despite being more balanced than the other books, the majority of the book analyzes the American educational context and uses curricular examples that are almost exclusively from the United States. Sears and Wright's book focuses entirely on the Canadian context, which is obvious considering the title explicitly denotes "Canadian Social Studies". Both *Challenges & Prospects* and *Anthology* include chapters on Canadian-specific topics like First Nations social studies education, which is more of a focus for Canadian social studies educators than American Indian education is for American educators. Unlike its predecessor (the *Canadian Anthology of Social Studies*, 1997) the 2006 version of the *Anthology* dropped "Canadian" from the title because the "previous edition aroused interest amongst British and American teachers" and they wanted to better attend to the interests and needs of a non-Canadian audience (p. ix). Despite dropping "Canadian" from the title the *Anthology* is still very much set in the Canadian context; every contributor is Canadian and all of the examples cited throughout the book are Canadian-curriculum specific.

American and Canadian Social Studies: A (Brief) Historical and Contemporary Context

"It is impossible to entirely avoid the American influence on social studies education in Canada. Instead, Canadian social studies educators have chosen to benefit from the dollars and energy put into social studies education in the United States by taking the models and strategies that seem useful, adapting them to the Canadian context, and discarding the rest, while at the same time working to develop and share uniquely Canadian ideas" (Clark, 2004, p. 32).

Penney Clark's quote best sums up the profound influence social studies developments in the United States have had on the development of Canadian social studies education. The similar

pattern of development in social studies education in both countries provides a unique situation for Canadian and American social studies educators to learn from each others' challenges, contexts and possibilities.

Since Canadian provinces began to adopt social studies as a school subject in the 1920's the major curriculum trends, resources and textbooks, pre-service textbooks for training teachers, the speakers invited to Canadian teachers' conferences, and the American references in provincial social studies curriculum guides all reveal the profound influence social studies developments in the United States have had on Canada. Clark (2004) explains that, "American social studies thought has affected Canadian curricula from the progressive education movement of the 1920's through the structure of the discipline and Canada Studies movements, continuing on through the social issues and values education influences, to the citizenship emphasis of the 1980's" (p. 32). It is important to note that American social studies model have not always experienced widespread acceptance across Canada, instead they are often incorporated in a piecemeal fashion that speaks to the fact that education (and curriculum development) in Canada are the domain of the different provincial and territorial governments. It would be disingenuous to suggest that the acceptance of social studies as a school subject in both Canada and the United States has been controversy free. Throughout the past century there has been fervent and widespread debates between advocates of social studies and those who believe that social studies would be better taught as separate courses in history, geography and other social sciences. There are further debates over pedagogical practices, purposes for social studies, and the exact content of what should be included in social studies courses.

Canadian social studies teachers and educators have not always enthusiastically and/or universally accepted developments in American social studies. Despite this reality, it can be argued that even Canadian-specific social studies developments emerged as a result of the powerful influence of the United States. For example, Clark (2004) highlights the fact that in the early 1970's the Canada Studies Foundation materialized in order to strengthen the amount of Canadian content in the curriculum, and it may not have come to light if not for perceived fears and threats of American cultural domination. It is also important to note that up until the 1980's developments and resources from Great Britain also had a profound influence on Canadian social studies developments. For example, the British production of primary and secondary source jackdaw kits for history and geography were widely used in Canada in the 1970's (Clark, 2004).

Clark (2004) believes that only in the 1990's and the first part of the twenty-first century did social studies curricula in Canada become more uniquely Canadian and began to feature more substantive differences from American social studies. In Canada there was renewed interest in strengthening the place of history and citizenship education in the curriculum, major revisions were made to the provincial and territorial social studies curricula, critical thinking was increasingly emphasized in curriculum documents, and social studies resources and pre-service methodology textbooks were developed by Canadian educators who focused more on Canadian-specific curriculum content and important developments in Canadian social studies education (Clark, 2004).

While social studies education in Canada became more uniquely Canadian during the 1990's and 2000's, the American system shifted towards standards-based education reform (SBER). SBER is an effort by a governmental body or professional education organization to create a standardized document or guidelines that define and establish purposes and goals, what content is selected, teaching methodologies and assessment techniques. Believers in SBER assume standards need to be raised because students do not know enough and raising the bar is

the best way to improve student achievement. SBER proponents assume that national and state standards are important for ensuring American competitiveness in foreign markets, and that standardization will promote equal educational opportunity for all students (Ross, 2006).

Different national social studies organizations across the United States representing the seven different disciplines (history, US and World history, geography, social studies, civics and government, economics and psychology) supported SBER and worked to create standards documents that outlined the goals and purposes, pedagogy, content and assessment techniques for their specific discipline. Ross (2006) points out that the creation of the different curriculum standards for each social studies discipline did little except aggravate the long-standing intellectual battles over pedagogy, purpose, and content of what constitutes social studies—the same arguments that have plagued social studies since its beginnings as a school subject.

One of the major controversies regarding the SBER is the use of standardized testing and “high-stakes tests” as the method for determining whether higher standards are being achieved. “High-stakes tests” are any tests that have real consequences for teachers, students and/or schools, whether it means pay increases for teachers, failure to graduate for students, or decreased budgets for schools. Mathison, Ross and Vinson (2006) contend that almost every state that has raised the bar for higher standards have also introduced high-stakes standardized tests to determine if the standards have been met. While Canada has not completely disregarded SBER and high-stakes testing, it has not been embraced as widely and as enthusiastically as it has in the United States. For example, in British Columbia, Social Studies 11 (a required course for graduation) features a mandatory provincial exam that is worth twenty percent of a student’s final grade. While the standardized exam for Social Studies 11 can be criticized for a number of different pedagogical and political reasons, this exam is not necessarily a high-stakes exam. It is worth twenty percent of a student’s final grade, students can still fail the exam and pass the course, and both teachers’ pay and contracts and school budgets are not linked to how well students do. Both Quebec and Ontario do not require mandatory provincial exams in social studies to graduate, and many provinces (including BC), have either cancelled, or made provincial exams optional for graduating students.

Furthermore, unlike the United States there have not been any unified pan-Canadian movements established to define pedagogical purposes, content selection, teaching methodology and assessment for social studies, or the different social studies disciplines. The lack of any national standardization can be accredited to the fact that there has been little desire amongst the provincial governments that control education and curriculum development to create any national uniformity, and there has been a lack of political will and little enthusiasm generated amongst politicians, public and members of the educational community. When there have been attempts to standardize social studies curricula across Canada, the attempts feature regional rather than national collaboration, such as the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum, and the purpose is to pool scant resources rather than provide standardized pedagogy, content or assessment practices.

In this section, I have outlined some of the similar historical and contemporary developments in social studies education in Canada and the United States. The context for teaching social studies is more similar than different in both countries, and there is a great deal Canadian and American educators can learn from each other’s challenges, contexts and possibilities for improving social studies education in both countries.

Overview of the Four Books

Alan Sears and Ian Wright wrote *Challenges & Prospects for Canadian Social Studies* (2004) (hereafter *Challenges*) with the purpose of updating their first book *Trends & Issues in Canadian Social Studies* (1997). *Challenges* retains important chapters from the previous edition that have been updated to acknowledge the changing conditions in social studies education, and it also features a number of chapters written by new contributors. Both editions of Wright and Sears' books share similar theoretical frameworks, chapter organizations, and authors, however *Challenges* includes several notable improvements. The authors removed some of the more dated and irrelevant chapters from *Trends* while offering recent research and a more pan-Canadian perspective on topics important to Canadian social studies teachers including chapters on: Global education, First Nations education, law education, technology use in social studies education, history and geography education, multiculturalism education, peace education, and critical thinking.

Challenges is organized into three distinct parts: *Part 1—Contextual Challenges and Prospects* features five chapters that attempt to introduce the reader to the wider contexts and debates in the field of social studies education across Canada. This section includes chapters on the historical context of social studies in English and French Canada, an analysis of the relationship between history education and social studies, and an examination of citizenship education in the Canadian context. *Part 2—Content Challenges and Prospects* includes nine chapters that provide distinct perspectives on the question of what content should be included in social studies curricula and how it should be taught? Various arguments are forwarded for more inclusion in the curriculum of the following topics: historical thinking, closer ties between school geography and academic geography, law-related education, preparation for the challenges of globalization, understanding of multiculturalism, social studies designed to understand First Nations' issues, instruction about gender and sexuality, education for peace-building and, instruction designed to help students improve their visual literacy. *Part 3—Process Challenges and Prospects* features seven chapters that focus primarily on social studies "methods", different pedagogies and processes used to teach social studies content. There are chapters that focus on instructional approaches for teaching conceptual understanding, critical thinking, situated learning, computer technologies, and assessment and evaluation in social studies classrooms.

E. Wayne Ross' third edition of *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems and Possibilities* (2006) (hereafter *The Social Studies Curriculum*) both updates and expands aspects of the 2001 revised edition while maintaining its focus on presenting an overview of contemporary perspectives on the enduring problems and broad range of issues facing social studies educators regarding "issues in curriculum development and implementation" (p. 7). The book includes chapters from a variety of authors, all of which strongly emphasize concerns for equality, social justice and diversity of purposes and forms of knowledge within the social studies curriculum. There are new chapters on race, gender, sexuality, critical multiculturalism, visual culture, moral deliberation, digital technologies, teaching democracy, and the future of social studies education. Ross (2006) identifies several purposes for the book—he hopes that this book will "stimulate readers to reconsider their assumptions and understanding about the origins, purposes and nature of the social studies curriculum" and that the book will enable "teachers and other curriculum workers to better understand and act on the nature, scope, and context of social studies curriculum concerns" (p. 13). Most importantly for Ross and the other

authors of the chapters included in the book is that social studies educators should challenge the status quo and actively work to transform society.

The Social Studies Curriculum is organized into four sections. *Part I—Purposes of the Social Studies Curriculum* features four chapters that focus on the purposes traditionally identified for social studies education in North America including a background to the disciplinary struggles for control of the social studies curriculum (particularly the history versus social studies debate) and an investigation into the ways in which various “actors” (departments of education, textbook publishers, and others) have influenced the curriculum. *Part II—Social Issues and the Social Studies Curriculum* presents five chapters that examine social issues in the social studies curriculum with a particular emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Ross is clear to point out that it is impossible to present a comprehensive overview of all the important diversity issues related to social studies, and as a result this section addresses the most frequently raised concerns, especially gender, race, class and participatory democracy. *Part III—The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems and Possibilities* features seven chapters that examine the social studies curriculum in practice, particularly the issues that have emerged as a result of initiatives to transform social studies curriculum and teaching that are currently demanding the attention of teachers and curriculum specialists. Ross expanded the coverage of topics compared to the 2001 revised edition and included six new chapters on topics that represent the issues that he believes are particularly significant for social studies education in the twenty-first century. These topics include assessment in social studies, digital technology and social education, addressing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues in the classroom, young children and moral deliberation, global education and teaching democracy in the classroom. In *Part IV—Conclusion* Ross brings all of the different aspects of the social studies curriculum together into a coherent arrangement that provides an effective starting place for social studies teachers and educators who believe that the purpose of social studies “should help children and young adults understand and transform their world” (p. 13).

For the past decade *The Canadian Anthology of Social Studies* (1997) has been used throughout Canada as a professional resource for practicing teachers and curriculum developers, and as a methods text for pre-service elementary and secondary social studies teachers. I was introduced to the book when I was a student-teacher in 1999, and I have referred to it throughout the past decade while teaching secondary social studies and history. A second edition, called *The Anthology of Social Studies Volume 2: Issues and Strategies for Secondary Teachers*, (hereafter, the *Anthology*) was published in the fall of 2008. The editors separated the previous single volume Canadian Anthology (1997) into elementary and secondary volumes to better address the different challenges each group faces in teaching social studies. It is the secondary Anthology that I will be discussing in this review.

The new edition of the *Anthology* features many revisions and updates from the original anthology. It includes new chapters on topics that represent the most recent and significant topics for social studies educators including: First Nations education, reading instruction for social studies, historical and geographic thinking, use of primary documents and feature films, creating a community of thinkers and enhancing critical thinking. The new volume has seven fewer chapters than the previous single volume of the anthology, as out-of-date chapters were removed and several chapters were shortened after irrelevant examples were removed. Eighteen chapters are new to this volume, and many of the chapters from the original anthology have been revised.

The *Anthology* is designed to integrate the best of theory and practice in social studies by including a multiplicity of viewpoints and perspectives that complement and accentuate each other in a way that provides an “exciting and powerful vision of social studies” (Case and Clark, 2008, p. ix). The *Anthology*’s thirty-four chapters are broken into three parts that are linked together by a vision of social studies that features constructivist and inquiry-based approaches designed to transform the ways in which social studies is taught in secondary school classrooms. *Part 1—Foundations* includes three chapters that introduce and examine the purposes, visions and rationales generally accepted as the purpose for teaching social studies—teaching democratic citizenship. *Part 2—Ends and Means* features nineteen chapters divided into five sections that focus on the different “ends” or purposes for teaching social studies and the different “means” or methods used to achieve those ends. *Part 3—Implementation* includes twelve chapters that describe a variety of strategies, resources and tools designed to help teachers plan meaningful lessons, units and courses, identify and utilize useful learning resources and “authentically” assess students’ work.

The most recent publication of the four books, Alan J. Singer’s third edition of *Social Studies for Secondary Schools: Teaching to Learn, Learning to Teach* (2009) (hereafter *Social Studies FSS*) is focused on the American context. Singer advocates an inquiry and activity-based approach to social studies teaching that is informed by both practice and theory, and he believes that *Social Studies FSS* can be used in a number of ways: as a text for graduate and undergraduate preservice social studies methods courses, for inservice training programs, and as a reference for both beginning and experienced social studies teachers. Throughout the book Singer encourages all teachers to become curriculum creators and not curriculum consumers, and to remind social studies educators that the way we teach reflects our understanding and beliefs about society and the purposes for history and social studies education.

The third edition of the book follows a similar structure and includes many of the same topics as the two previous editions, but Singer makes several important changes to address the criticisms incurred by the previous editions. The 2009 edition includes specific lesson ideas in each chapter designed to work in inclusive settings, address American learning standards, and promote literacy and the use of technology in social studies classes. In an attempt to connect social studies teaching with the current political context in the United States, Singer has included more essays on the politics of social studies education. He responds to the critics of activity-based education and multicultural education by including a “sharpened defence” of the efficacy of these approaches (p.xiv). Throughout the book Singer emphasizes the importance of social studies teachers having adequate conceptual knowledge of history and the social sciences before they begin teaching, and that successful teachers are committed to the continuous growth of their knowledge and understanding throughout their career.

In *Social Studies FSS* Singer attempts to blend theory with practice by integrating discussions about educational goals and the nature of history and social studies with ideas for organizing social studies curricula, units, lessons and activities. The book is written entirely by Singer and includes thirteen chapters that are divided into three major sections. Each chapter addresses a broad question about social studies education and is written as a question (for example Chapter 5 is entitled “Is Social Studies Teaching Political?”, and then features a number of sub-chapters that begin with a narrower question that focuses on a more specific educational issue such as “Why was the debate on the National History Standards so heated?” and “Should teachers discuss their opinions in class?”. Each chapter concludes with a number of essays about related social studies topics, sources for further reading, lesson examples and activities

designed to promote discussion and different approaches for teaching social studies. One of Singer's more novel ideas is to include lesson ideas at the end of each chapter that reflect the themes in the unit and are created by new and experienced secondary school teachers to serve as exemplars for beginning teachers. After the introductory chapter *Part I—Thinking About Social Studies* includes five chapters that focus on philosophical issues such as the reasons for teaching and learning history and social studies, social studies goals and standards, the political nature of the social studies curriculum and the design of social studies curricula. *Part 2—Preparing to Teach Social Studies* is intended to be more practical and includes three chapters that focus on planning quality social studies units and lessons. *Part III—Implementing Your Ideas* contains four chapters that explore topics such as thematic and interdisciplinary teaching, a project approach to social studies, assessing student learning and our effectiveness of our teaching, and finally ideas for promoting literacy and the use of technology in social studies classrooms.

Critical Analysis

Despite the fact that all four books concentrate on the complicated and diverse field of social studies, there are some important differences in the purposes and ideological viewpoints between the books. Singer's *Social Studies FSS*, Case and Clark's *Anthology*, and Sears and Wright's *Challenge & Prospects* share similar purposes in that they attempt to introduce important contextual problems and the latest theories in social studies education while blending them with practical methods designed to help teachers improve and transform social studies teaching. All three books are best utilized as methods texts for pre-service teachers and as valuable resources for social studies teachers. Unlike the other three books, Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum* attempts to present a comprehensive overview of the issues in curriculum development and implementation faced by social studies educators in order to push readers to reconsider their assumptions about the "origins, purposes and nature of the social studies curriculum" (2006, p. 13). Ross' book is less focused on practical solutions or "means", instead he hopes that the book will enable teachers and social studies educators to better understand and act on the nature, scope, and context of social studies curriculum concerns. Singer, Case and Clark, and Sears and Wright's books present the ends and potential means for social studies education, while Ross believes that his book is an effective starting place for social studies teachers and educators who believe that social studies should aim to transform society into a more just and inclusive space.

All of the books emphasize the belief that while social studies teachers face many mandated outcomes and expectations, they have the freedom to choose what content and goals in the curriculum to accentuate and how the content and goals in the curriculum will be taught. In other words, the books share the view that teachers should become curriculum developers not curriculum consumers (Singer, 2009). Furthermore, the four books share social constructivist and social reconstructionist orientations that emphasize that the purpose of social studies is not just to learn social studies content, but also to problematize the curriculum in order to help students "construct" and develop the knowledge, understandings, values, abilities and habits that strengthen participation in democratic society.

All four books also suggest that the purpose of social studies is to teach the values of democratic citizenship necessary for transforming society by making it more equitable, inclusive and just, however some books are more explicit about their commitment to these principles. Each book includes many of the same references to theorists and educators who advocate a

transformative approach to teaching democratic citizenship in social studies, including Kilpatrick, Rugg, Dewey, Freire, Giroux, Greene, McLaren and Apple amongst others. Ross' and the other contributors to his book offer a more explicit, passionate and politically radical (Neo-Marxist) view of the causes and potential solutions to the current problems in society. Ross logically argues that traditional social studies teaching, curriculum, and teacher education do not reflect a socially reconstructionist vision of the future, and current practices are more focused on implementing curriculum standards and responding to high-stakes tests than developing and working toward a vision of a socially just world (Ross, 2006, p. 321). In *The Social Studies Curriculum* Ross contends that social studies educators have focused too much on the "means" to transform society and not enough time on the "ends", or goals to be accomplished. The author reveals his belief in the role social studies education can play in social reconstruction when he asks "whether social studies should promote a brand of citizenship that is adaptive to the status quo and socially powerful, or whether it should promote a brand of citizenship that aims to reconstruct and transform society?" (Ross, 2006, p. 320). Social transformation will only occur when people realize that "...it is impossible to simultaneously champion participatory democracy and any system that supports a class-divided society, where public decision making is limited to the most narrow and controlled possibilities" (p. 329). Similarly, Ross argues that many teachers often implement curriculum created by others because they are not conscious of the reasons for their actions, and he challenges social studies educators (and others) who express a commitment to democracy to be self-critical of the values and interests represented in their use of language, their social relations and their practice (p.329). While Ross' book offers the most radical view of social reconstructionism, the overall belief that social studies education has an important role to play in providing students with the knowledge, attitudes, habits and dispositions required to transform society is shared by all books.

Many of the chapters in the four books contain many of the same topics. For example, each book includes chapters on the origins, purposes and goals for social studies education, computer technology and social studies education, potential implications of globalization for social studies, multiculturalism, anti-racist education, and critical history education. Given the fact that Case and Clark's *Anthology* includes the largest collection of (thirty-four) chapters, it is understandable why it provides a wider-variety of important contemporary perspectives and practical issues than the other three books. Furthermore, because of the number of chapters included, the *Anthology* is able to devote several chapters to important social studies topics which enable it to offer multi-perspectives and delve deeper into issues such as critical thinking, reading comprehension for social studies, learning resources for social studies, and assessment practices in social studies. The chapters in *Anthology* are written by thirty-four different teacher educators and practicing teachers which helps provide a more diverse view of social studies that appeal to a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences.

Social Studies FSS reveals Singer's strong belief that history education should be the center of the social studies curriculum, but because he is the sole writer, the book is limited to his perspective and biases. There is a lack of attention given to some topics currently capturing the interests of social studies educators in the United States and internationally, including historical and geographic thinking, reading literacy for social studies, critical thinking, multicultural and anti-racism education, and visual literacy. While Singer's experience and insights provided throughout the book are helpful, and he includes brief articles and excerpts from other social studies educators at the end of each chapter, the history only focus limits the applicability of the book to the diverse interests of pre-service and practicing social studies teachers. As previously

mentioned, Ross' book *The Social Studies Curriculum* concentrates more on providing a comprehensive overview of the issues in curriculum development and implementation, and focuses less on providing practical and methodological strategies for social studies educators to use in the classroom. As a result, Ross' book includes chapters on topics that help social studies teachers learn to uncover the taken for granted elements in our teaching. For example, *The Social Studies Curriculum* includes chapters on the future of social studies education, the influence and resistance to curriculum standardization and high-stakes testing, and Marxism and critical multicultural education to introduce teachers to some of the "taken for granted" aspects of the current context for social studies education.

Due to the different purposes of the books, the format and layout of the four books have similarities, but also several important differences. Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum* attempts to present a comprehensive view of the issues in curriculum development and implementation faced by social studies educators, and is not designed to be a social studies methods text. As a result, the book and chapters follow a straightforward academic format and does not typically include photos, table, diagrams or tools meant to illustrate important concepts or ideas. *Challenges & Prospects* focuses to a greater extent on the issues, challenges and context for Canadian social studies, while the *Anthology* concentrates on marrying the theory with the practice to provide possible solutions, practical methods and resources designed to help teachers enhance their practice. The *Anthology* includes a variety of tools including tables, models, diagrams, anecdotes, and other visual sources like photographs, paintings and political cartoons to help the reader understand how to implement difficult resources and methods into their practice. For example, on page 163 a table is provided to illustrate how visual representations of common text structures can be used to help improve students' reading comprehension strategies in social studies. Sears and Wright's collection does not include these tools, and as a result readers may face greater difficulty understanding the practical applications of the theory discussed in the chapters. Singer's *Social Studies FSS* shares a comparable purpose to Case and Clark's book, to serve as a methods text for beginning teachers and as a resource to practicing teachers, yet the format and structure of the book is not nearly as accessible for pre-service and practicing teachers as the *Anthology*. Singer includes some visual resources such as tables, diagrams, charts, drawings, and photographs, but they are too few in number for a social studies methods book. Although the book is organized logically, many of the pages appear too busy—they include too many sample lesson ideas, teaching activities, essays, classroom activities and questions that obfuscate and divert the reader away from the central topics within each chapter.

When *Challenges & Prospects* was published in 2004 it featured a number of topics that were on the forefront of a new vision for social studies education: critical thinking, First Nations education, historical thinking, globalization, gender sexuality in the classroom, and authentic assessment and evaluation, were just a few subjects gaining an increasing amount of acceptance and interest among practicing teachers, educational academics and curriculum developers. Since 2004 these topics have been further researched, practiced and written about by educators around the world. As an upshot of more recent publication dates, the *Anthology*, *The Social Studies Curriculum* and *Social Studies FSS* capture more recent developments on a wider assortment of topics in social studies education. For example, Linda Farr-Darling and Ian Wright's article on critical thinking in *Challenges & Prospects* does not reflect subsequent developments that the conceptualization and practice of critical thinking has undergone in the past few years, developments that are unpacked in several of Roland Case's articles in the *Anthology*. Similarly,

because *Social Studies FSS* was published in 2009 Singer is able to include some of the most up-to-date theory from both the field of social studies education and education in general. For example, in his chapter on the project approach to social studies Singer refers to two research articles about the impact of technology on social studies classrooms from 2007. Singer also refers to topical issues, events and articles relevant to social studies teachers to provide readers with real-life examples from the world around them. Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum* (2006) includes chapters that capture the latest data and arguments about high-stakes testing and standards-based-educational reform among other subjects.

The important differences between *Challenges & Prospects* and *Anthology* can be illustrated by the different treatments of historical thinking in the two books. In *Challenges* the article on historical thinking by Peter Seixas and Carla Peck presents an approach to teaching history that outlines the elements necessary to develop students' historical thinking abilities. The article was originally published in 1997, and was rewritten for *Challenges & Prospects* in 2004. In this article Seixas presents an early conception of historical thinking that has undergone considerable development since then. The *Challenges & Prospects* article delineates the concept of historical thinking and includes few practical ideas for implementing historical thinking except for a series of questions and exercises outlined at the end of the article. In 2006 Seixas built upon his previous work and created a more fully articulated conception of historical thinking called the "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking", a multi-year, Canada-wide project to reform history education through the development of classroom-based assessments (Peck & Seixas, 2008). The article on historical thinking in *The Anthology*, written by Seixas' University of British Columbia colleague Mike Denos outlines important goals for teaching historical thinking, and provides practical examples for implementing it in the classroom. Denos points out that his chapter borrows heavily from Seixas' latest theoretical developments, however, Denos attempts to do what Seixas' article in *Challenges* does not—to explain and provide practical examples that help teachers develop historical thinking in the classroom. Denos' chapter accomplishes this by providing important rationales for using historical thinking, using anecdotes from his classroom experiences to illustrate historical thinking methodologies, outlining challenges teachers face when implementing historical thinking, and by clarifying difficult concepts through the use of helpful tables, diagrams and figures.

Conclusions

After reviewing Singer's *Social Studies FSS* (2009), Case and Clark's *the Anthology* (2008), Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum* (2006) and Sears and Wright's *Challenges & Prospects for Canadian Social Studies* (2004) I have come to the realization that it is impracticable to argue that one of these books is "the best" book about social studies education. No single book can meet the needs of a diverse Canadian and American audience of beginning and experienced social studies teachers, social studies educators and curriculum developers who have different realities, needs and requirements for a social studies text. Instead the most logical route is to discuss which books best satisfy the different needs of an audience.

If the purpose is to identify a book that will prompt readers to reconsider their assumptions and understandings about the purposes, origins and nature of the social studies curriculum then Ross' book is the best choice. Ross is not focused on laying out the exact methods for achieving social transformation, instead he wants social studies educators to critically examine and become conscious and self-critical of the social and political realities inherent in their own practice. Ross believes that teachers are the key component in any

curriculum improvement and he hopes that this book provides social studies teachers with the perspectives, insights and knowledge necessary to achieve this goal. To Ross these perspectives and insights are the starting point towards transforming society, and Ross believes that teachers, the education system in general, and especially social studies education must play a significant part in this. Unlike Ross' book, Case and Clark's *Anthology* and Singer's *Social Studies FSS* do not provide a wide enough overview and critique of the current issues and debates in curriculum development and implementation. Sears and Wright's *Challenges & Prospects* includes various chapters that provide as wide an overview of issues as Ross' book, but the Sears and Wright book focuses exclusively on describing the Canadian context, and some of the chapters are slightly dated, although at the time they were published these chapters represented the cutting edge in social studies education.

In recommending Ross' book I don't want to give the impression that many of the arguments and claims made in the book would go unchallenged by social studies educators from all sides of the ideological spectrum. The book provides one view of the problems created by "thin" spectator democracies in North America and the education system. Ross' book would be criticized by the "Right" for being too progressive or radical—for its adherence to the totalized belief that societal problems are the logical outcome of socio-economic inequalities. Similarly, *The Social Studies Curriculum* can be criticized for being too idealistic and utopian in its belief that our schools are important sites of possibility for transforming society into a more democratic, egalitarian, inclusive and just place. The problems may be too immense and embedded in our current society to possibly expect that schools and teachers can be responsible for alleviating them. Lastly, Ross focuses the book on identifying and uncovering the problems in social studies education to serve as a starting place for teachers to begin their transformative work. Ross believes that the contributors to his book have provided a variety of pathways for those who want to take up the challenge and he admits that there are "multiple means" to achieve this end (p. 329). I would argue that Ross' book has clearly identified the problems in social studies education that have led to the current "spectator democracy", but he has not provided enough practical suggestions for teachers to understand how to actively begin working towards transforming society.

If the purpose is to identify a social studies book that blends theory with practice in a way that is relevant and instructive as a methods text for student teachers in a teacher education program, and as a professional resource for practicing teachers, then Case and Clark's *Anthology* would get the nod over both Singer's *Social Studies FSS* and Sears and Wright's *Challenges & Prospects*. The *Anthology* is able to achieve the difficult task of including the important foundational issues and problems, practical strategies, and visions for social studies while interweaving a constructivist, inquiry-based approach that "stands on the shoulders" of previous and contemporary theory. Singer's book does not include as much of a variegated perspective of the issues, problems and practical strategies for social studies, and the format of his book isn't as readable and accessible as the Case and Clark book. The main strengths of the *Anthology* are the diversity of respected teacher practitioners and teacher educators who write different chapters, an attractive, helpful format and style that includes many useful suggestions helpful to both practicing and beginning teachers, and lastly the wide coverage of important social studies issues, problems, methods and strategies that help beginning and practicing teachers achieve their goals and visions for transforming the way that social studies is taught and learned.

Despite its strengths, the *Anthology* is not flawless and should not be considered the ultimate collection of articles on social studies education. Although it captures many of the latest

developments in social studies theory and practice, inevitably it too will require revision and restructuring because many of the topics in social studies education are relatively new, and have a great deal of room for continued growth. Several topics in the book, like geographic thinking, are still in their infancy and will require more development and research. In the future, the *Anthology* may want to include contributions and important developments from social studies educators outside of Canada in order to make the book more relevant to a wider audience.

I have used the *Anthology* with student-teachers in social studies methods courses that I taught over the past two years and the majority of the students found the book very helpful and accessible. Those that did complain said that the *Anthology* includes too many chapters and topics to consider. Although I commiserated with the students, I also realized that their comments were as much about the overwhelming diversity of topics within the field of social studies as they were about the book. Furthermore, these students failed to comprehend the purpose of an anthology—they viewed the book as a body of knowledge they needed to master in their one semester methods course rather than a diverse collection of scholarly thinking on a given topic. The *Anthology* represents the diversity of topics that constitute social studies education, and it is up to the individual teacher to choose which topics are germane to their vision, goals and values for social studies education.

While all four books are excellent examples of recent scholarship on social studies curriculum, methods and issues, Ross' *The Social Studies Curriculum* and Case and Clark's *Anthology* represent the two best books for their respective purposes. Ideally the two books would be used in concert in a social studies methods course. Ross' book would help students contextualize and uncover the current problems and issues facing social studies educators, while Case and Clark's book could be used to provide students with the abilities, methods, tools and resources necessary for transforming social studies education, and hopefully society.

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