DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 412 SO 030 050

AUTHOR Thorton, Stephen J.; McCourt-Lewis, Anne A.
TITLE Perspectives on Teaching and Learning History, or "They Could Have Thrown Teapots For All I Care."
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, (Boston, MA, April 16-20, 1990).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Citizenship Education; Curriculum Development; Curriculum Evaluation; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *History Instruction; History Textbooks; *Learning Processes; *Revolutionary War (United States); Social Studies; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes; United States History

ABSTRACT

Despite a long-standing commitment to citizenship education throughout the United States, relatively few researchers have examined what civic learnings are acquired from particular topics in the curriculum such as the Revolutionary era. Researchers have largely neglected the substance of classroom life, the specific curricular context and subject matter being studied. This paper presents the results of a study that explored the relationships between civic learning and learning about the Revolutionary era. Specifically, the study considered the reactions to an elementary-level textbook chapter on the deterioration of Anglo-American relations prior to the Revolution by: a professor of history, a professor of social studies education, an elementary school teacher, a junior high social studies teacher, and two bright sixth graders. Four major topics relevant to civic education emerged for the readers' responses: (1) political values, (2) the lessons of history, (3) fair-mindedness and balance, and (4) learning history. The topics are examined in detail and the following recommendations are made: strategies such as class discussions should be more frequently employed than recitation; researchers need to examine much more closely what children now learn, and take these perspectives into account when they make suggestions for improvements in curriculum design and for more effective teaching practices; and more attention should be paid to civic learning in particular topics in the curriculum. A 38-item reference list is included, as are appendices containing the protocol for study of the text and a list of the major topics and ideas emerging from the study with related tables. (DB)

Perspectives on Teaching and Learning History, or "They Could Have Thrown Teapots for All I Care"

Stephen J. Thornton

Anne A. McCourt-Lewis

University of Delaware

Similar reasoning is evident in school district curriculum guides. Delaware's Colonial School District guide for the middle grades, for instance, begins with the statement that the social studies curriculum "has been designed to prepare students as responsible citizens..." (Colonial School District, 1986, p. 2). As Donald Oliver and James Shaver (1966) once pointed out, university-based historians might justify teaching certain facts about the Jacksonian period because of their scholarly knowledge of those facts or because that selection of facts is the most accurate interpretation of the period. However, they then point out:

> Such criteria are not adequate for the selection of specific content for the general education high school social studies program.... The interests of the community, and of the student who will live in the community, become the most essential factors. (pp. 7-8)

Jonas Soltis summed it up well when he (1968) noted that civic education uses historical subject matter as a "vehicle": "we speak of teaching someone about the Civil War so that he will understand the current segregation problem" (p. 33).

Despite a longstanding commitment to civic education throughout the United States, relatively few researchers have examined what civic learnings are acquired from particular topics in the curriculum such as the Revolutionary era.[1] Researchers have largely neglected, in Lee Shulman's (1986) words, the "substance of classroom life, the specific curriculum content and subject matter being studied" (p. 22).

In this paper, we will present the results of a study that explored the relationships between civic learning and learning about the Revolutionary era.

More specifically, we will consider the reactions to an elementary-level textbook chapter on the deterioration of Anglo-American relations prior to the Revolution by: a professor of history, a professor of social studies education[2], an elementary school teacher, a junior-high social studies teacher, and two, bright sixth-graders.

Although U. S. schoolbooks have always incorporated images of civic virtue (Billington, 1966; Elson, 1964; FitzGerald, 1980), only a few educational researchers have studied teaching, learning, and curriculum materials about the Revolutionary era (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 1988; Wineburg & Wilson, in press). To date no researcher has focused upon the Revolutionary era as a "vehicle" for civic education. Our intention therefore is to characterize what the educators in our study say are the civic learnings that American youngsters should and what selected responses from our two sixth-graders suggest children do derive from reading a text on the Revolutionary era.

Method

In a comparative analysis of British and American history textbooks in the 1960s, Ray Allen Billington (1966) noted that "instruction in American history is defined in the United States as a national duty, designed to plant the seeds of patriotism in youth" (p. 14). Two decades later, O. L. Davis, Jr. and others evaluated selected U.S. history textbooks. They too emphasized the civic mission of U.S. history instruction in their evaluation (e.g., Davis, et al., 1986).

Significantly, for the purposes of this paper, these and other analysts (e.g., Popkewitz, 1977) of the content of U.S. social studies curriculum materials have seldom examined what the intended audience learned from that content. Moreover, although the 1980s witnessed a considerable increase in

the research base on how children learn history (e.g., Downey & Levstik, in press; Kennedy, 1983; Knight, 1989; Levstik, 1989; Levstik & Pappas, 1987; Thornton & Vukelich, 1988), civic learning came in for only incidental mention.

In this study, we conducted individual interviews of approximately one hour each with a history professor, a social studies education professor, a junior-high social studies teacher, two bright sixth-graders, and the children's current classroom teacher. Each reader was asked to respond to a previously unseen elementary-level textbook chapter on the deterioration of Anglo-American relations prior to the Revolutionary War. After readers had finished each section of the chapter, they were asked: "What is your reaction to what you've just read?" Once the readers had reacted to each section in the chapter, they were asked further questions such as, "Tell me everything you remember about this chapter that you read--the entire selection." A complete list of the questions asked is provided in Appendix A.

Later, all of each reader's responses were transcribed and comments pertinent to civic education grouped according to topics that emerged from their responses. We then identified, for each topic, the particular subordinate ideas specified below.

We did not ask about civic issues per se; we wanted to determine what civic learning occurred without prompting. We proceeded this way because, as Judith Torney-Purta (1985) has pointed out, asking respondents their views of "freedom" or "democracy" often results in answers which are little more than slogans (p. 92). In other words, many people tend to corrupt the meanings of civic values. Like critical thinking (Cornbleth, 1985; Noddings, 1978), it seems unlikely that civic education can be directly taught. To put it another

way, instruction in widely-taught topics such as "how a bill becomes law" is no guarantee that students will learn associated democratic values.

Our stipulative definition of "the content of civic values" was taken from the work of Torney-Purta (1985): "freedom, toleration, fairness, respect for truth, and respect for reasoning" (p. 95). Most of the readers' responses included herein were culled from two questions: "What do you think the most important ideas are that the average fifth-grade student should 'get' from his or her reading of the selection?" "How might this selection help with an understanding of U.S. history in general?" We did also include, however, relevant information from readers' responses to other questions not specified here. (See Appendix A for all questions asked.)

Altogether our readers appear to have identified four major topics and 11 subordinate ideas relevant to civic education (see Appendix B). Not all readers, of course, identified the same ideas. Nor do all of the ideas seem to be equally central to civic education. For example, the idea that "the concepts of 'democracy' and 'self-government' are central ideas in the Revolutionary era and to political values today" would certainly seem to be more directly pertinent to civic education than the idea that "learning facts, names, and dates should not be a mindless activity for children."

The four major categories emerging from the readers' responses were: (1) political values, (2) the lessons of history, (3) fair-mindedness and balance, (4) learning history. These categories and the subordinate ideas under each will be elaborated upon as each is considered in turn. The categories and ideas are not entirely discrete but nevertheless provide a structure for discussion. We will review the comments of each reader for each idea. If no

mention is made of a reader's comments on an idea, this signifies that he or she did not mention that idea in any of his or her responses.

Findings

1. Political Values

Political values associated with the democratic ideas inherent in the events leading up to the American Revolution are perhaps the most obvious kind of civic learning resulting from study of this period of history. As one authority put it: "From the study of American history the pupil may...emerge with a clearer understanding of man's [sic] long struggle for a larger measure of freedom" (Cartwright, 1946, p. 10). It is noteworthy, despite the seeming centrality of emergent democratic values in the Revolutionary era, that only one relevant comment in this category was made by the children, and then only by one of the children.

a. The concepts of "democracy" and "self-government" are central ideas in the Revolutionary era and to American political values today. This idea would seem to be self-evident in a text describing the events leading up to Lexington and Concord. As Table 1 reveals, however, three of the readers (including both children) did not mention these concepts. This is even more remarkable in the case of "self-government" since it is the explicit focus of much of the text.

Insert Table 1 about here

The two professors (of history and of social studies education) emphasized the importance of both democratic ideas and self-government. The historian summed up well the responses of both professors: readers should "get out of

this a general sense that American values are based on the idea of fairness and people participating in making the laws that govern them." The junior-high social studies teacher commented on the importance of "concepts such as...[no] taxation without representation...".

b. The right to question, protest, and sometimes defy governmental decisions is a defining characteristic of the American way of life. Three respondents related historical development to the American character. The classroom teacher, for instance, spoke of "the spirit of the American people." She continued, "the fact that Britain said that 'America has to obey because they are our children'...makes the fur on your back stand up.... As Americans, we don't like that kind of thing."

The two professors raised a similar, but slightly different, point --that the colonists' response to Britain's punishment of Boston after the Tea Party was defiance rather than compliance. As the historian put it:

> sometimes when you punish people strictly it boomerangs on you.... And that's probably an idea that would be pretty compelling to fifth graders who are used to being dealt with by people in authority, and probably often in a way that they perceive as being unfair, or tyrannical.

c. Issues leading up to the Revolution were the cornerstones of the political values Americans hold today. Responses in this sub-category are broader than the first idea; this idea signifies a kind of American creed. Remarking on how the chapter might help with an understanding of U.S. history in general, the social studies professor spoke of the importance of:

> the notion that we have an inherent right to self-government, and that this, and liberty and patriotism have been valued qualities, and central to defining what it means to be an American.

The same reader also said:

> ...you would want [students] to see that this [concern for self-government] was not restricted to <u>just</u> one colony; that, increasingly, the issue was one that spread, not merely among those in Massachusetts or Virginia, but indeed in the Middle Colonies as well as in the New England and Southern Colonies; and that, in a sense, there was an incipient nationalism, and the seeds of the founding of the United States, built into this kind of situation. That at last the colonies were finding something that they had in common that was more powerful than their mutual links to the Mother Country....

According to the historian, the text's authors intended that readers would learn at least two major ideas from the book's description of events: first, American values are based on the ideas that drove the colonial protests; second, that the colonists' "reaction against Parliament's taxes is really a major step forward in Americans making that a central keystone of their whole political value structure." Similarly, the classroom teacher remarked on the American's right to question governmental decisions: "I believe that's part of the 'American heritage'...and I suspect it may have been passed down <u>from</u> the time of the colonists."

2. The Lessons of History

Whether consciously or not, people derive "lessons" from history (Neustadt & May, 1986, pp. xxi-xxii). That is, they conclude that some situation today can be better understood by reference to some situation in the past. Of course, as in the case of policymakers equating stopping the Communists in Vietnam with stopping Hitler at Munich, the analogies drawn are often mistaken. Nevertheless, people do derive lessons from history; the real questions are: What lessons do they draw? How well-founded are these lessons?

Several writers (e.g., Dewey, 1938/1963, pp. 48-49; Stodolsky & Glaessner, 1988, p. 1) have noted, in Frances FitzGerald's (1980) words, that:

> in some general sense,... what sticks to the memory from...textbooks is not any particular series of facts but an atmosphere, an impression, a tone. And this impression may be all the more influential just because one cannot remember the facts and arguments that created it. (p. 18)

a. Events in history have relevance to understanding contemporary events as well as events in times and places other than the setting of the historical events studied. The three adult respondents most directly concerned with teaching history to children--the social studies professor, the social studies teacher, and the classroom teacher--all mentioned, in one way or another, how history had relevance to understanding contemporary events. The classroom teacher, for instance, spoke at length on this subject:

> I think there are a lot of things in here [in the textbook chapter] to help us understand what we're like as Americans, to make comparisons as to events that happen in today's society [like] the problems at Kent State.... I think it's also important to help us understand things world wide. To understand we as a country actually have gone through a revolution that's happening in other countries. Is that [another country's revolution] something that we can accept just without further thought because we have gone through the same? Do we need to look at it further? Do we support revolution everywhere because we have gone through it?

In a similar vein, the social studies professor observed that ideas like liberty, self-government, and patriotism "have continued to have enduring significance in American history." The social studies teacher spoke to the importance of connecting central ideas about the Revolution to other social studies courses such as world cultures and to issues important to the students: "I think these concepts have to be expanded to show that this is not just an isolated issue. Some more examples that [students] might run into, that maybe they're familiar with, localized, either as far as local government, or even personalized into their own life."

b. Understanding the origins and consequences of a specific conflict may help one understand conflict in other times and places. Conflict was the only issue commented on by all six of our respondents. With the exception of the female sixth-grader, all respondents appeared to underscore the importance of understanding conflict and how it came about. The social studies professor provided perhaps the most comprehensive view of conflict:

> Given these circumstances [the growing tensions between the British and the colonists], and perhaps the stubbornness of many of the leading British politicians of the day, it is, in a sense, not surprising that eventually some sort of violence or some sort of conflict--beyond just verbal and writing letters--was likely to ensue...in a sense, you had--a· you do before many wars, such as the Civil War and the first World War--a situation, perhaps analogous to...tinder dry wood on a hot summer's day...it only needs a spark to set it off. And, it seems, things such as the Boston Massacre and so forth were among those sparks.

The classroom teacher and the historian provided comparable, though less broad, observations on conflict. "I think," said the classroom teacher, "in particular, the Boston Massacre would be something I would want to zero in [on] and hope that the fifth graders could understand that [violent conflict is] something that happens in our society" and she then referred to the

problems at Kent State as an example of this. The historian noted students would learn from the text that "there was increasing hostility [between the British and the colonists] that ultimately led to...a clash,...." The social studies teacher framed the issue of conflict in terms of what resulted from the colonists' defiant acts such as the Boston Tea Party.

Conflict, or at least specific conflicts, also evoked comment from both sixth-graders. As the reader might have noticed, the four ideas (1a, b, c and 2a) previously considered were not mentioned by the children. After reading about the conflict, however, the male sixth-grader remarked that the Boston Massacre "kind of makes you feel a little bit patriotic--for the colonists." The Boston Massacre, the boy later concluded, was "interesting because it tells about an action that the British took against the colonists. It's not like the colonists were able to get away with all that [throwing stones and snowballs, yelling] without the British getting them back."

The female sixth-grader also remarked on the Boston Massacre, although her remarks do not indicate much interest in, or understanding of, that incident. Her comments make clear she did not recognize that the distinction between the colonists' throwing rocks and snowballs and the British soldiers' firing of guns helped to provide the Patriots with an opportunity to label this event "The Boston Massacre."

3. Fair-Mindedness and Balance.

A continuing concern by critics of history textbooks (e.g., Billington, 1966; Davis, et al., 1986) has been balance and the avoidance of bias. Balanced presentation is consistent with both the methods of the historian and the goals of civic education. Our readers identified two focuses relevant to fair-mindedness and balance: propaganda and presentation of opposing views.

a. One must recognize propaganda and its use by those on both sides of an issue, especially in times of conflict. The social studies teacher and the social studies professor noted that both Great Britain and the American colonists used propaganda in the Revolutionary era. "The colonists," the social studies teacher commented, "used propaganda to blow this [the Boston Massacre] all out of proportion. And here [in the textbook] it's presented rather matter of factly, not getting into the fact that, by choosing the term, 'massacre' has significance."

The social studies professor spoke to similar concerns:

> We might wonder, a little bit, whether in Boston the Patriots called themselves the Sons and Daughters of Liberty--whether this perhaps loads the dice, a little bit, in the sense [that] "patriotism" and "liberty" tend to be buzz words that suggest positive ideas.... that "Patriots" was a term that was perhaps chosen...[because] being against "Patriots" is like being against "motherhood." And it's pretty hard to be on the other side.

As we have seen, perhaps these two social studies educators have a point given the sixth-grade boy's previously quoted remark about being made to feel "patriotic."

b. The points of view and rationales of those on both sides of an issue -- historical or contemporary -- need to be considered. All of the adults spoke to the importance of presenting at least two sides of an issue. The only indication of the children's views was the boy's remarks about being made

to feel patriotic for the colonists after reading about the Boston Massacre and his later comment about the British at the Boston Massacre "getting back" at the colonists. The adults' overall sentiment was stated succinctly by the classroom teacher: "I think it's important to be shocked back into the reality of realizing that there is more than one point of view." The social studies teacher, the historian, and the social studies professor also emphasized the importance of students seeing both British and American viewpoints.

4. Learning History

The final category concerns how and what students should and do learn. The learning process, especially learning to reason and to value, is itself a goal of civic education. Examination of learning considerations is also clearly warranted because without effective learning the three previous categories are moot. If schoolchildren do not learn what is in the curriculum, then why should we concern ourselves about the content of that curriculum? It is educationally significant, we believe, that the two sixth-graders said almost nothing about issues in the first three categories. Regarding learning history, the children had a good deal more to say.

a. Children must learn to think for themselves in order to understand and to learn history. In one way or another, all of the adults raised this point. The children were silent about learning to think for themselves, however, this silence may be revealing about the classroom opportunities they have had--or have not had--to think meaningfully about history.

The social studies professor argued that the textbook's presentation did little to engage children in "active learning." He continued: "I think that kind of learning is different in kind from what is implicitly presented by

> ...I would think children would be used to the idea of throwing stones and snowballs, so that [detail in the text about the Boston Massacre] would strike home with them. And the idea that [in return] the soldiers started to shoot, I think would make quite an impression on the children.

The historian -- as quoted earlier in connection with the idea on the right to question, protest, and sometimes defy governmental decisions -- also commented that the idea of unjust punishment creating resentment would be compelling to fifth-graders who probably feel that they have been treated unfairly by people in authority.

The two sixth-graders also mentioned their affective involvement, although in strikingly different fashions. The boy spoke with obvious enthusiasm for the intrinsic interest of the subject matter. For instance:

> I know a lot about the Boston Tea Party. Because a couple of years ago I saw a movie on it, and I read some books about. I always like the Boston Tea Party. Just because I thought it was kind of hilarious too, because of the name they gave to it.

In contrast, the sixth-grade girl consistently found the subject matter "boring" or disconnected from her interests. She is worth quoting at length as we doubt that paraphrasing would do her sentiments justice. Regarding a description of the colonists harassing British troops immediately before the Boston Massacre, she observed:

> Well, I don't think the first part, about the snowballs and stones, was really necessary. I mean, who cares if they threw snowballs and stones. I don't care. They could have thrown teapots for all I care.

Concerning how the text's account could be made more interesting, she continued.

> Like battles interest boys, and then ladies and gowns and short stories and stuff interest girls. So I think they should have more of both...more of something so that they [both boys and girls] can remember it.

And discussing what she thinks of social studies material like the text she read, she said, "I've always thought it boring!".

c. Children need to develop an understanding of the sequence of events leading up to the Revolutionary War and of what those events mean. Both the classroom teacher and the social studies professor mentioned the importance of students gaining, in the social studies professor's words, "a rich understanding of what events mean." As the classroom teacher put it:

> [The text] gives the chronological [order of events] leading to the Revolutionary War. And that's a very important time in the history of the United States. I think we have to understand that time in history to really know where we're coming from as a country.

d Learning facts, names, and dates should not be a mindless activity for children. The prevailing stereotype of history instruction entails recitation of facts, names, and dates with little concern for explication of their meaning. Both of the sixth-graders mentioned this issue. The boy noted that "dates" sometimes "didn't stick in my mind." More emphatically, the sixth-grade girl noted:

> I guess [students] shouldn't be asked to learn dates. I think dates are the most ridiculous things in the world.... Only the very, very important dates should [be learned]. But not when Custer's funeral was held....

The classroom teacher held a somewhat different conception of the significance of dates and events. She said that "the chronology of events leading up to the Revolutionary War [are] important," as are "...perhaps some of the important names in history." Of course, it may be that the teacher and the children had very different types of learning experiences in mind--learning facts, names, and dates need not be mindless--but, nonetheless, there seems to be at least some reason to suppose that the teacher and students had different perspectives on these details.

Conclusions and Discussion

Our aim in this paper has not been to demonstrate that there is frequently a gap between official goals for social studies programs and educational outcomes--that is already well-established (e.g., Goodlad, 1984; Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1980; Thornton, in press). We found it unsurprising, for instance, that the social studies professor had more to say about the theoretical aims of citizenship education than the classroom teacher (although she did have

much more to say on these issues than we had expected). Similarly, based on our reading of the social studies literature, we had low expectations for what students would learn and retain about the Revolutionary era.

What this paper does contribute to the social studies literature, we believe, is perspective on curricular aspirations versus what is learned from that curriculum. While social studies educators have long emphasized the field's citizenship mission (Stanley, 1985), there have been few fine-grained analyses of what students actually learn from widely-taught topics like the American Revolution. As Jane J. White (1989) found in her analysis of knowledge construction in a social studies lesson, the construction of meaningful knowledge requires that it "be relevant, interesting or useful to...students" (p. 14). All of our respondents, in one way or another, supported White's conclusion. In other words, the perceived relevance, interest, or use of a particular topic is a major determinant of what is learned. Unless civic issues prove engaging to students, worthwhile learning is unlikely to result.

Although other researchers have examined learning considerations vis-a-vis the Revolutionary era, their analyses have not extended to explicit treatment of the civic rationale for teaching that subject matter. For example, Isabel L. Beck and Margaret G. McKeown (1988) analyzed the "meaningfulness" of four fifth-grade textbook treatments of the American Revolution. They proposed two criteria to guide their analysis First, that students should construct "a coherent mental model of a situation" which enriches their knowledge of a topic" and allows them "to use it to understand similar circumstances across topics and historical periods." Second, they propose "using historical information to develop general thinking processes

such as inferencing, interpreting, and evaluating." Although these two criteria are certainly defensible and reasonable--and are reflected in our ideas 2a and 4a--they are too narrow if we are serious about the civic mission of the social studies curriculum.

In our view, the findings we have presented in this paper suggest the need for multiple perspectives on what is relevant, interesting or useful. The views of authorities in reading, educational psychology, and history, which are often invoked (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 1988; Bennett, 1986) to justify curricular decisions, are grist for the mill, but do not extend far enough. Social studies professors who teach pre- and in-service courses and who supervise and design instructional materials must also be represented. So must classroom teachers who transform curriculum into actual classroom events. And, so must students--the people whose sense-making of a curriculum is what ultimately counts. Why is it that the two sixth graders found the Boston Tea Party, the Boston Massacre, and the punishment of Boston more worthy of comment than the Stamp Act and the Committees of Correspondence? How can this memorableness be harnessed to civic purposes?

Finally, although it seems unlikely that democratic values can be directly taught, there are at least three steps that can be taken to enhance civic learning in our schools. First, strategies such as class discussions which increase the opportunities for civic learning should be more frequently employed than recitation (Torney-Purta, 1985, pp. 92-93). Second, researchers need to examine much more closely what children now learn--and what teachers want them to learn--and, take these perspectives into account when they make suggestions for improvements in curriculum design and for more effective teaching practices. And, third, most conceptions of citizenship education

have been cast in terms too broad to provide much guidance for practitioners. More attention is needed to civic learning in particular topics in the curriculum.

References

Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (1988). Toward meaningful accounts in history texts for young learners. Educational Researcher, 17(6), 31-39.

Bennett, W. J. (1986). First lessons: A report on elementary education in America. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education.

Billington, R. A. (1966). The historian's contribution to Anglo-American misunderstanding. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Butts, R. F. (1985). Civic learning for teachers: Capstone for educational reform. In A. H. Jones (Ed.), Civic learning for teachers: Capstone for educational reform (pp. 1-6). Ann Arbor: Prakken Publications.

California State Department of Education (1985). Model curriculum standards: Grades nine through twelve. Sacramento: 1985.

Cartwright, W. H. (1947). Evolution of American history in the curriculum. In R. E. Thursfield (Ed.), The study and teaching of American history (pp. 17-34). Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

Colonial School District. (1986). Social studies curriculum guide for middle school: Grades 6, 7, 8. New Castle, DE: Colonial School District.

Committee on American History in Schools and Colleges of the American Historical Association, the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the National Council for the Social Studies, Edgar B. Wesley, Director. (1944). American history in schools and colleges. New York: Macmillan.

Cornbleth, C. (1985). Critical thinking and cognitive processes. In W. B. Stanley (Ed.), Review of research in social studies education: 1976-1983 (pp. 11-63). Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, and Boulder, CO: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education and Social Science Education Consortium.

Davis, O. L., Jr., Ponder, G., Burlbaw, L. M., Garza-Lubeck, M., & Moss, A. (1986) Looking at history: A review of major U.S. history textbooks Washington, DC: People for the American Way.

Dewey, J. (1938/1963). Experience and education. New York: Collier Books.

Downey, M. T., & Levstik, L. S. (in press). Teaching and learning history: The research base. In J. P. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning. New York: Macmillan.

Elson, R. M. (1964). Guardians of tradition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

FitzGerald, F. (1980). America revised: History schoolbooks in the twentieth century. New York: Vintage Books.

Goodlad, J. I. (1984). A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gross, R. E. (1958). United States history. In R. E. Gross & L. D. Zeleny (Eds.), Educating citizens for democracy (pp. 162-214). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kennedy, K. J. (1983). Assessing the relationship between information processing capacity and historical understanding. Theory and Research in Social Education, 11(2), 1-22.

Knight, P. T. (1989). Research on teaching and learning history--A perspective from afar. Social Education, 53, 306-309.

Kownslar, A. O. (1974). Is history relevant? In A. O. Kownslar (Ed.), Teaching American history: The quest for relevancy (pp. 3-15). Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

Levstik, L. S. (1989). Historical narrative and the young reader. Theory Into Practice, 28, 114-119.

Levstik, L. S., & Pappas, C. C. (1987). Exploring the development of historical understanding. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 21, 1-15.

Merideth, D. (1947). Changing content of American history courses. In R. E. Thursfield (Ed.), The study and teaching of American history (pp. 35-57). Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

Neustadt, R. E., & May, E. R. (1986). Thinking in time: The uses of history for decision-makers. New York: The Free Press.

Noddings, N. (1978). Overview of the instructional dimensions study conference. In National Institute of Education (Ed.), Perspectives the instructional dimensions conference. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.

Oliver, D. W., & Shaver, J. P. (1966). Teaching public issues in the high school. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Popkewitz, T. S. (1977). The latent values of the discipline-centered curriculum. Theory and Research in Social Education, 5(1), 41-60.

Raywid, M. A. (1985). Comparisons on civic education. In A. H. Jones (Ed.), Civic learning for teachers: Capstone for educational reform Ann Arbor: Prakken Publications.

Shaver, J. P., Davis, O. L., Jr., & Helburn, S. W. (1980). An interpretive report on the status of precollege social studies education based on three NSF-funded studies. In What are the needs in precollege science, mathematics, and social science education? Views from the field Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspective. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (3rd ed., pp. 3-36). New York: Macmillan.

Soltis, J. F. (1968). An introduction to the analysis of educational concepts. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Stanley, W. B. (1985). Recent research in the foundations of social education: 1976-1983. In W. B. Stanley (Ed.), Review of research in social studies education: 1976-1983. Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, and Boulder, CO: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education and Social Science Education Consortium.

Stodolsky, S. S., & Glaessner, B. (1988). Students' views about learning math and social studies. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Thornton, S. J. (in press). Teacher as curricular-instructional gatekeeper in social studies. In J. P. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning. New York: Macmillan.

Thornton, S. J., & Vukelich, R. (1988). Effects of children's understanding of time concepts on historical understanding. Theory and Research in Social Education, 16, 69-82.

Torney-Purta, J. (1985). Evidence for balancing content with process and balancing answers with questions: The contribution of psychology to the civic education of teachers. In A. H. Jones (Ed.), Civic learning for teachers: Capstone for educational reform. Ann Arbor: Prakken Publishers.

Ubbelohde, C. & Fraenkel, J. R. (Eds.). (1976). Values of the American heritage: Challenges, case studies, and teaching strategies Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

White, J. J. (1989) The construction of substantial knowledge in social studies lessons. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Wineburg, S. S., & Wilson, S. M. (in press). Subject matter knowledge in the teaching of history. In J. E. Brophy (Ed.), Advances in research on teaching. Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Appendix A

Protocol for Study

Set for Task:

I'm going to ask you to read a section of a fifth-grade textbook that's about U. S. hi·tory [sic] just before the American Revolution. I'm also going to ask you some questions about your reading. We're going to use the same text and questions with elementary school readers and adult readers because we want to compare everyone's answers.

Task Directions:

I'm going to ask you to read silently as you normally would, and when you come to a section heading, I'd like you to stop and to tell me your reaction to what you will have just read. At the end of your reading, I'm going to ask you some more questions. With this in mind, I'd like you to look through the table of contents so that you have a sense of the whole book and then to begin reading the selection.

Questions at each Heading:

What is your reaction to what you just read?

Questions at Completion:

1. Tell me everything you remember about what you read in the selection. (Probes: Tell me more. Do you remember anything else?)
2. What do you think the most important ideas are that the average fifth-grade student would "get" from his or her reading of the selection?
3. What did you do to help yourself as you read or as you tried to remember what you read?

4. a. Which parts of the selection did you find most interesting? Why?

   b. Least interesting? Why?

5. Is there anything about the material that you think would cause problems for the average fifth-grader?

6. a. What did you know about the important ideas in this selection before you read?

   b. How did your knowledge affect the way you read the material?

   c. Suppose the average fifth-grader, who doesn't know what you know, read this material? Are there any ideas in the material such a reader might have difficulty understanding?

7. a. How might this selection help with an understanding of U. S. history in general?

   b. What would the average fifth-grader have to do to gain these understandings?

   c. What should a teacher do to help students get these understandings?

8. a. What do you think about when reading this kind of material?

   b. What do you think of this kind of material?

   c. Is it like any other reading that you know about?

Appendix B

Major Citizenship Topics and Ideas Emerging from Readers' Responses
("Topics" are the broad categories identified by numerals;
"Ideas" are the subordinate points identified by letters.)

1. Political Values

   a. The concepts of "democracy" and "self-government" are central ideas in the Revolutionary era and to American political values today.

   b. The right to question, protest, and sometimes defy governmental decisions is a defining characteristic of the American way of life.

   c. Issues leading up to the American Revolution were the cornerstones of the political values Americans hold today.

2. Lessons of History

   a. Events in history have relevance to understanding contemporary events as well as events in times and places other than the setting of the specific events studied.

   b. Understanding the origins and consequences of a specific conflict may help one understand conflict in other times and places.

3. Fair-Mindedness and Balance

   a. One must recognize propaganda and its use by those on both sides of an issue, especially in times of conflict.

   b. The points of view and rationales of those on both sides of an issue --historical or contemporary--need to be considered.

4. Learning History

   a. Children must learn to think for themselves in order to understand and to learn history.

   b. Children require affective involvement to understand and to learn history.

c. Children need to develop a rich understanding of the sequence of events leading up to the Revolutionary War and of what those events mean.

d. Learning facts, names, and dates should not be a mindless activity for children.

Notes

1. The conception of civic learning employed here is admittedly a limited one: mainly political knowledge and values. Although our data do not permit us to speak to a broader view of civic education, a thorough analysis would extend further. We agree with Mary Ann Raywid (1985) that "even impressive displays of relevant propositional knowledge [are to little avail] in the absence of a sense of social responsibility and a lived commitment to moral values." (p. 40)

2. Throughout the early stages of the study--conception, data collection, transcript preparation, identification of the topics and ideas emerging from our readers' responses--Stephen Thornton's role was only that of responding to the text and the follow-up questions as the social studies professor. His participation as an author of this paper began only after the stages identified above.

Table 1

Major Topic Categories and Subordinate Ideas Emerging from the Responses of Indicated Readers

	Readers					
		Social Studies		Sixth Grade		
Topics and Ideas	Historian	Professor	Teacher	Teacher	Girl	Boy
1. American Political Values						
a. Centrality of ideas of democracy and self-government	X	X	X			
b. Right to question, protest, and defy a defining characteristic	X	X			X	
c. Issues in Revolution cornerstones of US values today	X	X		X		
2. Lessons of History						
a. Relevance of events in history to other times and places		X	X	X		

Topics and Ideas	Readers: Social Studies: Historian	Social Studies: Professor	Social Studies: Teacher	Sixth Grade: Teacher	Sixth Grade: Girl	Sixth Grade: Boy
b. Relevance of understanding origins and consequences of conflict	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Fair-Mindedness and Balance						
a. Recognition of propaganda and its use on both sides of issues		X	X			
b. Consideration of points of view and rationales on both sides of issues	X	X	X	X	?	
4. Learning History						
a. Children need to think for themselves	X	X	X	X		
b. Children require affective involvement	X		X	X	X	X

Topics and Ideas	Readers					
	Social Studies			Sixth Grade		
	Historian	Professor	Teacher	Teacher	Girl	Boy
c. Sequence of events leading up to Revolution and what events mean	X	X		X	X	X
d. Learning facts, names, and dates should not be mindless				X	X	X

Note. Topics are lettered; subordinate ideas are numbered, the idea information in this table is in abbreviated form - see Appendix B for a full statement of each idea.

Appendix 16

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991