Toward Assessing Internet Use in the Social Studies Classroom: Developing an Inventory Based on a Review of Relevant Literature

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Abstract

This study conducted a review of the literature related to the use of the Internet for general classroom teaching and, more specifically, for the teaching of social studies. The study first focused on three questions: what research is being conducted on defining best practice related to the use of the Internet, what is the impact of various types of Internet use on K-12 student learning, and what is the impact of various types of Internet use on powerful social studies teaching and learning? The answers to these questions then served as a starting point for describing a set of holistic guidelines for Internet use in social studies classrooms. The literature review on the use of the Internet, both for general classroom teaching and in the social studies classroom, found that, while much is said about the potential of the Internet and varies examples described in which it can be utilized, little research has been conducted on its impact on student learning and on the in-service use of the Internet use in social studies classrooms. The study also indicated that many teachers do not use the Internet on a regular basis and, for those teachers who do use the Internet, it is employed without changing their traditional approach to teaching. The recommendation from this study was to utilize the NCSS Position Statement on Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies (cite??) as a guide to assist in developing a more structured and intentional use of this medium. To this end an inventory of Internet use based on the tenets of 'Powerful Teaching and Learning was provided along with examples on how each domain of the inventory could be used in the social studies classroom.

We need much more research on Internet use in an educational setting, we need more guidelines on its proper use, and we need helpful 'suggested use formats' for teachers who are real novices when it comes to the Internet and its educational use….Some studies seem to indicate that computer tutorials and/or use have had an adverse impact on student's math skills. Is it (computer use and also the internet) really the great panacea for our educational woes or is it another smoke and mirrors ploy by political and educational leaders with agendas? I certainly do not know the answer, but as you can tell, I do have lots of concerns and questions. Most teachers I speak with, I believe, fall into this same category.

-- Participant in a survey of Internet use in high school social studies classrooms (VanFossen, 2000)

Despite the scarcity of research evidence on its impact on student learning in social studies classrooms (see, for example, Shiveley and VanFossen, 2003; Whitworth and Berson, 2002), the Internet continues to be touted as an important resource for social studies teachers. A cursory review of recently published articles in three major social studies journals confirms this. More than a dozen articles focused on Internet use in classrooms appeared in *Theory and Research in Social Education, The Social Studies,* and *Social Education* between January 2003 and September 2004. These articles typically followed a common pattern, describing, for example, important information sites, use of online primary sources for teaching history, or new online curriculum models**.** This formulaic approach in the literature (one the authors are guilty of themselves) was confirmed by Whitworth and Berson (2002) in their review of computer technology use in the social studies. While they found that "Internet use and accessing information on the Web remains the most common use of (computer) technology in the social studies," more than two-thirds of the articles they reviewed simply described Internet resources or Internet-based lessons, or were overviews of technology use (pp. 476-477). Almost none of the articles reviewed described research

done on the use the Internet in classrooms and the impact of this use on students. Whitworth and Berson concluded that "there is still a need for research…particularly how the use of new and innovative ways to integrate technology into the classroom *impacts learning outcomes according to NCSS standards* (p. 478; emphasis added)."

With several recent exceptions, the few studies that have been conducted on Internet use in social studies classrooms have focused almost exclusively on *pre-service* social studies teachers' (i.e., university students) use of the Internet (e.g., Mason, 2001; Owens, 1999; Ehman, 1999). This relative lack of study of K-12 classroom use seems even more incongruous given that the learning opportunities the Internet provides align well with the goals and purposes of social studies education. Indeed, data have indicated that many social studies teachers desire to incorporate the Internet into their classroom teaching more frequently (VanFossen, 2000).

In fact, despite the apparently topical nature of this area for inquiry**,** a recent study indicated that the field of social studies may have reached a plateau with respect to the investigation of Internet use in classrooms. Shiveley and VanFossen (2003), in a content analysis of sessions presented at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), found that the number of Internet related sessions peaked in 1999 and declined each year from 2000-2003. Perhaps most concerning was the nature of the sessions that were presented. Less than one-third of all Internet sessions presented at NCSS during this time period dealt explicitly with Internet-based teaching approaches and less than 15 percent of these session dealt with Internet-based, inquiry-oriented approaches. What efforts are being made to go beyond this apparent plateau and to heed the call of Whitworth, and Berson (2002) and others for more research on best or

wise practice use of the Internet? What research is being conducted on, for example, the impact of various types of Internet use on K-12 student learning, attitudes, or motivation in general, and on powerful social studies teaching and learning in particular? Most importantly, what does the literature say about best practice?

The purpose of this paper is to answer these questions and to use the answers as a starting point for describing a set of holistic guidelines for Internet use in social studies classrooms. These guidelines will then be used to inform the development of a very preliminary scale for evaluating Internet use in social studies classrooms. We will develop the guidelines based upon our synthesis of the relevant theoretical and research literature, as well as the NCSS Position Statement "A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy" (hereafter, PTL). These guidelines will form a template for creating our inventory (see Figure 1). We will first describe how the Internet is currently being employed in classrooms and provide short summaries of the supporting literature on Internet best practice use in social studies specifically and in educational technology generally. We will then summarize five key features of PTL and describe how these features, in conjunction with the relevant research literature, can inform classroom use of the Internet. Finally, we describe sample Internet use that addresses each feature and provide recommendations for further study—including a brief description of the development of our inventory and suggestion for how our inventory might be used.

Internet Use in Social Studies Classrooms

What does current research tell us about how social studies teachers <u>are</u> using the Internet with students in classrooms? First, it tells us that most aren't. Becker, Ravitz,

and Wong (1999) found that only 30 percent of the social studies teachers in their study reported using the Internet with students, with only 14 percent reporting 'frequent' use and that social studies teachers generally used the Internet less than teachers in English, vocational studies, and the sciences. In his study of Indiana social studies teachers, VanFossen (2000) found that only 12.6 percent of teachers were 'high frequency" users of the Internet.

What does the literature say about how the Internet is being used by those teachers who are using it? Unfortunately, at least for the social studies, the picture is not good here either. Cuban (2001), for example, found that, of the few social studies teachers who were using computers (including the Internet) in classrooms, most seemed to use the technology to maintain current classroom practices. Whitworth and Berson (2002) concluded in their content analysis of recent social studies publications that "computers continue to serve the primary function of facilitating students' access to content and remain somewhat relegated to being an appendage to traditional classroom materials (p. 482)." VanFossen (2000) found that the two most frequent uses of the Internet by social studies teachers were (1) to encourage students to use the Internet to gather background information, and (2) to gather background information for lessons the teachers has already planned. Conversely, VanFossen found that only about 3 percent of teachers in the study used the Internet to develop interactive assignments that could foster student inquiry in the social studies.

These data seem to indicate that social studies teachers' classroom use of the Internet has fallen short of realizing the powerful benefits often claimed for it. Among these benefits claimed are: the ability to break down the classroom's physical limitations

and expand students' experiences (Wilson, 1995), the development of students' inquiry and analytical skills (Braun, et al., 1997), and opportunities to expand student experiences with visual technologies (White, 1997). Becker (1999) concluded, "along with word processing, the Internet may be the most valuable of the many computer technologies available to teachers and students (p. 32)." As Doolittle and Hicks (2003) point out, however, "if integrating technology means nothing more than enhancing traditional delivery system of social studies content, where laptops replace notebooks…then we will be no closer to the NCSS vision of transformative, powerful social studies teaching and learning (p. 75)."

Best Practice Use of the Internet: The Literature from Educational Technology

Much has been written regarding the use—pro and con--of technology in general in the schools, and a portion of the literature deals specifically with the classroom use of the Internet in today's classrooms. However, as indicated earlier, little of this relates directly to the effective use of the Internet for pedagogical reasons, and still less on the impact of such use.

When we examined the literature regarding overall Internet use, certain themes emerged. Simply grouped, these are that the Internet: (1) can be used to increase access to information; (2) creates both the necessity and opportunity for students to learn and apply critical thinking skills while using it; (3) can help facilitate collaboration and communication, both within the class and around the world; (4) can increase availability to diverse resources and multiple perspectives and therefore lead to more complex and challenging research projects; (5) can assist and challenge students to construct meaning for themselves; and, perhaps most importantly, (6) is not being used effectively by most

teachers and has not begun to reach this potential. We will briefly elaborate on each of these.

The primary function the Internet serves in most classrooms is as a tool to gather information for teachers and students and has become one of the first places teachers and students go to collect data on almost any topic, whether at home or at school. There is no denying that there is a wealth of information readily available in the form of texts, primary sources, pictures, artifacts, on-line newspapers, multi-media presentations, editorials, maps, databases – almost anything one can think of on almost any topic. Moreover, teachers and students alike are fairly proficient in accessing this information (Iakushina, 2002, McKenzie, 1998, Shiveley and VanFossen, 2001).

Students are less proficient in applying the critical thinking skills necessary to sort through the overload of information they are exposed to in order to determine the degree of authenticity, bias, reliability of the sources, and to place this information in some context. This represents both a problem and an opportunity. Teachers are faced with the dilemma of limiting student access, creating a system that pre-checks all information, or taking the time to teach the critical thinking skills vital to decipher and process this information. Yet, without taking the time to develop one or more of these strategies, one finds that much of the time spent on the Internet is wasted with much of the data collected dubious at best (Fabos, 2004; Hicks and Ewing, 2003; Iakushina, 2002; VanFossen and Shiveley, 1999; Shiveley, 2004).

If such skills <u>are</u> learned, however, a whole new world opens up - one that provides access to global networks and credible multiple perspectives, and that challenges students to think in terms different than may be traditionally presented in

their current classroom setting and culture. Communication avenues are created that allow for instantaneous or non-synchronized communication with classmates or experts from around the world. Multicultural perspectives and resources become available for examination and consumption. Field trips no longer need be dependent on the logistics and budget of the school transportation office (Bellan and Scheurman, 1998; DeWitt, 2003; Hicks and Ewing, 2003; Risinger, 1998; Sunal, Smith, Sunal, and Britt, 1998).

Increased access to multiple and diverse sources of knowledge, critical thinking skills to evaluate this information, and increased collaboration with others inside and outside of the classroom now come together to provide opportunities for research projects that move well beyond the traditional model. The Internet can be a powerful source for such research, challenging students to investigate problems that are authentic, connected to the curriculum, and interdisciplinary in nature. The Internet can also assist in the presentation and communication of the conclusions of such projects (DeWitt, 2003; Risinger, 1998; Solomon, 2003: Thiers, 2004).

If used in such a way, such projects allow students to take ownership of the problems and issues they are investigating and to become more involved with the construction of their own knowledge. They become “infotectives,” collecting and analyzing data, looking for insights, solving problems requiring the synthesis of information, and, in the process, making meaning (Crane, 2000; Goldman and Krause, 2003; McKenzie, 1998; Sunal, Smith, Sunal, and Britt, 1998; Wilson and Marsh; 1995).

Finally, the literature indicated that despite the many well-documented opportunities the Internet provides for changing how teaching and learning <u>can</u> occur in the classroom, a majority of teachers do not use it to its fullest potential**.** Teachers use

the Internet because it is in their classrooms, because the possibilities seem obvious, and because they want to be involved with the technology trend. However, instead of creating a more interactive and collaborative classroom, everyday Internet use often leads to a mechanical teaching style and can actually distance students from reality rather than draw them in (Benenson, 2001; Chadwick, 2002).

Looking more closely at those teachers who indicate they are comfortable in using Internet for instructional purposes, researchers find these teachers use the Internet in a way that only slightly modifies what content is traditionally taught. Instead, teachers use it primarily to gather information for themselves and for communication (e-mail or distributing information on a webpage) rather than for changing how instruction is delivered (Gibson and Oberg, 2004, Russell, Bebell, Dwyer, and O'Conner, 2003; Ruthven, Hennessy, and Deaney, 2003). Teachers quickly discover that effective use of the Internet requires additional skills and practice, and perhaps more planning and preparation time than traditional teaching, to determine its judicial use (Bellan and Scheuraman, 1998). These are skills, experiences, and time that they may find lacking. In the final analysis, most teachers have yet to move beyond the conceptual toward the development of a systematic, organized approach to how and when to use the Internet so that it effectively, efficiently, and consistently promotes learning in the content area they are teaching.

Social Studies Literature on Best Practice Use of the Internet

Clearly, the classroom potential of the Internet has been largely unrealized. What does the literature suggest about how social studies teachers should integrate Internet

technology? In other words, what has been promoted as best practice for Internet use in social studies classrooms? What practices seem to hold the most potential for promoting powerful teaching and learning, and, most importantly, improving student learning? As noted earlier, there has been very little research conducted on the impact of Internet use on social studies students' learning, attitudes, or motivation. In fact, only a handful of studies have even undertaken these questions. One example is Milson's (2002) study of WebQuest use in a 6th grade classroom. The WebQuest is a curriculum model promoted as an approach for fostering inquiry using Internet-based resources.[1] While Milson did not seek to determine the impact of this type of Internet use on student learning directly, his interviews with students following their use of the WebQuest indicated that (a) students had different perceptions of the value of the use of the Internet; (b) students generally chose lower order, or "path-of-least-resistance" strategies when using the WebQuest; and (c) students approached and perceived the value of the WebQuest investigations differently.

The few remaining studies of Internet use in social studies classrooms have focused on the use of Internet-based primary source materials in the study of history, and have provided only tentative conclusions about the effectiveness of such sources on student learning. Hicks, Doolittle, and Lee (2004), for example, studied high school history teachers' use of web-based primary source materials, which are often cited as one of the powerful benefits to classroom Internet use. Hicks, et al. found that while teachers saw the potential of web-based primary sources, they actually used them less frequently than textbook-based primary sources. Hicks, et al. felt the primary reason for this finding was teacher belief that they did not see the Internet as an organized repository of such

[1] To find out more about the WebQuest model, visit the WebQuest Page at http://webquest.sdsu.edu/.

material. Despite its interesting conclusions, however, it must be noted that this study offered no data on student learning associated with Internet primary source use.

Doppen (2004) studied computer use (including Internet use) by four first-year social studies teachers in their respective high school history courses. As with Hicks, et al., Doppen found that Internet-based primary source material was one form of technology used by these first year teachers in an attempt to foster historical inquiry and to develop historical thinking in students. Results indicated that when used to support students' historical inquiry, computer and Internet technology was viewed positively by students. Doppen suggested that students who used computers and the Internet found historical study more interactive, more interesting, and more timely. Because of the cross-case methods of this study, however, no data on student achievement or motivation were reported.

In a related study, Saye and Brush (2004) explored the impact of scaffolded, multimedia resources (rather than Internet-based resources) on one teacher's classroom practice. While Saye and Brush reported that hypermedia learning environments (such as the Internet) "can support more disciplined inquiry into ill-structured problems (p. 352)," their results appeared to raise more questions than were answered. Saye and Brush concluded, however, that their work suggested promise "for advancing problem-based study through holistic, technology-supported learning environments (p. 373)."

While these studies are encouraging, they are preliminary and contexted within the study of history and they are only marginally related to both questions of classroom use of the Internet and its impact on students. If little research on these questions has been done, what does theory offer us? In other words, what does the literature say about

theoretical (or practical) guidelines for best practice use of the Internet in social studies classrooms? Not surprisingly, the literature is a bit deeper here.

Rose and Fernlund (1997), for example, utilized the NCSS' *Expectations of Excellence Standards* as a framework for recommendations of best practice for all computer use, including Internet use. Interestingly, however, Rose and Fernlund described the Internet's benefit in its ability to serve as "a research tool of tremendous potential (p. 163)." Perhaps this somewhat narrow-sighted view can be explained by the fact that these recommendations were proposed in the 'early adoption' phase of the Internet circa 1997. In any event, Rose and Fernlund provided a series of suggestions for guiding and improving student research projects and a series of questions for teachers to consider when using the Internet in classroom research. Among these are: (1) What skills do students need?; (2) What research sites are available?; (3) How much time do I need?; (4) What directions do students need?; (5) What skills do teachers need?; and (6) What is the 'acceptable use policy' in my school? These questions, while important for all teachers to consider, don't offer much in the way of 'best practice' suggestions or models.

Saye (2002) pushed social studies teachers to think of technology (particularly hypertext media) as more than just a tool for research. He suggested that it could be used for "embedding conceptual, metacognitive, and strategic scaffolds" that could help students make connections to abstract relationships and engage in critical and reflective thinking (p. 193)." Saye stressed that the "success of technology as an instructional partner depends on its fit with the other elements in the learning environment," implying that Internet use, much like any other classroom strategy, can be most successful when part of a "holistic" approach centered on the citizenship mission of social studies (p. 193).

Doolittle and Hicks (2003) outlined a foundation for technology use that was grounded in constructivist theory. Doolittle and Hicks claimed that "the application of technology within the realm of social studies has traditionally been theoretically underdeveloped" and presented a detailed theoretical framework for thinking about Internet and other technology use in classrooms (p. 71). After a lengthy overview of cognitive, social, and radical constructivist theory, Doolittle and Hicks concluded that "if interactive learning technologies are truly going to impact teaching and learning, there needs to be a shift…that requires technology be used…for inquiry, perspective taking and meaning making, and not as a conduit for the transmission of knowledge (p. 87)." Using key tenets of pedagogical constructivism, Doolittle and Hicks described six strategies for Internet use:

1. Teachers and students should be prepared to implement technology as a tool for inquiry.
2. Teachers should use technology to create authenticity, which facilitates the process of student inquiry and action.
3. Teachers should use technology to foster local and global social interaction such that students attain multiple perspectives on people, issues, and events.
4. Teachers should facilitate student knowledge construction by using technology to build on students' prior knowledge and interest.
5. Teachers should enhance the viability of student knowledge by using technology to provide timely and meaningful feedback.
6. Teachers should cultivate students' academic independence by using technology to foster autonomous, creative, and intellectual thinking.

Mason, et al., (2000), offered very similar guidelines for technology and Internet use, albeit from the perspective of preparing future social studies teachers to use technology. Indeed, although they did not offer a theoretical framework for their guidelines, Mason, et al. reached conclusions similar to Doolittle and Hicks (2003). For

example, while cautioning against "using technology for technology's sake," Mason, et al. presented a litmus test for classroom technology use: does technology allow students to learn in ways they could not without technology, or to learn in more authentic and meaningful ways (p. 108). Five broad guidelines for computer and Internet technology use by social studies educators, no matter the grade level, emerged from these recommendations:

1. Extend learning beyond what can be done without technology.
2. Introduce technology in context.
3. Include opportunities for students to study relationships among science, technology, and society.
4. Foster the development of skills**,** and the acquisition of knowledge, to enable students to participate as good citizens in a democratic society.
5. Contribute to research and evaluation of social studies and technology.

Thus, there seems to be broad general agreement on guidelines for Internet use in social studies classrooms, but this agreement is derived from a small number of sources. In fact, there has been very little written on the practical implementation of these guidelines. The National Council for the Social studies Position Statement "A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy" (NCSS, 1992) offers a starting point. Prepared by the Task Force on Standards for Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies, and approved by the NCSS Board of Directors in 1992, this document was not intended as a guide for the use of any particular methodology or content area, and does not even contain the word "Internet" in its text. It does, however, summarize the nature and purpose of the social studies and describe what one would see should one visit a model social studies classroom

regardless of grade level. For the purposes of this article, we will summarize here only the first two sections of this document.

Section one reviews the "Background and Rationale" for the social studies and begins by reaffirming citizen education as the primary purpose of social studies throughout the K-12 curriculum. Viewed through this lens, powerful social studies teaching becomes that which helps students develop social understanding and civic efficacy. Acknowledging that the term "social studies" applies to all courses or units including the social sciences as well as "the arts and humanities, mathematics and science, current events, and students' own interests and experiences," the position paper makes it clear that the social studies should not betreated simply as "collections of miscellaneous information and activities, but rather should be organized within a coherent citizen education curriculum." Effective social studies programs are those in which students are engaged in the "difficult process of confronting ethical and value-based dilemmas" and encouraged to "speculate, think critically, and make personal and civic decisions based on information from multiple perspectives"

Such programs also:

- foster individual and cultural identity along with understanding of the forces that hold society together or pull it apart;
- include observation of and participation in the school and community;
- address critical issues and the world as it is;
- prepare students to make decisions based on democratic principles; and
- lead to citizen participation in public affairs.

Social studies students must therefore possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work in diverse groups to address and solve problems, to collect and analyze appropriate data necessary to make decisions, to think critically and creatively about the content they are learning from multiple perspectives, to communicate effectively throughout the decision making process, and to take action on the decisions reached.

Section Two of the NCSS Position Statement describes "A Vision of Powerful Social Studies Teaching and Learning" as meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active. In the following section, we will briefly summarize this position statement and apply it to classroom Internet use.

Meaningful Teaching, Learning and Internet Use

Social studies teaching and learning is meaningful to both teachers and students when knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes are interconnected and applied toward important ideas and real-life situations in and out of school. It is meaningful because it requires the learner to connect and apply new facts, concepts, and generalizations to prior knowledge, interests, and experiences and it is more consequential if presented in connected major themes rather than through superficial coverage or memorization of disconnected bits of information.

In order to be meaningful, then, classroom Internet use should place students in positions where they use and extend prior knowledge and that expand student interests or experiences. One way to approach such Internet use is to employ a semi-structured scaffolding approach that builds on student questions about and/or interest in a particular topic. Scaffolding is a process in which students are given semi-structured instructional

support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently. Such use might ask students to use Internet resources to deepen, broaden, or even contradict their own previously or widely held views on a topic, or might consist of placing students in a unique role or asking them to produce a report that examines evidence that calls into question some widely held view. In addition, meaningful Internet use should relate to important ideas or major themes in the social studies as they relate to social understanding.

One substantive project designed to promote the meaningful use of the Internet would be to ask students to role play members of a Department of State committee providing recommendations to the current administration on future policies for rebuilding Iraq. The group's goal would be to produce a short, but well-supported memorandum that recommends a policy. Each student in a small group might have a different task and be assigned multiple resource sites to accomplish their task. For example, group members might begin with an overview of the current situation using the MSNBC/Scholastic resource "Rebuilding Iraq" (http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/social/iraq_interactives.htm). Some group members might research official United States policy using the State Department resource "Iraq Update" (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html). Additional group members might check the status of the current rebuilding efforts at "Rebuilding-Iraq Net" (http://www.rebuilding-iraq.net/portal/), the official site of the Iraq Project and Contracting Office. Finally, Iraqi and other perspectives might be investigated at "Iraq Net" (http://www.iraq.net/index.php) or "Iraq Press Online" (http://www.iraqpress.org/).

This particular activity addresses a number of important ideas from the NCSS Curriculum Standards including: People, Places, and Environment; Power, Authority, and Governance; Global Connections; and Civic Ideals and Practices

This type of Internet use is qualitatively different from a 'webhunt' approach that would ask students to use search skills to collect answers to questions about Iraq. Rather than using Internet resources to answer worksheet-based questions such as 'who is the Prime Minister of Iraq?' students would be developing opinions about larger issues such as "is it in the interests of the United States to postpone elections for Prime Minister in Iraq until stability can be achieved?

Integrated Teaching, Learning and Internet Use

Integrative social studies teaching and learning takes a field that is naturally integrated internally (among the social sciences) and addresses a wide range of content using "varied instructional resources and learning activities." This content is "anchored by themes, generalizations, and concepts drawn from the social studies foundational disciplines, supplemented by ideas drawn from the arts, sciences, and humanities, from current events, and from local examples and students' experiences." It strives to also integrate also one's knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes and to apply these in authentic decision-making contexts.

For classroom Internet use to be considered integrated, students must study issues important to social understanding and civic efficacy that requires the bridging of content from areas across the curriculum in a meaningful way. Such study would combine students' local experiences with the experiences of citizens living in other geographic and cultural areas in an effort to expand students' limited or narrow view on

social phenomenon. Students would be expected to conduct inquiry by using data from multiple sources and disciplines, to measure, develop and display their data, and to communicate their findings through multiple means. In short, students would synthesize the knowledge and skills taught in all school subjects, to integrate this knowledge and skill with values, and to apply it to authentic social problems.

An activity designed to encourage such integration might ask students to formulate a practical immigration policy for the 21st century based on democratic values, trends in globalization, economy statistics, and current events. To do this, individual students would first study the history of American immigration and how this immigration has impacted America, both positively and negatively, including the effects of immigration in the local community – culturally, economically, artistically, and religiously. Current and past immigration policies would then need to be compared. Students would then work in teams to formulate their immigration policy for the next century, taking into account current American concerns about border security and international terrorist groups and considering the pros and cons of tighter restrictions on immigration.

A brief overview of American immigration history along with significant dates affecting U.S. Immigration may be located at a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services resource (http://www.rapidimmigration.com/usa/1_eng_immigration_history.html) along with a short description of each law. This information could be used to gain a sense of context for such laws and to infer the intent for various policies in our history. Additional links at this site provide information to new immigrants on how to adjust in America.

Fordham University offers a site (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook28.html#Latin%20American%20Immigration) that provides data into "US immigration and its effects," various bar graphs displaying immigration numbers at different times in American history, as well as links providing immigration statistics and primary source documents specific to European, Asian, and Latin America. Multiple perspectives on immigration policy, past and present, including lessons and study guides can be found at Brown University (http://www.choices.edu/curriculum_unit.cfm?id=25), the Close Up Foundation (http://www.closeup.org/immi_act.htm) and at the National Issues Forum (http://www.nifi.org/discussion_guides/guides.aspx?catID=8). The implications of population projections could be assessed using current Census Bureau's information (http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/popproj.html) and information on how other countries deal with immigration issues could be explored at various countries' websites or in international journals (http://www.aicgs.org/events/2002/immigration_summary.shtml; http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0NTN/is_48/ai_111026246).

This type of lesson would require students to look at the history, policies, benefits, concerns, and current issues surrounding immigration and would incorporate history, politics, sociology, culture, religion, economics, literature, art, math, and more. Students would then need to apply this knowledge to new situations in order to make decisions. In the process, immigration in America would not be seen as simply a historical event, isolated from today's issues, but as an on-going concern which all democracies must face and try to balance.

Value-Based Teaching, Learning, and Internet Use

Value-based social studies teaching and learning requires teachers and learners to consider "ethical dimensions" in a reflective, comprehensive, and realistic manner. Social policy is examined in regard to implications and alternative considerations. Relevant data is gathered and critically assessed, alternative and opposing points of view considered, and value-based reasoning applied with "a sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to social responsibility and action."

Value-based Internet use must consider topics that are, by their nature, often considered controversial and always complex. Rather than shy away from such topics, citizens in a diverse and pluralistic democratic society must learn the skills necessary to study such issues in a reflective, inclusive, comprehensive, and realistic way, discuss such topics in a respectful, open-minded manner, consider the merits of opposing views, make recommendations that consider the common good, develop well-reasoned positions consistent with basic democratic social and political values, and use value-based reasoning to make recommendations for the public good. ~~Student~~ Activities must therefore require students to engage in discourse based on sound rationale and information and to become comfortable with ambiguity and disagreement in an effort to reach agreement or propose solutions to difficult and potentially divisive questions.

A unit dealing with civil rights, for example, could provide students with an opportunity to investigate and formulate opposing positions on the policy of Affirmative Action. Students would research two widely held positions with the purpose of determining the fundamental values that undergird each position. Students would need

to consider how values shape an individual's position on a controversial topic and could ask themselves: How are those values relevant to my values? Where do I stand on this issue? Students would then develop a position statement on this issue that would reflect their own values.

The University of Michigan's split ruling on Affirmative Action could be studied at http://www.npr.org/news/specials/michigan/ along with President Bush's comments on this case (http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/aahist.html)

The Affirmative Action and Diversity Project: A Web Page for Research at http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/ offer access to primary source documents on this topic. Some of the historical context of Affirmative Action could be viewed at the National Organization for Women's website (http://www.now.org/nnt/08-95/affirmhs.html), including links to past civil rights laws, constitutional amendments, and court rulings. Websites can be used to present opposing rationales for this topic. The Affirmative Action and Diversity Project (http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/) and Stanford Magazine http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/1996/sepoct/articles/against.html are only two such examples. A presentation of the most often cited pros and cons can be found at http://www.balancedpolitics.org/affirmative_action.htm and a presentation of 10 myths about affirmative action at http://www.understandingprejudice.org/readroom/articles/affirm.htm

Rather than simply informing students of past civil rights legislation and skirting over the controversy that was present at that time, students would see these issues in an authentic and current context and realize that such issues are on-going, complex, and influenced by the values of one's culture, geographic location, and personal

implications. Students would gain a better understanding of how intelligent well-meaning people can disagree on important questions and why one must include values in the decision making process and in efforts to reach equitable comprise solutions.

Challenging Teaching, Learning, and Internet Use

For social studies instruction to be powerful it must be challenging. In the social studies this means that students are exposed to multiple sources of information, including conflicting opinions on topics that may often be considered divisive. With access to such information, students are encouraged to investigate societal and policy questions requiring critical analyses, to build a case based on relevant evidence and arguments, to present creative solutions or alternatives, and be prepared to explain and defend their ideas using content-based arguments in a professional manner.

Internet use must be challenging to students both in terms of rigor and in regard to forcing students out of their traditional comfort zones. Problems must be examined that create disequilibrium and cognitive dissonance. This often requires students to be exposed to multiple sources of information, including well-reasoned, conflicting opinions. Students must collect, analyze data, and critically analyze data on important historical and contemporary social issues. During the process students would be expected to work as a learning community striving to gain a deeper understanding of the content and to listen carefully and thoughtfully to information that challenges one's current thinking. Divergent thinking and solutions are welcomed. Students ultimately would be expected to present a position that is well grounded in data, to clearly articulate that position, and to be prepared to defend it in a reasoned manner.

One potentially challenging project would ask students to examine the heightened tension that often exists between civil liberties and national interests during a time of national crisis. Students could be presented with times in the past in which government polices seemed to fly in the face of guaranteed Constitutional and commonly accepted civil rights (e.g., freedom of speech, trial by jury, *habeas corpus*, protection of life, liberty and property). Students could be presented with apparent conflicting evidence in a study of civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution and historical events such as the Sedition Acts of 1798 (http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/alsedact.htm), the suspension of *habeas corpus* relief during the Civil War (http://www.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/detainees/habeas_corpus.html), or the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II (http://www.eduplace.com/ss/hmss/4/unit/act5.2.html).

With this historical background students could debate the current The Patriot Act from multiple perspectives. Pro-Patriot Act opinion and data (http://www.lifeandliberty.gov/, http://www.wired.com/news/conflict/0,2100,60102,00.html) could be compared with anti-Patriot Act opinion and data (http://www.crf-usa.org/terror/patriot_act.htm, http://www.aclu.org/SafeandFree/SafeandFree.cfm?ID=12263&c=206). Students would need to examine the differing stances while also critically analyzing the sources from where the information came. When does national security outweigh civil liberties and how can our past decisions in this regard help guide future decisions?

Active Teaching, Learning, and Internet Use

Finally, powerful social studies teaching and learning requires both the teacher and student to be active. Students must be prepared to take ownership of their learning experience through authentic activities. This means that, in addition to more traditional assignments, students must frequently engage in "cooperative learning, construction of models or plans, dramatic re-creations of historical events that shaped democratic values or civic policies, role-play, and simulation activities" and later process their learning "by paraphrasing it into their own words, exploring its relationship to other knowledge and to past experience, appreciating the insights it provides, or identifying its implications for social or civic decision-making."

In order for classroom Internet use to be called active, it must place students in learning contexts where the students are responsible for at least some of their own learning. An example of such a context might be group project that required members to assign tasks (e.g., review a series of Internet sites; conduct a specific Google® search) that were not explicitly assigned as part of the project, but were essential to completing the overall task. In addition, active Internet use would create situations where students' existing knowledge needed to be modified or transformed and then applied to a new context in order to be successful. One example of this might be an Internet-based assignment that would require students to use Internet resources to research a public policy issue in their local community and develop and action plan for addressing this issue. Students could then synthesize their findings in an e-mail to their local representatives and ask for feedback on the issue in a return e-mail from the representative.

A more specific example of active Internet use can be seen in the activity "Put Words in My Mouth" (DelMonte and LaBuz, 2003), a WebQuest where students are asked to develop a state of the union address for an imaginary President completing his or her first year in office.[2] Students choose one of four roles (Secretaries of Education, Health and Human Services, Energy, and Homeland Security) and then use Internet-based resources to investigate the attitudes, ideas, and needs of the nation relative to their department. During this investigation phase, students are asked to use multiple sources but to critically assess the validity of the information they are gathering. The group meets to discuss findings, set an agenda for the President, and create a speech that places most important issue to the President first, and so on. Clearly students are not engaged in passive reception or simple memorization of content, but rather are synthesizing information and applying it to new contexts.

We would add two brief but important points regarding the activities described above. First, each of the websites described in the activities was used for illustrative purposes only. Teachers could find many other sites that may serve their purposes just as well, or perhaps better. Second, while each of the activities were used to highlight one particular aspect of "Powerful Social Studies Teaching and Learning" using the Internet, one can see how a well-planned activity would easily cut across multiple categories. A lesson that required students to formulate a new immigration policy (an example of "integrated" above) could also be meaningful, value-laden, challenging, and active, according to many of the criteria used to describe these categories.

The Social Studies Internet Use Inventory (SSIUI)

[2]To learn more about this WebQuest, visit http://oncampus.richmond.edu/academics/education/projects/webquests/president/ .

We have tried to build a case for how Internet use might assist in developing powerful teaching and learning in the social studies classroom. In the process we have drawn from the relevant literature generally, and from the 1992 NCSS Position Statement, "A Vision Of Powerful Teaching And Learning In The Social Studies: Building Social Understanding And Civic Efficacy" (PTL). Our next step is to investigate the degree to which such Internet use exists in social studies classrooms. In order to document and describe how classroom Internet use resembles the type we have outlined here, however, we need to create and pilot some sort of an instrument or inventory for assessing the types of Internet use we might observe in classrooms**.** This kind of inventory could then generate a scale that might be used to compare actual classroom Internet across classrooms.

A scale is defined as a set of numerical values assigned to objects or behaviors for the purpose of measuring the qualities under investigation (Thorndike, 1991). In this case, the SSIUI was designed to indicate the degree to which actual classroom Internet use mirrored the ideal cases described above. Individual item writing for the pilot SSIUI was guided by our analysis of relevant literature with an emphasis on PTL. Each category in the inventory, then, corresponds with one of the five themes in PTL (see Figure 2).

Using the pilot SSIUI, a particular case of classroom Internet use could be assigned a rating between 0 and 38; the higher the rating, the closer the observed use appeared to the PTL-based use outlined here. Most items in this pilot inventory ask raters to indicate the degree to which the classroom Internet use represents the presence of some attribute of PTL. That is, raters who observed Internet use that clearly "asks

students to investigate complex, ill-structured problems" would assign a score of '+2' for that item. However, one item under each of the themes asks raters to indicate the degree to which such use does not represent use suggested by PTL. For example, if raters saw that "Internet use is passive examination or simple memorization of content" was clearly evident would assign a score of '0' in that category.

At this stage, our next goal is to use the pilot SSIUI in several classrooms in order to determine its utility in discriminating among various types of Internet use. We have identified several secondary teachers who are high frequency Internet users. We will pilot the inventory—in conjunction with other data collection techniques—during field observations of classroom Internet use. Our objective will be to determine the efficacy of the SSIUI for assessing Internet use by comparing all data collected for each teacher with the resulting scales.

Potential Usefulness of SSIUI

We believe the development and use of the SSIUI has potential impact in at least three areas: pre-service preparation, in-service professional development, and evolving research on the impact of Internet use on student learning, motivation, or attitudes. Because the SSIUI was developed using the PTL, it can serve as a guide for assisting social studies methods instructors—or those in educational technology—in discussing best practice Internet use in social studies classrooms. While the SSIUI should not be oversimplified to a checklist, it can serve as an example of the type of Internet use we want to promote in classrooms. Similarly, experienced teachers can use the SSIUI to assess their own Internet use and to determine how to improve their own practice. This type of professional reflection can be facilitated using such an inventory. Finally, the

SSIUI can provide important insight necessary for expanding research on the impact of Internet use on social studies learning. Before student learning can be assessed, however, some method for assessing Internet use must be developed. Because Internet use is not a unitary phenomenon (i.e., not all Internet use is 'equal'), differentiating best practice use from other examples is essential before systematic investigation of student learning can begin.

Conclusion

The available research literature on the use of the Internet for general classroom teaching, and the use of the Internet the social studies classroom in particular, tells us that most teachers do not use the Internet on a regular basis and that those who do, usually do so without changing much in their traditional approach to teaching. This remains the case despite the long-standing and widely held acknowledgment of the great potential of the Internet for improving social studies instruction. We have suggested using the NCSS Position Statement on Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies as a guide to assist in developing a more structured and intentional use of this medium. To this end we created an inventory of Internet use based on the tenets of 'Powerful Teaching and Learning (PTL)' and provided examples on how each domain of the inventory could be used in the social studies classroom. We believe that the SSIUI inventory could be used to improve the instruction of future social studies teachers on best Internet practice, help guide and challenge practicing social studies teachers toward more purposeful use of the Internet, and provide a rubric to support a new level of research in Internet use in the social studies classroom. It is our hope that the social

studies may begin to move beyond the apparent ‘plateau’ of low level analysis of current practice and theoretical suggestions of best practice toward careful planning and implementation of effective pedagogical strategies that begin to tap into the potential of the Internet in a regular, systematic and thoughtful manner.

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Figure 1. Social Studies Internet Use Inventory (SSIUI) Development Process

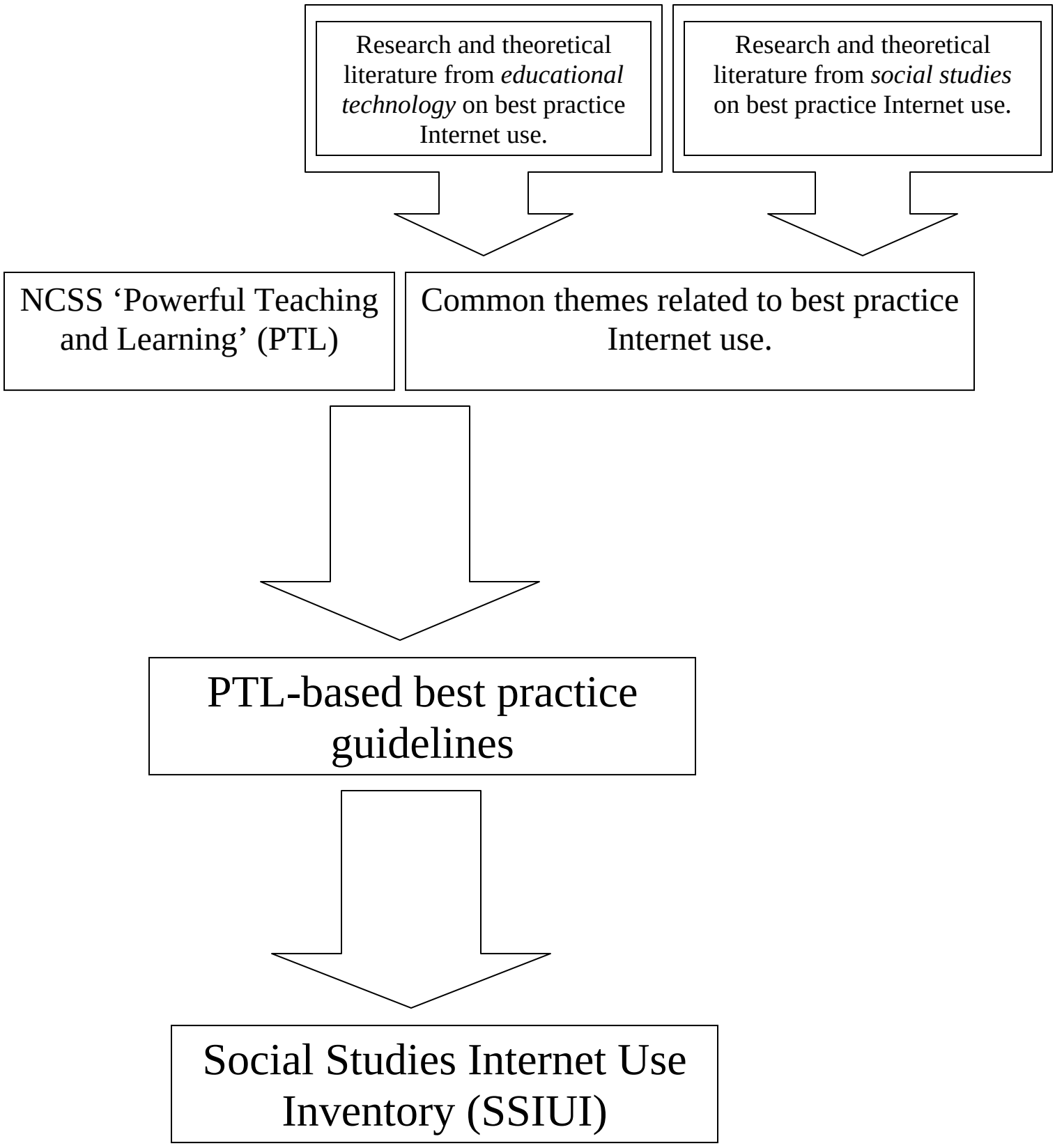

Figure 2. Pilot Social Studies Internet Use Inventory (SSIUI).

Is this Internet use MEANINGFUL?				
Internet use scaffolds or connects students' prior knowledge, interests, experiences?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use helps extend important ideas or major themes in the social studies that extend social understanding?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use consists of superficial coverage of disconnected bits of information?	**Not evident (+2)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+0)**	**N/A**
Is this Internet use INTEGRATIVE?				
Internet use is related to citizenship education or content relevant to developing social understanding?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use requires students to apply knowledge, skills, or dispositions to authentic decision-making contexts?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use asks students to engage in isolated activities or in knowledge-seeking that are unrelated to authentic decision-making?	**Not evident (+2)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+0)**	**N/A**
Is this Internet use VALUE-BASED?				
Internet use asks students to examine multiple points-of-view?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use requires students engage in critical reading of information?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Information used is sensitive to cultural differences?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Information used can lead to social action?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use asks students to engage in simplistic or one-sided examinations of issues with no implications for personal or social action?	**Not evident (+2)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+0)**	**N/A**

Figure 2 (con't.). Pilot Social Studies Internet Use Inventory (SSIUI)

Is this Internet use CHALLENGING?				
Internet use asks students to investigate complex, ill-structured problems?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use requires analysis of complex alternatives and opposing views?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use requires students build cases based on evidence and defend their ideas to others?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use asks students to engage in reception of information that does not require critical analysis or to collect information and presents it uncritically?	**Not evident (+2)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+0)**	**N/A**
Is this Internet use ACTIVE?				
Internet use requires students' modify or transform existing knowledge?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use requires students to be responsible for some portion of their own learning?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use requires students to apply knowledge to new contexts?	**Not evident (+0)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+2)**	**N/A**
Internet use is passive examination or simple memorization of content?	**Not evident (+2)**	**Evident to some degree (+1)**	**Clearly evident (+0)**	**N/A**