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**OHIO COUNCIL**

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**FOR THE**

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**SOCIAL STUDIES**

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**Summer 1999**  
**Volume 35, Number 1**

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# ***OCSS Review***

## **Editorial Board**

### **1999**

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**OHIO COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES**

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**THE REVIEW**

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# OHIO COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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## Editor's Page

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**Timothy C. Connell**

Laurel School

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In my tenure as editor of the *OCSS Review*, I think that every issue has had at least one article about the Ohio Model Curriculum or the Proficiency Tests. It is a topic of perennial interest, a controversial topic if there ever was one, and an issue that is not likely to go away soon. So for the 1999 issue the Editorial Board decided upon the theme "Proficiency Tests, Standards, and Curriculum." There is probably not a better way to begin this issue than to hear from Bill Muthig, a key official at the Ohio Department of Education. Few in Ohio have given more thoughtful consideration to the Proficiency Tests than Bill. Those who have attended his well-organized and richly detailed presentations at the OCSS annual meetings can verify this. In his article here he discusses the new Graduation Qualifying Exam in Citizenship.

We shift from the Ohio Graduation Exam to a look at how high-poverty schools can become high-achieving schools. The author, Samuel Casey Carter, interviewed more than 100 principals of successful schools in poverty-stricken areas. At these schools educators set standards and set policies to ensure that students succeed. The results are striking. At one school, a middle school in one of the worst areas of New York City, students scored in the 93rd percentile in reading and the 96th percentile in math. Carter argues that there are seven common traits of these schools which, if followed, can lead to dramatic results.

Next, James Shiveley tackles the question of how social studies teachers can deal with competing models. The Ohio Model is built around six strands, yet there are ten in the NCSS model. What are the similarities between the two? How are they different? Can a teacher, as Professor Shiveley suggests, in his title "kill two birds with one stone?" As he illustrates, the answer is essentially "yes," but there is one area in the NCSS model, science and technology, where there is not a direct connection with the Ohio Model.

Patricia Clayton looks more directly at the Ohio Standards and explores a

strategy for improving test scores using five action verbs. Her analysis of the Proficiency Tests shows that words such as sequence, classify, compare, analyze, and prioritize are essential for students to know if they are going to succeed on the fourth and sixth grade tests. In her article she lays out a lesson that introduces the action verb “compare.”

Not only are standards an issue for students, they are increasingly becoming an issue for teachers. Ron Helms discusses how the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards has implemented a program of certification for teachers who have taught for more than three years. Although there is a significant time demand to complete the process, the results can be rewarding in many ways, including the possibility of a significant pay increase for teachers. He explains how the process works, and he also lists a number of Websites that teachers can use to gather more information about what is involved in obtaining certification.

Few things are more boring in life than history textbooks. If ever there was a case for book burning they are the target, and I suspect that there would be a race between teachers and students to light the match to start the conflagration. In Section II we explore alternative strategies to make history come alive to students. Frequent contributors to the *Review*, Jack Ahern and Alexa Sandmann of the University of Toledo, discuss recent trade books that can be used to enhance teaching history to middle school students. They explain how well-written stories about the past can excite students about learning and give them a deeper understanding of the past. This is followed by an article by Linda Logan of the Ohio Historical Society who discusses how teachers can use primary sources in the classroom. The Ohio Historical Society and other such institutions have a wealth of information that students can use to learn about the past. For example, she provides selections from two diary accounts of Confederate soldiers who were imprisoned in Northern camps during the Civil War. A third way to enliven the classroom is to use computer technology. Chris Dziubek reviews a number of computer simulations and explains the advantages of several very sophisticated programs. Students can do everything from viewing the remains of Pompeii to taking an in-depth look at the year 1961. In this last program students can see the Berlin Wall as it was built and explore the relevant issues of the day, from the tension of the Cold War to the race by Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris to break Babe Ruth's home record.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage our readers to submit manuscripts that might be appropriate for publication. Articles dealing with any aspect of the social studies - key issues in economics, history, sociology, political science; book reviews; and curriculum and instructional matters - will be considered for publication. The theme for the next issue will be “Teaching War and Peace.” War is an entanglement that cannot easily be avoided and the recent crisis in the Balkans raises the issue of when a country should fight, and under what circumstances. Next year will also mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United States' departure from Vietnam. We encourage submissions on this theme, and we particularly hope to hear from classroom teachers regarding the strategies that they use to teach about war and peace. To encourage such submissions, the Ohio Council for the Social

Studies has agreed to pay an honorarium of \$100 to any pre-college classroom teacher whose manuscript is accepted for publication in the *Review*.

The deadline for submission for the Summer 2000 issue is June 1, 2000. Manuscripts received after that date will be considered for subsequent editions. All submissions should include a hard copy as well as a copy that is saved on a computer disk. Macintosh is the preferred format; PC compatible is fine.

Address manuscripts and make all inquiries to:

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**Part I**

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**Proficiency Tests, Standards and  
Curriculum**

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# Planning for Ohio's New Graduation Qualifying Examinations in Citizenship

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**William Muthig**  
Ohio Department of Education

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**O**HIO has new High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations on the horizon. Students wishing to graduate in 2005 and beyond will have to take all five of the new examinations. These students are presently in middle school and many school districts have begun to think about potential changes in local curriculum and instructional approaches to help their students be successful on the new examinations.

How much change is needed in social studies curriculum and instruction to adequately address student needs as they face the citizenship portion of the examinations? An initial look at the competencies to be assessed in citizenship might suggest a particular direction to take. However, there are several aspects to addressing this issue. Considerations ranging from the nature of the curricular program to the use of test results will help refine the nature of the task.

## **Background**

The High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations originated as part of Amended Substitute Senate Bill 55 which was passed by the General Assembly in August of 1997. One outgrowth of the discussions following the DeRolph school finance decision issued by the Ohio Supreme Court, Am. Sub. S. B. 55 is a wide-ranging school performance accountability measure. Included in its other provisions is the establishment of student proficiency on the Fourth-grade Proficiency Test in Reading as a criteria for promotion to the fifth grade. It also permits retention of students who are not proficient on three or more of the Fourth-grade and Sixth-grade Proficiency Tests. Other provisions mandate summer remediation programs, establish school district performance standards, increase graduation requirements, permit contracting for remediation and intervention, and set requirements for community schools. These provisions have varying effective dates.

After September 15, 2004 anyone planning on graduating from an Ohio high school must be proficient in all five areas assessed on the new examinations. The first operational administration of the examinations is scheduled to occur in March, 2003. This will give potential graduates of the Class of 2005 at least five opportunities to be successful on each of the five examinations.

During the summer of 1998 advisory panels were convened to propose the competencies to be assessed on the new examinations. In its work, the citizenship committee utilized the various national standards documents as well as National Assessment of Educational Progress frameworks for civics, geography, and history. It also consulted *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-based Program* and sample courses of study from local districts across the state. After various reviews and extensive discussion, the committee settled on thirteen competencies.

The draft lists of competencies in all subject areas were released in September for public comment. Reactions to the citizenship competencies came through eleven public forums, over 8,000 review forms, and unsolicited letters. The original advisory panel met again in December and discussed the public response, identified major areas of concern, and proposed revisions to the competencies. The revisions were taken to the State Board of Education which adopted the revised competencies at its February, 1999 meeting.

### **Citizenship Proficiency Test Dimensions**

One of the many issues now facing school districts across Ohio is how to respond to the new lists of competencies, specifically in this instance, the citizenship competencies. Before attempting to modify what is being done locally, it would be helpful to look at the new examination competencies in the light of the overall proficiency testing program.

Some people have a tendency to view the proficiency tests as independent entities at the grade levels where they are administered. In reality, Ohio has a proficiency testing program and as it has developed over time, the inter-test connections have become stronger and stronger. Part of the reason for this on the citizenship tests is due to the adoption of *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-based Program* in 1994. The *Model* gave the committees overseeing the development of the citizenship tests at fourth and sixth grades a common set of guidelines to foster programmatic development. The *Model* was again used in the development of the citizenship portion of the graduation qualifying examinations.

These programmatic connections can be seen in various sequences of outcomes and competencies. For instance, in the American Heritage strand (or reporting subscale) are two outcomes and a competency that relate to the use of information:

*Fourth Grade*

2. Identify and use sources of information about a given topic in the history of Ohio and the United States.

*Sixth Grade*

2. Utilize a variety of resources to consider information from different perspectives about North America:
  - (a) identify the central idea an historical narrative attempts to address,
  - (b) inquire into the relative credibility of sources.

*High School*

1. Analyze information about major historical developments by:
  - (a) interpreting documents (i.e., Declaration of Independence, Northwest Ordinance, U.S. Constitution [including amendments]),
  - (b) identifying and comparing experiences and perspectives,
  - (c) assessing credibility of sources (e.g., primary and secondary sources, biased and objective accounts), and
  - (d) interpreting data (e.g., charts, graphs, narratives, illustrations, and photographs).

In this sequence, students move from identifying sources of information and what they are used for, through examining the main point expressed in an information source as well as how credible it is, to making comparisons and interpretations based upon the data and perspectives provided in the sources of information. The high school competency builds upon the preceding outcomes for the fourth and sixth grades.

It should be noted that there are connections to the existing Ninth- and Twelfth-grade Tests as well. Outcomes 1 and 16 on the Ninth-grade Test deal with the significance of particular documents and the use of information. Outcome 20 on the Twelfth-grade Test concerns student's abilities to use information.

As another example, in the World Interactions strand (subscale) there are four outcomes and a competency that relate to the students' developing understanding of regions:

*Fourth Grade*

8. Use maps and diagrams as a source of information to: . . .
  - (d) explain the influence of the natural environment on the settlement of Ohio and on changes in population patterns, transportation, and land use.
9. Identify or describe the location of Ohio in relation to other states, to regions of the United States, and to major physical features of North America.

*Sixth Grade*

10. Use maps of North America or the world to identify physical and cultural regions and to show relationships among regions.

11. Examine instances of contact between people of different regions of the world and determine the reasons for these contacts.

*High School*

6. analyze the global implications of post-World War II regional changes involving:
  - (a) the growth of international organizations (e.g., United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, European Union), and
  - (b) the end of colonialism and the development of national identity movements (e.g., the separation of India and Pakistan, the independence of Congo from Belgium, the reunification of Germany).

In this sequence, students move from recognizing the concept of regions, through seeing connections between regions, to using regions as a basis for analyzing historical developments. Once again, the high school competency builds upon the expectations from the preceding grade levels.

While not all outcomes/competencies are linked in a manner just demonstrated, there is no need to have all of them so linked. Some concepts and skills can be learned and assessed and not need further development. Purposes of local government are only assessed on the Fourth-grade Proficiency Test. Other concepts and skills will not show up until later in the program and may not have a direct lineage back to instruction which takes place in earlier grades. The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination in Citizenship has a competency pertaining to democratic and totalitarian governments. While the current Sixth-grade Test has a similar outcome, there are no similar outcomes on the Fourth-grade Tests.

There are many other examples of inter-test connections that use fourth- and sixth-grade outcomes to build toward student success on the high school competencies. The point is that the Proficiency Tests in Citizenship employ programmatic development.

This programmatic development is also reflected in the way in which the outcomes and competencies are correlated with *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-based Program*. It is even more evident as one examines the many steps across several grade levels that contribute to achieving high school expectations.

Consider this portion of a competency from the citizenship examination:

3. use information about different cultures to explain the consequences of contacts between peoples from 1750 to the present by examining:
  - (a) patterns of migration, . . .

Now consider the following sequence of instructional objectives from the Model (in the “strand” column, “PS” indicates People in Societies and “WI” indicates World Interactions)

GRADE LEVEL	STRAND	OBJECTIVE NUMBER	
2	PS	5	use a map to investigate where different groups of Americans live and have lived at different times in the past
3	PS	2	determine why various cultural groups settled where they did in the community
4	PS	3	indicate on a map where various cultural groups have settled in Ohio
5	PS	1	compare the reasons various cultural groups had for coming to North America
5	PS	2	use appropriate maps to locate sources of major migrations to North America and indicate the direction of the major migrations
5	WI	3A	suggest reasons for the distribution of population and the location of selected places with respect to landforms, climate, natural vegetation, resources, historical events, or human wants
5	WI	4	combine information from a variety of sources to examine patterns of movement A. give examples of human movement and compare reasons, distances, frequency, and mode of transportation B. explain why human activities require movement and determine that few places are self-reliant; therefore, human networks bring areas together
8	PS	3	examine the reasons why various groups left their homelands to come to North America
8	WI	3	explain patterns of movement in terms of physical, cultural, economic, and political barriers or inducements
9	PS	2	identify various groups of immigrants that came to the United States between 1815 and 1919 and trace the social, political, and economic developments that led to the migrations
10	PS	2	compare patterns of immigration to the United States in the twentieth century with earlier centuries

All of these instructional objectives help address competency 3a on the citizenship examination. While the competency is focused on tenth-graders, the plan in the *Model* to prepare students for that competency begins in the second grade by using maps to identify where groups of people live and continues through the tenth grade when students are comparing patterns of immigration. By implementing the strategy used in the *Model*, teachers from primary grades through the high school grades are all contributing to students being able to successfully take the examination. This integration across the grade levels is part of what contributes to the programmatic development in the *Model*.

A final dimension of the proficiency testing program that needs to be considered is the reporting of student performance. In many conversations about proficiency testing, teachers have stated that often they receive limited information about student performance on the tests. Sometimes they may only receive a list of students who were not successful on the previous test administration. In actuality school districts receive much more information about the performance of their students.

A variety of reports are made available to school districts describing the performance of students on the Fourth- and Sixth-grade Proficiency Tests. Each year the Ohio Department of Education provides districts with test interpretation guides to use with that year's reports. These reports can be used to make decisions relevant to questions concerning student needs for intervention and questions about the adequacy of the local curriculum in addressing the kinds of expectations represented by the proficiency tests.

Information about individual students includes those test areas in which they have or have not demonstrated proficiency. The scaled scores for each test area are also made available so that the distance from the proficient score (above or below) can be determined. Subscale information is provided in which the raw scores of individual students on each part of the test can be compared with the score attained by the minimally proficient student. Information about which learning outcomes make up each subscale is included in the interpretation guides. All of this information can be analyzed to develop an intervention program for students needing additional assistance.

Other reports provide information regarding an entire population of students. Information is provided on the frequency distribution of scaled scores. Subscale frequency distribution is included in the reports. A disaggregate analysis of student performance on the basis of gender, race, and ethnicity is available. These reports can be useful when considering potential changes to the local district's curriculum.

While no final decisions have been made as yet regarding the types of reports that will be provided to school districts pertaining to the results on the graduation qualifying examinations, reports similar to those described above will in all likelihood be included. Districts will then be able to use the information as

they have from the Fourth- and Sixth-grade Proficiency Tests.

### **Considerations for Local School Districts**

With an understanding of where the proficiency testing program now stands, local curriculum can be examined to determine how the competencies need to be addressed. Does the curriculum need anything done to it at all? Or, if it appears to need some attention, how extensive will the alterations have to be to address the new expectations? Does the local curriculum need to be revised, restructured, or completely revamped?

While examining curriculum is a good place to start, a district's response to the new competencies cannot end there. Further areas for inquiry need to be considered. How does classroom instruction relate to local curriculum and proficiency test expectations? What is the connection with district and classroom assessments? How is intervention utilized to address perceived deficiencies in student performance? What use is made of student data from the proficiency tests?

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are inextricably linked in an educational program. A recent article by Schmoker and Marzano in *Educational Leadership* focuses on building an infrastructure of materials, methods, and lessons aligned with standards to improve student performance on assessments (1999). Such infrastructures, they suggest, are presently lacking in most school districts. They propose three steps to create this kind of infrastructure in schools:

1. Start with the standards that are assessed.
2. Beyond state assessments, add judiciously to the list of standards you will teach and assess.
3. Do not add more topics than can be taught and assessed reasonably and effectively (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999, pp. 20, 21).

These are useful suggestions as schools reflect upon the new citizenship competencies.

How well does the local curriculum address the expectations set forth by the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination in Citizenship? The competencies represent the standards that Ohio will assess. Are all of the competencies encompassed by the curriculum? How extensive and thorough is the treatment they receive? Is there a progression of knowledge and skill development leading up to the culminating objectives tied to the competencies?

How was *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-based Program* utilized in the design of the local curriculum? The *Model* was one of the resources used in the development of the competencies and helps to judiciously flesh out those expectations. As was demonstrated above, the competencies are correlated to the instructional objectives from the various grade levels in the *Model*. Does a similar

correlation exist between grade levels in the local curriculum and the competencies? Does the local curriculum reflect a K-12 programmatic approach with the content at each grade level conducive to reaching a common set of goals? Has particular attention been paid to the relationship between the knowledge and skills presented in grades seven through ten and the citizenship competencies? Has too much content been added to the curriculum so that depth of understanding is being sacrificed for breath of coverage?

Jere Brophy and Janet Alleman argue that learning opportunities established through a goal-oriented curriculum should be carried over into instructional practices and assessments that remain focused on the same goals (1993). When attention is:

focused on coverage of particular topics and subskills, the larger social education purposes and goals that are supposed to guide the entire process begin to fade into the background, as do many of the originally recognized connections and intended life applications. There is a general failure to tie things together. Knowledge content becomes fragmented into disconnected bits that can be memorized but not easily learned with understanding of their meaning or appreciation of their potential significance. Skills are taught and practiced in isolation from one another and from the knowledge content, and not as tools for using the knowledge content in authentic life applications (Brophy & Alleman, 1993, p. 28).

In this view of social studies practice, the standards that are assessed, according to Schmoker and Marzano, have become the “purposes and goals” of social education. The judicious additions they suggested have become the “connections and intended life applications.” And the limited addition of topics they urged have afforded the time and opportunity to “tie things together.”

There are other questions concerning instructional practices that a local district can consider. Are requisite information and skills addressed only once or are they addressed a number of times during the course of a grade and over the course of the social studies program? Is a rote method the approach used to convey knowledge or are there opportunities for reflection and application? Are students simply told how to perform skills or are they given “a series of lessons on *each* skill or strategy that moves (the) students from focused introduction to the skill or strategy through various types of practice and elaboration, to autonomous use of the skill” (Beyer, 1988, p. 221)? Is knowledge taught in isolated bits or is knowledge connected as part of a larger tapestry of concepts that are “fundamental and significant” to the discipline and critical to further learning (Marzano, Kendall, and Gaddy, 1999, p. 49)? Are students expected to learn more and more material that is “covered” in class or is less being taught, but taught well, so that students have a chance to think about and retain more content that is valued (Olsen, 1995, p. 130)?

No matter how well the curriculum has been defined and no matter how effective the instructional techniques that have been used, if what is taught is not assessed, many students will be less inclined to learn and teachers will not have good information on what students have attained. How often have teachers heard, "Will this be on the test?" And increasingly they are being asked to document student performance.

With the adoption of *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-based Program* in 1994, school districts have had the responsibility to implement their own competency-based education programs in social studies. Assessment is an integral part of a competency-based program. Questions related to the issues raised about curriculum and instruction can be set forth about assessment practices used in a school district.

Are there performance objectives to measure student progress in attaining the knowledge and skills reflected in the graduation examination competencies? Are there a reasonable number of performance objectives to be assessed at each grade level? Recall Schmoker and Marzano's admonition to start with the standards (competencies) that are to be assessed and to be judicious in adding topics to that list. Do the assessments progress through levels of knowledge and skill development leading up to the expectations reflected in the competencies? Do paper-and-pencil assessments in the district include open-ended items similar to those used in proficiency testing? Are performance assessments utilized to help ingrain the requisite knowledge and skills through application?

A corollary component to assessment in a competency-based program is intervention. Intervention is based on the evaluation of data generated by assessments. In part it involves the utilization of alternative teaching strategies to help students accomplish those goals they so far have been unable to achieve. The data should be gathered from a variety of assessments so that teachers have more information on which to base instructional decisions. The teaching strategies should be tailored to meet the particular needs of groups of students. Key to this process is the continual reassessment of students who are in intervention programs. The information gained from these assessments can help document student progress and help teachers refine the strategies used with the students. Intervention practices that are a part of an instructional program aligned with the competencies on the graduation qualifying examination will help assure successful student performance on those benchmarks.

Finally, there are some considerations concerning the use of proficiency testing results. Once again, while the score reports have not yet been designed for the graduation qualifying examinations, the reports should be similar to what is now made available for the Fourth- and Sixth-grade Proficiency Tests. Information contained on those individual student score reports should be given careful attention.

In addition to indicating if a particular student is proficient or not, the scaled

score also shows how far a student's performance is from the proficient score. If a student is not proficient, this gives a rough estimate of how intensive the intervention needs may be. But even if a student is shown to be proficient, a scaled score just above the proficient score may indicate someone who might benefit from additional work in the subject or who at least needs to be closely monitored prior to the next level of assessment.

No matter what a student's scaled score may be, the subscale scores should always be checked. Even a proficient student on the citizenship test could have had difficulty in one or more subscale areas.

The subscale information indicates areas of strength and weakness compared with the performance of students at the minimally proficient level. However, in examining the subscale information it is important to note the location of the band which indicates the performance typical of students at the standard. Compare the band with the number of points possible in the subscale. If the band is 3-4 and a student earns a 5, that student will be identified as having a strength in that subscale area. But if the total points possible in that subscale is 10, that student has only earned half of the possible points. The comparative performance may be a strength while the performance against the criteria may not be so strong and may indicate the need for intervention activities. Likewise, if the band is 8-9 out of a possible 10 and the student earns an 8, that performance will be listed as a weakness. It is a weakness only in the comparative sense; 8 out of 10 is generally regarded as a pretty good performance. Such a weakness may not be one that should be a major focal point for intervention.

Close examination of the scaled score and the subscale reports for each student will assist in the design of intervention strategies. It is also important to note which outcomes are encompassed by each subscale so that intervention efforts are centered on the appropriate areas. This will help prepare students for the graduation qualifying examination.

Reports on frequency distribution, subscale frequencies, and the disaggregate analysis of student performance can indicate the overall program's degree of accomplishment relative to the preparation of students for the graduation qualifying examination. The frequency distribution will indicate how successful the program has been in preparing a body of students to meet the expectations of the proficiency tests. The subscale frequencies may point to weak areas in the curriculum or instructional program. And the disaggregate analysis may suggest that certain segments of the student body are not performing as well as others and that there may be equity issues needing attention.

The broad-scale reports just mentioned establish a basis for discussions concerning the readiness of a district's students for the graduation qualifying examination. These discussions can proceed between elementary and secondary colleagues within the school district because of the consistency of reporting on the tests and the programmatic connections between the tests.

## Conclusion

What do school districts across Ohio need to do in preparation for the upcoming High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations in Citizenship? The answer to that question will be as varied as the number of school districts in the state. Certainly all will have to become familiar with the new citizenship competencies. Existing connections between a district's curriculum as well as instructional and assessment practices will have to be identified. Gaps between the district's expectations and the expectations of the new examination, if any, will need to be noted. A programmatic approach needs to be in place so that all of the competencies are adequately addressed in the curriculum. Students must be afforded enough time to develop the knowledge and skills that will be assessed. Information about student performance must be gathered and evaluated so that intervention can be provided before the students are expected to take the new examination.

This does not mean that teachers must focus their attention solely on the proficiency testing expectations. The expectations found in the citizenship proficiency testing program do not constitute a complete social studies program. But they do represent some crucial benchmarks as we prepare students for graduation and need to be focal points in curriculum, instruction, and assessment programs. Identifying examination competency linkages across the grade levels and between the various aspects of an educational program is an important task and one that needs to begin now in school districts throughout Ohio.

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## No Excuses: Demanding Academic Achievement from Low Income Students

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**Samuel Casey Carter**  
The Heritage Foundation

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**W**hen Irwin Kurz came to the Crown School 13 years ago, Crown's scores sat in the bottom quartile of District 17 in Brooklyn. Now they stand proudly as the best in the district and rank 40th out of 674 elementary schools in all of New York City.<sup>1</sup>

Kurz says, "It's a lot of garbage that poor kids can't succeed."

Crown School - P.S. 161 - is a school of over 1300 students, 98% of whom come from low income families. Although they have to pack their students 35 to a classroom, the teachers at Crown refuse to make class size an excuse for poor performance. More than 80 percent of kindergartners at Crown are readers, and the level of achievement only improves from there.

In 1996, Kurz added a selective middle school called the Crown School of Law and Journalism.<sup>2</sup> Now the 6th grade at Crown has the second highest reading scores in all of New York.<sup>3</sup> Taken together, the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades this year scored in the 93rd percentile in reading and in the 96th in math.<sup>4</sup> Last year, the entire 8th grade passed the algebra Regents - 84 percent with distinction.<sup>5</sup>

Crown is a neighborhood elementary school made up of 91 percent black and 8 percent Latino children who come from Crown Heights, an area of Brooklyn rightly proud of its Caribbean influences, but working hard to overcome the turmoil of its recent riots. From the outside, you could never tell that you were looking at one of the best schools around.

Inside, however, the signs of accomplishment are everywhere. In stark contrast to the world around it, Crown is a study in success that promotes achievement at every turn. Every square inch of hallway groans under the weight

of student projects, presentations, book reports, and the certificates of excellence they have received. "The physical plant has to show the kids that you care about them," Kurz remarks. The sparkling corridors shimmer with waxed floor reflections of the lights overhead and the awards that line the walls.

Crown is a shamelessly proud institution that looks and feels like a private school from the moment you cross the threshold. Even the plaid-uniformed students sport navy sweaters with an ornate Crown insignia emblazoned on the chest. "It's pretentious, but I want it that way," Kurz says with a wry smile. "We're trying to make a very special school for these children."

The school is clearly the product of Kurz's design. Its order, efficiency, and calm self-assurance all are reflections of the man who put them in place. Yet Kurz maintains that nothing at Crown is unobtainable elsewhere. "High expectations aren't enough," he says. "You have to intend on actually getting the job done. If you really intend on doing it, it will happen." When Kurz instituted the school uniforms, for example, he simply sent out a letter notifying the parents where to pick them up.

Don't be mistaken: Kurz is exceedingly hardworking and equally well-organized. He gets to work by 6:15 each morning and is able to eliminate many of that day's problems before anyone else even knows they exist. "It's the easiest way to build morale in a school," he says. "If you solve the little problems, they'll trust you with the big picture."

As a reflection of this thinking, Kurz makes sure that success comes early and often to his students. Children who don't succeed in the earliest years are quick to believe that they are ill-equipped for school. In response, Kurz established literacy in kindergarten as a hallmark of his program. "If we let them, children will attribute any failure in school to a lack of natural ability. Here we teach them that hard work creates ability." As readers in kindergarten, children at Crown quickly become accustomed to hard work and to real ability,

At Crown, classrooms literally overflow with books. Blouke Carus, President of Open Court Publishing, says Crown has implemented his company's explicit phonics-based curriculum better than any school in country. Much more than the school's attention to the rigors of phonetic decoding makes this so. Irwin Kurz has figured out how to develop the reading habit.

Kindergartners who can read and older students who write five book reports each year get a certificate hung on the wall and a button they can wear on their uniform. They are the members of the Principal's Reading Club. A monthly newspaper of student book reviews called *By-Lines* keeps the school abuzz with book talk. A weekly book sale is the center of school life. Over 2,600 books were sold in the two days before Christmas, with thousands more sold throughout the year. All books are sold at a loss for \$1 each—fund-raisers cover the balance. Student advertising executives and inventory clerks earn bookstore pay to buy their own

books in exchange for their work promoting and running the store. The bookstore is a tabletop.

As Kurz is quick to explain, success at Crown is primarily the work of a well-integrated staff. In all grade levels, children are assigned to a single teacher for all instruction, but the improvement of instruction is a collective responsibility shared by the entire faculty. Kurz instituted a system of peer evaluation where teachers on the same grade level observe each other solely to improve each other's teaching. The sense of professionalism among the staff is palpable.

Kurz is himself a teacher turned principal, who understands that teachers must be free to adapt their styles to the needs of their students. He believes that only the individual teacher knows what is best for the classroom and that real teacher autonomy and respect for individual teaching style are necessary to bring it out. The wide variety in classroom layout, decoration, and design shows a vibrant practice at work. It is Kurz's job to supply his teachers with whatever they need to improve their instruction, even if that means finding funds for outside seminars or additional supplies. In exchange, Kurz expects results. The average tenure at the school is 15 years.

Testing is the key to Crown's internal assessment. Mock tests in reading and mathematics are administered in December, January, and March. Teachers receive the results immediately and then tutor the children based on an exact portfolio of individual needs. Within two or three days, students requiring remediation are assigned to one of the 26 paraprofessional tutors on staff. Kurz is the test hawk behind this data-driven approach. "You have to set clear and measurable objectives for everyone," Kurz notes. "I don't know what other people use. We use tests." Of the 100 students who received tutoring after one such recent mock test—50 children in reading and 50 in math—99 passed when test day came around.

With genuine humility, Kurz says his job doesn't amount to much: he might set the goal, but it is for the others to reach it. He says quite frankly, "My teachers do all the work."

### **Seven Common Elements of High-Performing High-Poverty Schools**

I recently interviewed more than 100 principals of high-performing, high-poverty schools such as P.S. 161, looking to identify those practices that make a school a center of academic excellence. I wanted to find schools where at least 75 percent of the students come from low-income families but score in the top third on national exams. Typically, schools with this many low-income students score in the bottom third. The children in the high-achieving schools I found come from typical inner-city neighborhoods. They are predominantly African-American or Hispanic. Many of them even live near failing public schools that draw from the same local

population. So what explains their success? My visits to these schools uncovered seven common traits.

**Principals must be free.**

Effective principals decide how to spend their money, whom to hire, and what to teach. Unless principals are free to establish their own curricula, seek out their own faculties, and teach as they see fit, their teaching will not be its best.

Without freedom, a school principal is powerless. Effective principals either are given their freedom or take it for themselves. Principals whose schools develop a reputation for academic achievement usually are left alone; but in order to get there, great principals often are mavericks who buck the system or low flyers who get the job done quietly.

Schools serving low-income children are often poorly funded. Even on shoestring budgets, effective principals make their schools work, but innovation and flexibility are the keys to their success. Unless principals are free to spend their budgets as they see fit, their schools will be compromised.

**Principals use measurable goals to establish a culture of achievement.**

High expectations are one thing—the relentless pursuit of excellence is another. Tangible and unyielding goals are the focus of high-performing schools. Whether the goal is calculus by 12th grade, a fluently bilingual school, proficient musical performance for all, literacy at the earliest age, 100 percent attendance, or 100 percent working above grade level, great schools set hard and fast goals that the whole school must strive to obtain.

High expectations mean nothing if they are compromised in the classroom. Once the principal sets a clear vision for the school, every teacher has to be held personally responsible for enforcing it.

Outstanding middle schools and high schools focus on college preparation. In order to make achievement the product, great schools make college the goal.

**Master teachers bring out the best in a faculty.**

Improving the quality of instruction is the only way to improve overall student achievement. Master teachers are the key to improved teacher quality. Master teachers often head peer evaluations, lead team teaching, devise internal assessment measures, and keep the mission of the school focused on academic achievement. Quality, not seniority, is the key.

Effective principals scour the country for the best teachers they can find and design their curriculum around the unique strengths and expertise of their staff. Master teachers help the faculty implement that curriculum.

Students of comparable abilities have vastly different outcomes as a result of the teachers to whom they are assigned.<sup>6</sup> Effective principals turn their schools into schools for teachers. Master teachers teach the others how to teach.

**Rigorous and regular testing leads to continuous student achievement.**

Modern-day reform jargon speaks of assessment and accountability. Principals of high-performing schools speak of testing.

High expectations without a means of measurement are hollow. Testing is the diagnostic tool that best enforces a school's goals. Regular tests at all levels and in all areas insure that teaching and learning of the prescribed curriculum are taking place in every classroom. Mock tests usually are administered three or four times a year in preparation for the national exams.

Principals eliminate all excuses for failure by taking personal responsibility for the success of their children. As head of the instructional program, the principal does this best by personally monitoring the regular assessment of every child in the school. Teachers quickly learn that they too are tested each time they test their students.

**Achievement is the key to discipline.**

A command-and-control approach to discipline is limited by the number of guards you can hire. When self-discipline and order come from within, every extra person is part of the solution.

When a school clearly teaches by example that self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem anchored in achievement are the means to success, that school's own success inspires confidence, order, and discipline in its students.

Effective principals hope to create lasting opportunities with lifelong rewards for their students. Without apology, they allow the rigorous demands of achievement to show the way. Children need clear and conspicuous reasons to flee from error and run toward success. The demands of achievement provide both.

**Principals work actively with parents to make the home a center of learning.**

In high-poverty schools, a lack of parental involvement is often the first excuse for poor performance. Effective principals overcome this excuse by extending the mission of the school into the home.

Principals of high-performing schools establish contracts with parents to support their children's efforts to learn. In order to harness the benefits of parental support and motivation, effective principals teach parents to read to their children, check their homework, and ask after their assignments. In the end, however, each

student, not a child's parents, is held accountable for his or her own success.

More than almost anything else, an outstanding school is a source of pride, a wellspring of joy, and a force for stability in an impoverished community. Great principals work with parents to make this happen.

**Effort creates ability.**

Time on task is the key to progress in time. School is hard work, and great principals demand that their students work hard. Extended days, extended years, after-school programs, weekend programs, and summer school are all features of outstanding schools. None wastes time.

Effective principals eliminate social promotion. Students must fulfill very specific course requirements in order to advance either in class or on to the next grade level. No student is advanced without a clear demonstration of mastery.

Effective principals reject the notion that teaching is an 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. job. They expect the same of their teachers.

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Provided by New York City Board of Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability, Test Analysis Unit.

<sup>2</sup> Grades PK-5 at Crown average around 215 students each. The Crown School of Law and Journalism accepts the best applicants from the same neighborhood: Grades 6-8 average around 55 students each.

<sup>3</sup> Randal C. Archibold, "The Top Schools," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1999, sec. 1, p. 34. See *Separate and Unequal: The Reading Gap in New York's Elementary Schools*, Public Policy Institute of New York State, March 1998, p.44.

<sup>4</sup> California Test of Basic Skills and California Achievement Test-5, Spring 1998. Provided by New York City Board of Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability.

<sup>5</sup> New York City Board of Education 1997-1998 Annual School Report, "PS. 161—The Crown School," p. 6. See <http://207.127.202.63/>.

<sup>6</sup> William L. Sanders and June C. Rivers, *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*, University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center, 1996, p. 6

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# Two Birds With One Stone? A Comparison of the Ohio and National Council Social Studies Models

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Since 1994, social studies teachers at all grade levels across Ohio have worked to infuse each of the six strands from *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program (1994)* into their curriculum. Many of these teachers are members of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and have also become familiar with the ten national themes recommended by NCSS in *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Model for the Social Studies (1994)*. To what degree are the two models compatible? Are they, in fact, overlapping to the point that if a teacher concerns herself or himself with one, she or he need not bother with the other? Indeed, if the NCSS Model is more comprehensive, could a social studies teacher concentrate on the National Model and remain confident that in doing so, the Ohio Model objectives would also be covered?

Most teachers with whom I have talked take a different, more pragmatic, approach. Their view holds that, since the Ohio Model is aligned with Ohio's proficiency tests, they must rely almost exclusively on teaching the Ohio Model and hope that much of the NCSS Model will also be covered. Exactly to what extent this holds true, however, seems uncertain for many social studies educators. With this in mind, I compared the two curriculum models. What follows is a brief discussion of that comparison.

## Comparing Strands to Themes

As one might hope and expect, the Ohio Model and the NCSS Model have a great deal in common. Both have similar definitions of the social studies as a program "to help young people understand, through the study of the past and present, what it means to be a human being in society and develop the ability to

make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world of finite resources” (Ohio Department of Education, 1994, p.7)<sup>1</sup> By working from such similar definitions, both models organize the social studies through strands or themes woven throughout all grade levels. These strands work to promote the teaching of the social studies through intra- and inter-disciplinary approaches. To reach the objectives of any one strand from either model, content must be taken from multiple social sciences and, more often than not, from areas such as the humanities, the fine arts, the sciences, philosophy, and literature. Both models focus on outcomes that would be beneficial for democratic citizenship rather than on content specific to any distinct social science discipline. Both models strive to work in concert with various content models (e.g., economics, geography, history) and work to provide the “overall curriculum design and comprehensive student performance expectations,” while allowing room for the individual discipline model to provide more “focused and enhanced content detail” (NCSS, 1994, p. viii).

Differences between the two models seem slight. The Ohio Model organizes the social studies curriculum within six “strands” while the NCSS Model organizes the social studies into ten “themes.” In doing so, the NCSS Model allows the social studies to be broken down into more specific areas. The Ohio Model has specific “instructional objectives” for each grade, K through 12. In contrast, the NCSS Model has placed its “performance expectations” into three categories; the early grades, the middle grades, and the high school level. The Ohio Model seems to follow an “expanding environment” curriculum philosophy—focusing first the individual and community and moving on to state, national, and international issues in later grades—more directly than does the NCSS Model. (See Addenda I and II).

Yet, questions remain. If a teacher focuses on the Ohio Model, are all aspects of the NCSS Model covered? If so, to what extent? Are there areas in the NCSS Model not covered? If so, where are these gaps? To answer these questions I compared the overall objectives of each strand in the Ohio Model with each theme of the NCSS Model. (See figure on page 34).

This chart is best read by focusing on one Ohio strand at a time and asking, “If I am teaching this strand well, what aspects of which NCSS Model theme am I also addressing?” Since there are ten NCSS Model themes and only six Ohio Model strands, there is never a direct one-to-one relationship between an Ohio strand and a NCSS theme in which teaching one Ohio Model strand completely covers the teaching of a NCSS Model theme. One does find an occasional strong connection between a strand and a theme, but a NCSS Model theme is often covered by a combination of two Ohio Model strands.

An analysis of this chart reveals several points. One is that, when teaching all strands of the Ohio Model, nine of the ten themes of the NCSS Model are, in large part, covered. Indeed, some Ohio Model strands match up fairly closely with some NCSS Model themes (e.g., People in Societies with Culture; American Heritage with Time, Continuity, & Change; Citizenship Rights & Responsibilities with Civic

Ideals & Practice). Additionally, the NCSS Model themes which are covered best are those with at least two strong links with Ohio Model strands. These include the following four themes: Time, Continuity, & Change; Individuals, Groups, & Institutions; Power, Authority, & Governance, and Civic Ideals & Practice. Four other NCSS Model themes are covered fairly adequately by the Ohio Model, but not as directly or completely. These include Culture; People, Places, & Environments; Production, Distribution, & Governance; and Global Connections. Of these four, one could argue that the themes of “Culture” and “Production, Distribution, & Consumption” are covered better than just “adequately” because of their high degree of overlap with the corresponding Ohio Model “People in Societies” strand and the “Decision Making and Resources” strand.

One gap appears obvious. This is the NCSS Model theme of “Science, Technology and Society.” Here the Ohio Model has no strand that directly matches. However, one could claim to cover this curriculum area indirectly through weak links (not shown in Figure Three) from several Ohio Model strands. The Ohio Model Strands of American Heritage, World Interactions, and Decision Making and Resources all have objectives that deal with some aspect of the objectives found in the NCSS “Science, Technology & Society” theme.

## **Conclusion**

While many Ohio social studies teachers are familiar with both models and have informally compared the two as they taught to meet the objectives of one or the other, few have taken the time to explicitly or formally compare the two curriculum models. This brief discussion reveals what most have suspected; by teaching the Ohio Model well, a teacher can be confident that most of the NCSS Model themes are also being addressed. Yet, as noted above, there is one area of the NCSS Model in need of some additional curricular attention by Ohio social studies teachers; the theme of “Science, Technology and Society.” Once aware of potential gaps, however, teachers could work to strengthen the Ohio Model by, for example, incorporating reinforcing activities into related units of study or through the study of current events. One final suggestion would be for social studies teachers to compare the Ohio Model instructional objectives specific for his or her grade level to the NCSS Model performance expectations specific to their grade category. Only in this way can the most relevant information come from such comparisons.

## ADDENDUM I

### Ohio Strands<sup>2</sup>

The **American Heritage** strand refers to those aspects of the past that help to make the American people unique among the peoples of the world while at the same time recognizing what we hold in common with other people. What is it that makes us Americans? What common experiences, traditions, and habits do we share? How have we been shaped by the geography of the United States and by its political and economic systems? How have we been influenced by other cultures?

The **People in Societies** strand recognizes that the United States and the world encompass many different racial, ethnic, and religious groups. It also recognizes that factors such as gender and class provide people with different perspectives on issues. In the United States, all of these groups live together in one society. How do we come to appreciate the contributions of each other? How do we learn to work together for the common good?

The United States has never been completely isolated from the rest of the world, but its interactions with other nations have increased dramatically in recent decades. Economic, cultural, and intellectual contacts as well as political contacts are made daily through activities such as financing, tourism, reporting, and diplomacy. Some contacts may be intentional, such as cultural exchanges, and others may be unintended, such as the spread of disease. The **World Interactions** strand explores the links people make around the world as they attempt to address common problems. How do activities here create or reflect contacts with the rest of the world? How do we respond to the challenges of acting in an interdependent world?

Finally, the strand of **Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities** provides a context for examining and engaging in those activities that are part of an adult's public life. How do we work together to accomplish common ends? How can an individual be more effective in a public setting? Why is one's involvement in public affairs important in a democratic society?

As Americans, we celebrate the fact that we live in a democratic society. But what does that mean? The **Democratic Processes** strand examines the principles of democracy and explores the extent to which governments reflect those principles. What are the purposes of government? How should a democratic government strive to accomplish those ends? How well do the practicalities of governing in the United States reflect the challenges of democratic rule?

The **Decision Making and Resources** strand focuses on decisions individuals and societies make in addressing wants. What are potential resources and where are they to be found? How are resources utilized and transformed to satisfy wants? What constraints or directions exist when making decisions?

## **ADDENDUM II**

### **N.C.S.S. Themes<sup>3</sup>**

#### **I. Culture**

The study of culture prepares students to answer questions such as: What are the common characteristics of different cultures? How do belief systems, such as religion or political ideals, influence other parts of the culture? How does the culture change to accommodate different ideas and beliefs? What does language tell us about the culture? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history, sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum.

#### **II. Time, Continuity, and Change**

Human beings seek to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Knowing how to read and reconstruct the past allows one to develop a historical perspective and to answer questions such as: Who am I? What happened in the past? How am I connected to those in the past? How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? Why does our personal sense of relatedness to the past change? This theme typically appears in courses in history and others that draw upon historical knowledge and habits.

#### **III. People, Places and Environments**

The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions assists students as they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world beyond their personal locations. Students need the knowledge, skills, and understanding to answer questions such as: Where are things located? Why are they located where they are? What do we mean by “region”? How do landforms change? What implications do these changes have for people? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with area studies and geography.

#### **IV. Individual Development and Identity**

Personal identity is shaped by one’s culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. Students should consider such questions as: How do people learn? Why do people behave as they do? What influences how people learn, perceive, and grow? How do people meet their basic needs in a variety of contexts? How do individuals develop from youth to adulthood? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with psychology and anthropology.

#### **V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions**

Institutions such as schools, churches, families, government agencies, and

the courts play an integral role in people's lives. It is important that students learn how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they influence individuals and culture, and how they are maintained or changed. Students may address questions such as: What is the role of institutions in this and other societies? How am I influenced by institutions? How do institutions change? What is my role in institutional change? In schools this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science and history.

#### **VI. Power, Authority, and Governance**

Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world is essential for developing civic competence. In exploring this theme, students confront questions such as: What is power? What forms does it take? Who holds it? How is it gained, used, and justified? What is legitimate authority? How are governments created structured, maintained, and changed? How can individual rights be protected within the context of majority rule? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with government, politics, political science, history, law, and other social sciences.

#### **VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption**

Because people have wants that often exceed the resources available to them, a variety of ways have evolved to answer such questions as: What is to be produced? How is production to be organized? How are goods and services to be distributed? What is the most effective allocation of the factors of production (land, labor, capital, and management)? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with economic concepts and issues.

#### **VIII. Science, Technology, and Society**

Modern life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it. But technology brings with it many questions: Is new technology always better than old? What can we learn from the past about how new technologies result in broader social change, some of which is unanticipated? How can we cope with the ever-increasing pace of change? How can we manage technology so that the greatest number of people benefit from it? How can we preserve our fundamental values and beliefs in the midst of technological change? This theme draws upon the natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and the humanities, and appears in a variety of social studies courses, including history, geography, economics, civics, and government.

#### **IX. Global Connections**

The realities of global interdependence require understanding the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies and the frequent tension between national interests and global priorities. Students will

need to be able to address such international issues as health care, the environment, human rights, economic competition and interdependence, age-old ethnic enmities, and political and military alliances. This theme typically appears in units or courses dealing with geography, culture, and economics, but may also draw upon the natural and physical sciences and the humanities.

#### **X. Civic Ideals and Practices**

An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies. Students confront such questions as: What is civic participation and how can I be involved? How has the meaning of citizenship evolved? What is the balance between rights and responsibilities? What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world community? How can I make a positive difference? In schools, this theme typically appears in units or courses dealing with history, political science, cultural anthropology, and fields such as global studies, law-related education, and the humanities.

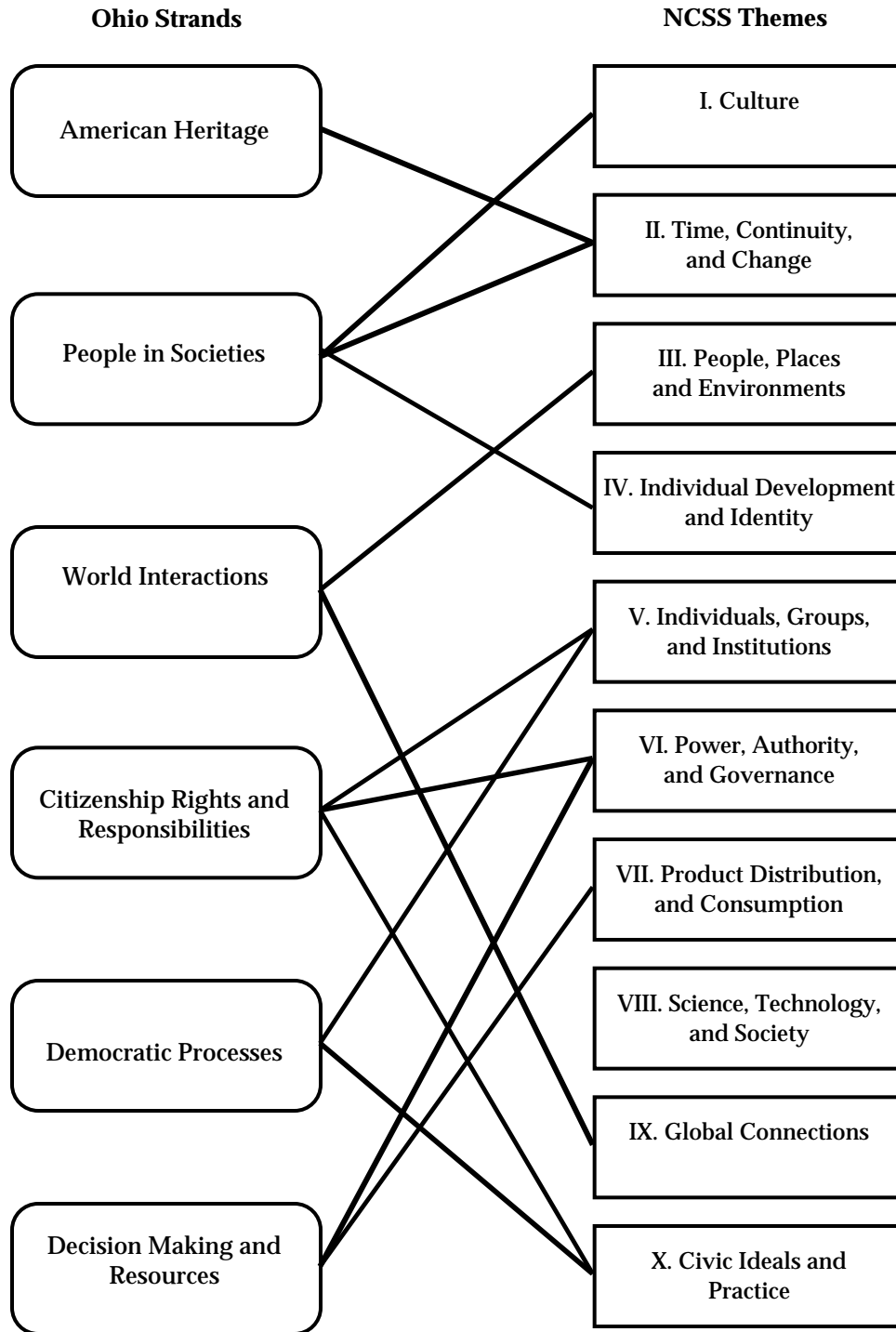
#### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>The National Council for the Social Studies defines the primary purpose of the social studies as helping “young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, p.3).

<sup>2</sup> Addendum I. Ohio Model Strands taken from *Social Studies: Ohio’s Model Competency-Based Program* (1994), Ohio Department of Education, pp. 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> Addendum II. The Ten Themes of the social studies standards taken from *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Expectations of Excellence* (1994), National Council for the Social Studies, pp. x-xii.

## Comparison of State and National Models



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## Improving OPT Scores by Teaching Five Action Verbs

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**D**o you feel bombarded with a whole new series of educational terms to identify and interpret? Do such terms as OPT (Ohio Proficiency Tests), CBE (Competency Based Education), CIP (Continuous Improvement Plan for the State Report Card), and PBL (Problem-Based Learning) make it difficult to decide what students should be learning and then what methods are needed to implement the decisions?

The common thread holding all of these terms together is for students to be able to identify and then solve problems facing them in their democratic society of the future. However, the knowledge explosion keeps adding to the complexity of making these decisions. According to Ian Jukes from the Thornburg Center for Professional Development, the English language now contains five times more words than in Shakespeare's era. "More than 1.3 trillion documents are produced each year in the United States alone. This number represents only one-tenth of 1% of all the information available in any given field of science and technology."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these staggering statistics, teachers realize they can't teach all the facts that could be taught. Therefore, "teachers around the world have abandoned 'pour and store' teaching philosophies and are working to help their students acquire thinking skills and take charge of their own thinking..."<sup>2</sup> Ohio's classroom teachers can better prepare their students for the immediacy of Learner Outcomes for the Ohio Proficiency and CBE Tests by implementing teaching strategies that focus on such thinking skills. These same strategies will also facilitate the lifetime goal of preparing problem solving and decision-making citizens of the future.

This article focuses on just one major set of skills for better preparing students for these short and long-term goals. Even though these skills are part of a

larger scope and sequence for Problem Solving and Decision-Making, K-6 teachers will find that students score better on the Proficiency and CBE Tests when they have a foundation for inquiry.

I examined the *Ohio's Social Studies: Model Competency-Based Program*<sup>3</sup> including the Learner Outcomes Correlation in the chart on page 37. A pattern emerged with five action verbs and their synonyms repeatedly used in the six strands for grades 4-6: *sequence*, *classify*, *compare*, *analyze*, and *prioritize*. For example in the American Heritage strand for each grade level, students are asked to use time lines which involves *sequencing*. The number in the parentheses at the end of each instructional objective indicates at which proficiency grade level it will be assessed.

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade -- Place a series of events in the proper *sequence* on a time line (4,6)

6<sup>th</sup> Grade -- Group significant individuals by broadly defined historical eras and devise multiple-tier time lines, entering information under different categories (6)  
(*Prioritize/Sequence*)

Leading research educators, such as Barry Beyer, advise teachers that "...unless youngsters can *classify* (group) and *seriate* (*sequence*) by the end of the second grade, they will quite likely always have serious difficulties reading and comprehending."<sup>4</sup>

In the People in Society strand, students are frequently asked to compare various cultures.

4<sup>th</sup> Grade -- *Compare* customs, traditions, and needs of Ohio's various cultural groups (4, 6)

5<sup>th</sup> Grade -- Read stories about individuals who represent various cultural groups, draw inferences about the experiences of the groups, and *compare* the problems and opportunities that the groups encountered in the past (6, PO)

The figure below shows a correlation between the frequency of the five action verbs and their *synonyms* in each grade level. The data, as indicated by strands, shows the frequency of the five action verbs compared to the total number of instructional objectives that have been correlated to a proficiency test level.

<b>Usage of Five Action Verbs</b> (Sequence, Classify, Compare, Analyze, and Prioritize)						
(The first column under each grade indicates the occurrence of the action verbs and the second column indicates the total OPT Objectives):						
<b>Five Action Verbs</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>		<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>		<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	
American Heritage	5	5	3	3	5	5
People in Society	1	4	2	3	3	4
World Interactions	1	10	6	6	3	4
Decision Making & Resources	1	7	2	10	3	4
Democratic Process	0	4	2	6	2	3
Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities	2	5	3	7	2	6
<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Percentage of Occurrence</b>	<b>29%</b>		<b>51%</b>		<b>69%</b>	

As the chart indicates, the frequency of these five recurring action verbs are 29% at 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 51% at 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 69% at 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Based on these frequencies, classroom teachers need to plan structured learning experiences for students to become proficient with *sequencing*, *classifying*, *comparing*, *analyzing*, and *prioritizing*. The sample lesson for introducing the concept of *comparing* regions of the United States is based on an adapted format from Barry Beyer (1991).

Below is a sample introductory lesson explaining how a teacher might introduce this material to students.

Goal: To introduce the skill of comparing

Objectives:

- To tell the major steps in comparing
- To state one important rule to follow in comparing
- To identify and compare physical and cultural regions when given maps (data) of North America (5<sup>th</sup> Grade World Interactions - Performance Objective)

Materials: pictures from both the Middle West and the Southwest

TEACHER

STUDENTS

Preview

1. Relate today's lesson to previous lessons on the Middle West geography to the geography of the Southwest. How are these two regions the same? How are they different? We can answer these questions by comparing these regions.

2. State that the goal is to learn how to COMPARE.

3. Write "COMPARE" on the board.

4. Ask for words that have the same meaning as comparing.

similar, likening  
contrasting,  
common attributes  
critical attributes

5. Define comparing.

To find similarities and differences between things.

6. Give and ask for examples.

Compared our shoes  
Envelope activity where we matched things  
Compare parents to children  
See if one has enough money to buy gum.

Explain and Demonstrate

7. List the following on the chalk board:

Steps for Comparing:

- a. Look.
- b. Choose a feature.
- c. See if that feature is the same or different for all the things.
- d. Tell a similarity or difference.
- e. Continue the process

(A Helpful Rule to Follow -- Choose a big (obvious) feature at first.)

8. Hold up a picture from each region  
How are these regions different?  
The same?
- Same: outdoor scene  
no people  
Different: color, tree-treeless
9. Walk through steps comparing the geographic pictures. Accept students' help as volunteered. Explain why each step is executed.

Review

10. Cover up list of steps and have students explain in their own words what was done and reasons for doing each step.
- a. Look at things
  - b. Choose a feature in one.
  - c. See if it is same in the other
  - d. Tell if similar or different.
  - e. Continue the process

Apply

11. Give two pictures to each group of students.
- Possible characteristics:  
weather conditions,  
natural clothing needs
- Using the steps and rule just explained and demonstrated, compare the pictures.
12. Have the students give some of the differences and similarities of their pictures.

Reflect

13. Review steps in comparing.
- a. What are some steps?
    - a. Look at things  
Find a feature of one.  
See if it is in the other.  
Tell if similar or different.
    - b. To see if two or more things are equal.  
To help choose between two or more things.
  - b. When should we compare?
14. Make a poster showing the steps in comparing and hang it up

This is an example for structuring an introductory lesson to help students learn the skill of *comparing*. This is but one of many short lessons needed in a grading period to move students through the three stages: an introductory lesson, guided practices, and independent use. There are many excellent books and articles that teachers can use as frameworks for designing their own lessons to introduce and develop these five action verbs. (See additional references)

In conclusion, research shows (Barry, 1991, 1997) that the skills of sequencing and classifying must be developed by the end of second grade in order for students to read and comprehend for problem solving and decision-making. If teachers want their students to master the application of these five action verbs, then Barry Beyer (1991, and 1997) and Art Costa (1991) stress the need to formally teach these skills as an integral part of teachers' lessons. The immediate benefit is that students will perform better on the short and extended format questions on the Proficiency and CBE Tests. The lifetime benefit will be mastery of the skills necessary for problem solving and decision-making.

## Notes

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<sup>2</sup>“Liberating Minds: Helping Students Take Charge of Their Thinking.” *ASCD Education Update* 40, 5: 1.

<sup>3</sup>Beyer, B. K. (1997). *Improving Student Thinking*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

<sup>4</sup>*Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program*. (1994). Ohio Department of Education.

<sup>5</sup>Beyer, B. K. (1991). *Teaching Thinking Skills: A Handbook for Secondary School Teachers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

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# **Social Studies Standards: Becoming a Master Teacher**

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**O**hio social studies teachers now have the opportunity to be recognized by their schools, communities, state, and nation as master teachers. Recently the National Council for the Social Studies announced the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). NCSS has discontinued its Advanced Certification Program and the NCSS Board of Directors now recommend that social studies teachers apply for NBPTS certification. A special panel presentation about these standards was offered at the NCSS Annual Conference in Anaheim and other NBPTS sessions have been and will be offered at the national and state levels (Helms, 1999).

## **National Board for Professional Teacher Standards Propositions**

National Board for Professional Teacher Standards has developed a set of five propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Teachers are members of learning communities

Educators who believe that these propositions are true should consider National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification and assessment. The successful candidate must hold a baccalaureate from an accredited institution of higher education, have completed three years of successful teaching, and must

hold a valid certificate (license) in the state in which the candidate is teaching (*What Every Good Teacher Should Know*, 1998).

NBPTS certification is new, having just begun in the 1998-99 academic year. The process is a challenging one, and parts of the process may be revised by the NBPTS. The leaders of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are classroom teachers. Facilitator training for university faculty and teachers is available at several National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Facilitators Institutes (*Making Good Choices*, 1998). The author of this article is a trained NBPTS facilitator, and is a Principal Investigator at Wright State University for a NBPTS grant to work with teacher candidates.

### **Social Studies Certification**

Ohio social studies teachers have a number of options to consider for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

- Early Childhood/Generalist (ages 3-8)
- Middle Childhood/Generalist (ages 7-12)
- Early Adolescence Generalist (ages 11-15)
- Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History (ages 11-15)
- Adolescence through Young Adult/Social Studies-History (ages 14-18+)

In addition, teachers who hold multiple certification areas may apply for multiple National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certificates. It is recommended that a teacher select one NBPTS area per year since it would be very difficult to work on multiple certification areas in the same year. It is also unlikely that O.D.E. would fund study on more than one certificate area annually. (Funding is discussed below).

### **The Social Studies Certification Process**

Social studies assessments are based on the NBPTS Social Studies-History Standards (*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Social Studies-History Standards*, 1998). Pages 59-61 of *Social Studies-History Standards* provides a listing of the authors. Teachers who have completed the NBPTS certification process express a good deal of satisfaction with the process. The essential concept is “completion” and not “certification.” NBPTS emphasizes that teachers will improve by completing the process. Not all teachers will be certified. Many teachers feel that the process is equivalent to work required for a master’s degree.

There are several sources of introductory information for social studies teachers about the NBPTS process, including sessions at OCSS and NCSS, WWW resources, and directly from NBPTS. A visit to the ODE website at <http://www.ode.ohio.gov> will provide a listing of orientation sessions. A visit to the NBPTS site at <http://www.nbpts.org> will provide application materials. The author’s page ([http://www.ed.wright.edu/fac\\_staff/helms/rhelms.htm](http://www.ed.wright.edu/fac_staff/helms/rhelms.htm)) also has more

information about the NBPTS. *The Guide to National Certification (1999)* is recommended for all who would apply for certification. The URL for the NBPTS is <http://www.nbpts.org>, and the phone number for the NBPTS is 1-800-22-TEACH.

NBPTS social studies assessments consist of two major parts: the portfolio entries and the assessment center exercises.

## **The Portfolio**

Social studies teachers PK-12 have several certification options. This discussion will focus on the Adolescence and Young Adulthood Social Studies-History portfolio. The other available certification areas are similar. The portfolio consists of several different entries, each of which asks for direct evidence of some aspect of the teacher's work and an analytical commentary on that evidence. The portfolio requires four different classroom-based entries, two of which ask candidates to videotape classroom interactions (both a large group and a small group video entry is required), and two of which ask candidates to collect student writing samples. In all four classroom-based entries, teachers are required to write a detailed analysis of the teaching reflected in the videotape or student work. While a descriptive narrative is required, the candidate is also expected to write a reflective analysis of the teaching practice.

The portfolio has six major components: teaching reasoning through writing, making real world connections, facilitating whole-class discussions, fostering small group interactions, documenting accomplishments with the professional community, and documenting outreach to families and the community. Videotape entries are required for facilitating whole-class discussions and for fostering small group interactions. The two videotape entries must be 20 minutes in length and editing is not permitted. The candidate must focus on different lessons and on different classes for each student entry and for each videotape entry. The portfolio entries have been designed to correlate with actual classroom practices. While new, the entries have been field tested by the NBPTS. It is estimated that over 100 hours will be required by the candidate to complete the portfolio (The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards. *Adolescent and Young Adulthood Social Studies and History*).

Documentation of the entries is required. The candidate must document his or her work outside the classroom with families and the larger community, with colleagues, and the larger profession. The emphasis is on the quality of the contributions rather than the quantity, and candidates must show evidence of their accomplishments and then comment on the impact and importance of those accomplishments.

The following is an inventory of portfolio entries:

Teaching reading through writing

Making real world connections

Facilitating whole class discussions

Fostering small-group interactions  
Collaboration with the professional community  
Outreach to families and communities

Each of these areas must be described, documented, and verified by other teachers or by people familiar with the entry submission. NBPTS defines descriptions as a retelling of the classroom lesson. Analysis is defined as providing concrete evidence which demonstrates the significance of the evidence submitted. Reflection (which is always more difficult) is thinking through decisions employed to instruct the lesson. It is important in reflections to indicate how future instruction might be improved. Analysis and reflection may overlap, but the focus of analysis is to provide reasons and interpretations. Analysis addresses how and why.

The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards Facilitators Institutes strongly stresses the development of a support system for candidates. An introductory orientation session of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Institutes explores “What’s in the Box?” “The Box” is about the size of two shoe boxes. The content varies with the type of national certification desired by the teacher candidate. Social studies teachers are strongly advised to attend an official orientation session. These sessions must be conducted by National Board Certified Teachers. Following the orientation session, the teacher should immediately contact the Ohio Department of Education for funding support. It may be possible (but unlikely) that a teacher may receive funding from ODE if an orientation session is not attended.

The Portfolio recommends a five month time line. Typically, a candidate begins this cycle in the spring of the year. However, NBPTS will consider applications through December of any year. The first month is devoted to gaining an awareness of the process and making application for formal acceptance by NBPTS. In the second month candidates receive “the Box.” After examining the portfolio materials and reading the social studies standards, the candidate should plan a calendar for the next several months, have student sign NBPTS release forms, and begin working on practice exercises. The candidate should also begin work on the Communication Log in the Portfolio. In the third month candidates continue entries and documentation, and in the fourth month they videotape entries and compose documentation for these entries. In the fifth month final drafts of all entries are completed, materials photocopied and “the Box” is sent to NBPTS for assessment.

### **The Assessment Center**

The assessment center portion of the process consists of a full day of assessment exercises that are focused on pedagogical content knowledge. This written assessment asks candidates to respond to specific prompts, some of which may be based on stimulus materials that are sent out to candidates well in advance of the assessment center date. The stimulus materials include photos, news articles, political cartoons, and graphics. The prompts for the first exercise include topics in social studies and history, a classroom scenario, and instructions on design of a

lesson plan. The prompts for the second exercise focus on the candidate's ability to analyze and evaluate student work with primary documents. Exercise three requires the candidate to design several interdisciplinary learning experiences that address multiple learning styles. Exercise four focuses on the candidate's ability to analyze professional readings. The exercises may be simulations of situations to which teachers typically must respond or explorations of particular questions on pedagogical content topics and issues.

The assessment center day typically consists of four 90-minute sessions, with different prompts or questions administered during each session. The four standards assessed follow: depth of knowledge, breadth of knowledge, professional readings, and instructional design. The assessment center exercises are administered at more than 230 testing centers across the United States during the summer on a schedule that typically allows several weeks' availability for each certificate. Master teachers who are teaching similar content and the same student development level assess the portfolio entries. All entries are assessed part to whole. A portfolio will undergo multiple assessments. Parts of the portfolio may "pass", while other sections may not. A candidate has three years to resubmit components of the portfolio.

### **The Application Fee**

The application fee for the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification process is \$2,000. Why does the assessment cost \$2,000 and where does the money go? In anticipation of these questions, NBPTS has posted a FAQs site at <http://www.NBPTS.ORG/nbpts/about/candfaq.html>. The primary reason for the fee is to compensate peers for scoring teacher entries. Performance-based assessment is a lengthy and complex process. A primary feature of NBPTS certification is that this process is certification by peers. Teachers are clearly central to planning, implementing, developing, and modifying the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards policies and procedures. While universities may assist in the certification process, only NBCTs assess NBPTS candidates. Thus the rigor of the process is judged by other social studies teachers. Only NBCTs may offer orientation sessions; however, many social studies teachers may become NBPTS assessors by attending assessor scoring institutes. The assessment occurs during the summer months, and a \$100 per day honorarium is provided. Assessment centers are at several locations in the U.S., and the assessment period ranges from five to fifteen days. Ohio social studies teachers do not need to be NBCTs in order to assess. Please visit the website if interested in assessment opportunities.

If a teacher pays the assessment fee and then must withdraw a refund is possible. Refund requests which are made prior to the portfolio due date of the cycle will be honored minus a \$325 processing fee. No refunds can be made after the portfolio due date. Candidates who pay the full assessment fee and submit a portfolio, but discover after the portfolio due date that they will be unable to complete the process during that assessment cycle, will have to pay the retake fee for any portfolio entries or assessment center exercises not completed during the

initial attempt.

## **The Ohio Department of Education**

The state of Ohio is strongly supportive of the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards process. At this time the Ohio Department of Education will fund the \$2,000 application fee for the first 450 qualified teachers applying for the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification. In addition, there is current discussion by the Ohio Education Association to increase the number of funded teachers. As an additional incentive, O.D.E will pay \$2,500 stipends annually for a period of ten years to those teachers achieving certification. This means an additional pay increase of \$25,000. Several local school districts have negotiated additional salaries to successful National Board for Professional Teacher Standards candidates. Another incentive is the concept of “license portability.” Several states have agreed to accept National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification as acceptable for teachers moving into the new states. See the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards website for current information on license portability. Interested Ohio educators should contact Rae Harriott-White or Jeanine Ellis at ODE at 614-466-2761 or visit the website at <http://www.ode.ohio.gov>.

## **Ohio Universities as Facilitators**

Wright State University is one of several Ohio Universities which offer facilities, course credit, and formal sessions for candidates for National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification. The fall OCTEO conference in Columbus offers university faculty seminars and resources concerning O.D.E support for NBPTS certification. Ohio colleges and universities are an integral component in preparing educators for National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification (Helms & Herrelko, 1998). Both the Helms web site and the O.D.E. website provides a list of Ohio universities which offer assistance to NBPTS candidates.

It is not necessary to affiliate with a university in order to receive NBPTS certification. A primary benefit is that candidates have a “ready-made” support group while working with a university. NBPTS facilitator training insists that providing emotional support for the candidates is an essential component for universities. Current statistics indicate a much higher “pass rate” for university cohort groups than for teachers who are not part of cohort groups.

## **Procedures/Conclusion**

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification requires the reflective construction of a teaching portfolio. The record of evidence must be in written form and video form. The two video entries must be classroom based,

and the videos must support the written documentation. Generally the record of evidence is concerned with comprehension of higher level thinking skills, stimulation of the learning process, discovery and inquiry, intellectual engagement, and reflection (by both teacher and student.)

Another component in National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification is a full day at approved assessment center. The assessment center is computer based and typically consists of four ninety minute sessions.

Each portfolio entry and each assessment center activity will be carefully evaluated and scored. The scoring rubric is part of the initial materials provided to the candidates. Thus the components of the final score are the videotapes, student work samples and teacher comments, and the written responses which have been mailed to the assessment centers.

The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards national office is located in San Antonio, TX. This office has established varying dates for applications, portfolios, and assessment centers. Due date on portfolios will vary between April and June. Notification of certification will occur between November and December. Another essential concept is that of “banking.” Candidates who fail certain components are permitted to bank the “passed” components and have a period of three years to complete the final process.

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**Part II**

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**Social Studies Issues**

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# The Use of Children's Literature in the Middle School to Teach American Heritage

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Teachers in the middle grades are constantly seeking ways to engage, to inspire and to inform their students about the past. Technology, whether the filmstrips of yesteryear or today's video games, are generally accepted as an effective means to reach these objectives. Yet, this article seeks to demonstrate that a more traditional means remains a particularly desirable methodology for teaching children about people in other times and places. Whether a book is read aloud to a class; used by a cooperative group to gather data or given to an individual student to prepare a report, the printed medium remains a powerful means to teach children about the human experience.

## Support for Literature to Teach History

The value of using children's literature, or trade books, to teach social studies - and especially history - has been well established in professional literature. Krey (1998) identified "fifty-nine references advocating literature-based instruction and presenting data-based evidence concerning the effects of literature-based social studies teaching" (p. 9). Although some may point to Levstik's (1986) chapter on the teaching of history in *Elementary School Social Studies: Research as a Guide to Practice* as the seminal statement, endorsement of the practice began far earlier. For example, Leonard Kenworthy (1962,1973,1986), in his popular methods books for elementary and middle school teachers provided lists of recommended children's books. Given the popularity of the Expanding Horizons approach at that time, his fifth grade bibliographies focused on U. S. History. Needless to mention, he recommended the use of historical fiction. The position was most recently promoted by the well known writer of trade books, Christopher Collier (1999), in a publication of The National Council for History Education (NCHE). In fact, from its inception

as the Bradley Commission (1988), NCHE has promoted fiction and nonfiction trade books to teach history.

After securing funds to promote the teaching of history, the NCHE published *The History Colloquium Manual: Energizing Professional Development for History Teachers* (1994). It was devoted to making history more appealing to children and included annotated bibliographies containing works of fiction and nonfiction, as well as an exemplar lessons for using nonfiction. California, which has a history-based state social studies curriculum, has periodically published the annotated bibliographies of books, *Literature for History-Social Science: Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* (1991, 1993, 1995) to supplement its course of study. The National Council for Social Studies also has demonstrated its support of using literature to teach social studies by its publications of annotated bibliographies: Silverbank's work (1992) focuses on historical fiction and Krey's (1998) contains annotated bibliographies for each of the ten NCSS strands, including the history strand, "Time, Continuity, and Change."

### **Case for Response Activities**

There also appears to be an audience for bibliographic descriptions of books for historic eras that include response activities as recent articles on the Civil War and Reconstruction (Sandmann & Ahern, 1997) in the *Middle School Journal* and the Great Depression and World War II (Ahern and Sandmann, 1997) in *Social Studies* would indicate. This is not surprising as editors of professional journals often state in "Notes to Contributors" that their readers want specific methods of increasing student achievement - which is the purpose of describing response activities to books.

This is not to say that teachers are unable to conceive of response activities, but rather even the most professionally involved want to consider many options. It is with that assumption that this article is based. For too many social studies teachers, how to use a trade book is probably limited because of their own previous experiences. So, what do teachers typically do? Reflecting on common practice of history teachers at universities, it is predictable that classroom teachers will read an excerpt from a work of nonfiction or fiction. This is a good practice, but reading excerpts is only one use of this resource and there are various other options, a number of which will be illustrated following the summary of each book. For example, few teachers, in the middle grades, are likely to read aloud a picture book, despite the fact that many picture books are more appropriate for a middle grade (or older) audience than for younger students. Because these books can be read in their entirety in one sitting, they can have enormous impact on student learning. Assigning a biography or other informational text is, of course, a commonplace book assignment for history teachers; less common is the use of fiction, despite as previously mentioned, the practice is strongly recommended in the professional literature.

## Use of Response Activities and Literature

Additional instructional options are useful. Even in urban areas smaller than Toledo, Ohio, it is not difficult for a teacher to ask a public librarian to collect sufficient numbers of the same text so that children can read silently and to one another in small groups. Or, all students might have their own copy if the history teacher takes advantage of resources well known to language arts teachers. Catalogs and book clubs published by Scholastic, Trumpet, or Troll provide copies of popular works in paperback edition at a modest price. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a more definitive characteristic of middle schools than the practice of integration, or an easier practice to implement by simply connecting social studies and language arts through literature.

In middle schools that employ cooperative learning groups, it is not uncommon for an entire class to be studying a historic period and children in different groups to be provided with the same book to read and discuss; then, each group's conclusions or highlights are then reported to the class. A recent newsletter of the National Middle School Association (1999), although not focusing on history, outlines a complex instructional model called Literature Circles in which groups of children assume different roles in their group's study of a published work. For example, one child is responsible for writing questions that will facilitate discussion while another selects important passages within the reading for the group to discuss. Another is responsible for finding a connection between the content of the reading and something outside the text.

In the remainder of this article, we provide summaries, of and suggestions for, using a variety of trade books specifically chosen to support the learning outcomes for Ohio's American Heritage Strand of the citizenship proficiency test. The criteria for selecting the books was simple; the book must be current (published in 1997 or later), historically accurate, appealing to middle grade students, and lend itself to extension activities. Most of all though, it had to be "a good read!" Following the summaries of each book, we designed response activities written as ideas to be read directly by students.

It was our intent not only to provide teachers with new and recommended works of literature to teach American Heritage, but also to suggest ways an individual student - or for that matter a group or class - could become engaged with a book and the historical content, thus providing a powerful context for making history meaningful in contemporary life.

## Annotated Bibliography and Response Activities

Denberg, B (1998). *The Journal of William Thomas Emerson: A Revolutionary Patriot*, Boston, Massachusetts. New York: Scholastic, ISBN 0-590-31350-9

Finally, Scholastic has extended its "Dear America" series of books to include journals written by middle grade males, the "My Name is America" series. William

Thomas Emerson loses his family to a lightning strike when he is ten. He is bound to a childless neighboring couple, but Will stays only two years before he has had enough of his alcoholic master. He heads to Boston where he finds shelter and a sense of belonging with a woman who owns and runs a tavern. There, Will eventually finds himself a part of the activities of the "Committee." As with all the other journals in this series, an historical note concludes the text, along with captioned illustrations.

1. Write an article for the *Gazette*, after doing further research on any of the events referred to in the text.
2. The Fitch sisters are "warned" (see page 30) about continuing to sell British goods. Do they have a right to do so? Write a letter to the editor, either supporting the Fitch sisters' actions or the "Citizen's" position.
3. Using the "historical note" at the end of the text, create a timeline of events.

**Blumberg, R. (1998) *What's the Deal? Jefferson, Napoleon, and the Louisiana Purchase*. Washington, D. C: National Geographic Society. ISBN 0-7922-7013-4**

Rhoda Blumberg is a prolific and effective writer of history for early and later adolescents. This massive acquisition of land clearly was a turning point in our history. There are as many complex twists and turns in this history as there would be in any murder mystery. This is a good source for studying historical perspective.

1. Betty Franks of Maple Heights High School has her students study this period and compare ways the story of the Purchase might be told by different historians—i.e. the perspective of a Haitian, French or American. Choose one and write the "story" from that viewpoint
2. She also asks her students to debate to whom would they erect a statue: Napoleon, L'Ouverture or Jefferson? If not a statue, what would be an appropriate monument?

**Myers, W. D. (1998) *Amistad: A Long Road to Freedom*. New York: Penguin Putnam. ISBN 0-525-4590-7.**

One of the most dramatic events in America's sad history of enslavement of some of her people is well told in this brief (94 pages) work of nonfiction. Ohio teachers will appreciate the presence of a time line as well as a map of the voyages.

1. Do a Venn diagram comparing the film *Amistad* (available in video stores) with the book. Concentrate on information provided as well as perspective taking.
2. Review each of the transgressions experienced by the four children. Write a letter of apology to the children for what was done to them. In your letter suggest a way that what they experienced should not be forgotten. As a group decide on what would be an appropriate way of remembering and preventing this type of experience.
3. Select five persons in the book and do a literary report card—be sure to

include “teachers comments.”

**Ruby, L. (1999). *Steal Away Home*. New York: Aladdin. ISBN 0-689-82435-1**

Literally, Dana finds a skeleton in the closet, and so an investigation of a death which occurred more than 130 years ago begins. The journal which Dana finds in the same room provides many of the answers. She discovers that her house was once part of the Underground Railroad and the mysterious “guest” was Lizbet Charles, a conductor and former slave. Ruby skillfully unfolds the past through alternating chapters. Dana, her friends, and the authorities attempt to solve the puzzle of who the skeleton is and how she died, and this is juxtaposed with the historical information.

1. Read *Two Tickets to Freedom: The True Story of William and Ellen Craft, Fugitive Slaves* (Freedman, 1993, Scholastic), a book which provides greater detail about the escape of Ellen and William Craft. Then, reread Ruby’s version of their escape on pages 83 to 86. Did Ruby portray their place in history accurately? Write a short paper, verifying or clarifying the details.

2. Do research on the major routes escaping slaves used, either finding or creating a map. Then, write a paper explaining why these routes would have been the best ones, given current population patterns, possibilities of transportation, and geographical patterns.

3. How involved were Ohioans in the Underground Railroad? Prepare a report on Ohio’s involvement.

**Paulsen, G. (1998). *Soldier’s Heart*. New York: Delacorte. ISBN 0-385-32498-7**

Subtitled, “Being the story of the enlistment and due service of the boy Charley Goddard in the First Minnesota Volunteers,” this historical novel chronicles the making of a “soldier’s heart.” Paulsen describes the evolution of such a concept, which currently might be called post-traumatic stress disorder, and compares it to “shell shock” of World War I, and “battle fatigue” of World War II. Fifteen-year-old Charley, eager to enlist in the “shooting war” which seems as enticing as the circus, learns quickly that war is not as exciting and wonderful as all the drums and songs, posters and slogans made it appear.

1. Charley believes that “to be a man,” he needs to enlist. How else might he have defined himself as “a man”? Write a letter to Charley convincing him NOT to enlist, providing powerful examples of alternative ways to “prove” himself.

2. Identify at least three cause and effect relationships related to the war, such as Cause: scarce resources, (such as food) means that Effect: coffee is made from burned oats. Create a poster highlighting these ideas, being as specific as possible using details from the text.

3. Choose one of the major events of the book and write a letter home as if you were Charley, relaying the information to loved ones.

4. With 15 other classmates, read Paul Fleischman’s *Bull Run*, as it can be easily read in a Reader’s Theater fashion.

5. Paulsen’s opening line is “War is always, in all ways, appalling.” Support

this statement, using evidence from the text. If possible, use evidence from other major wars in which America has participated: Revolutionary War, French and Indian War, War of 1812, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Gulf War.

6. Make a timeline of the battles in which young Charley fought.

**Taylor, M. (1999). *The Well*. New York: Scholastic. ISBN 0-439-05652-7**

Like Taylor's other short novels, *The Well* packs a powerful punch—perhaps the most gripping of all. During a drought, the Logan family—ever generous—willingly shares the water from their well with all, even their white, prejudiced neighbors. While the adults are capable of walking this precarious societal line of the era, hot-headed Hammer, the eldest Logan son, finds it difficult to handle Charley Simm's taunting of them simply because they are black.

1. Read any of the other books about the Logan family: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; *The Road to Memphis*; *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*; *Song of the Trees*, *Mississippi Bridge*, or *The Friendship*. Compare the actions of the Logan family in any these situations with their actions in this book.

2. List the reactions of the characters in this novel which would no longer be tolerated by our society, thereby showing that change occurs in history.

3. As if you were David, write a letter to your father, explaining what happened when he tried to help Charley get the wheel back on his wagon.

**Biermann, C. (1998). *Journey to Ellis Island*. Illustrated by Laurie McGaw. New York: Hyperion. ISBN 0-7868-0377-0**

A tribute to her father, Biermann describes her father's experience when he traveled to Ellis Island in 1922. A boy of eleven, Julius, his mother, and seven-year-old sister Esther board the *Rotterdam* in Rotterdam, Holland for their historic journey to New York. Having escaped from Russia, they intend to join Julius' brother in America, but not before Julius loses a finger to a stray bullet. This accident almost keeps Julius from being permitted to enter America, where strict rules about persons who might become "liabilities" were followed by the doctors and social workers who made decisions on Ellis Island. Beautiful photographs and illustrations of the Island, both then and now, grace the oversized pages of this picture book, and tell the "rest" of Julius and his family's story, including Julius' visit to Ellis Island on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the "run around the Island" that won him entry into the "golden country."

1. Read one of the other books about Ellis Island listed at the end of the book.

2. From further reading, create a chart, by decades—1900-1910; 1911-1920, etc., of persons who entered America through Ellis Island.

3. Choose one decade and create a chart which details which countries people emigrated from.

4. Why did so many people come to America at the beginning of the twentieth century? Create a cause and effect chart showing as many different reasons

as possible.

**Viola, H. J. (1998). *It Is a Good Day to Die: Indian Eyewitnesses Tell the Story of the Battle of the Little Bighorn*. New York: Crown. ISBN 0-517-70912-0**

This unusual work gathers together descriptions of the battle by Native Americans. The excerpts are short and are an easy read for middle school students. They are unique resources as they were written at a time in which the Native Americans were hesitant to share their feelings with someone who could do harm to them.

1. Assume that the Native Americans had won the Indian war. Assume their character and write their description of the battle.

2. The Native Americans often had rivalry between tribes and thus this facilitated their defeat. Prepare a speech to one of the tribes that was acting as scouts telling them of the consequences of their behavior.

3. The worst defeat of the American Army was not a Little Bighorn. Research the defeat of General St. Clair in the Ohio Territory Indian Wars.

**Tillage, L. W. (1997). *Leon's Story*. Pictures by Susan Roth. New York: Farrar Straus, Giroux. ISBN 0-374-34379-9.**

Oral history projects are not uncommon in the middle school; however, someone, in this case a school custodian, tells his story to a group of students noting that all of the ugly incidents of racism is not that uncommon. Unfortunately, a parent hearing of her child's experience chose to record Leon's life. This act has given us a very accessible resource for middle and senior high school students learn about racism.

1. Your family may not have experienced the indignities of Leon but their life deserves to be recorded. Do your family's history.

2. Find someone who is older than Leon. Ask them if they have any memories of legal or "understood" racism. Ask them if they had seen "White's only" signs. Ask them if they can recall people of color not being allowed to live in certain neighborhoods. Ask them if they can recall indignities exhibited toward people of color.

**Krull, K. (1998). *Lives of the Presidents: Fame, Shame (and What the Neighbors Thought)*. Illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co. ISBN 0-15-200808-X**

Written in a style that would not be unfamiliar to Joy Hakim, these short, one- and two-page biographies of the Presidents, should be as appealing to the teacher as they contain the significant aspects of the term of office, as to the students because they also include matters of, i.e. Clinton's food (bananas spread with peanut butter) and music loves (Presley, Black, gospel) are noted. As for... "While admitting privately that he has had affairs, he and Hillary have publicly acknowledged commitment to preserving their marriage despite difficulties. Clinton can make fun of his own reputation: "That's a good-looking mummy.... If I were a single man, I might ask that mummy out, when the 'ICE Maiden' of prehistoric times was discovered."

1. The "Man on the White Horse" is a theory of the causes of historic events. It argues that one individual causes events. Review the articles on the major presidents and argue that the author of this work believes in and documents that thesis.
2. Using a volume of Joy Hakim's *A History of US*, create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the two history writers.
3. "Behind every Great Man is a Greater Woman". Review the chapters and argue that the author appears or does not appear to believe in this thesis.

**Hansen, J. (1998). *Women of Hope: African Americans Who Made a Difference*. New York: Scholastic. ISBN 0-590-93973-4**

In an astonishingly beautiful and thoughtful work, Hansen has written the portraits of thirteen African American women who have made a difference in our world. Not one of these women was content only to make it better for "herself" or "her" people. These were women who crusaded for justice for all. A black and white photograph accompanies each biographical sketch. This book is a powerful tribute to all: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the Delaney Sisters, Septima Poinsette Clark, Ella Josephine Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ruby Dee, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Marian Wright Edelman, Alice Walker, Alexa Canady, and Mae C. Jemison. These women are role models for us all. As Walker states, "It's so clear that you have to cherish everyone . . . every soul is to be cherished."

1. The women whose accomplishments are highlighted in this book made contributions across various disciplines such as medicine, law, theater, literature, and science. More "women of hope" are listed at the end. Choose one and write a portrait of her achievements, just as Hansen has done.
2. Make a list of other noteworthy women in our history, particularly those of other cultures, who have "overcome obstacles of race and gender, and have by their examples and efforts given us courage and hope." Categorize them by achievement, as Hansen does.
3. Choose one person from the list created above and write a portrait. Create a "Hall of Fame," sharing your knowledge with others.

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# Integrating Primary Source Documents Into the Classroom

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**I**ntegrating primary source documents into a social studies class easily piques students' interest in history. Rather than reading abstract ideas in a textbook, students read a letter or diary entry about a real person's experiences in a situation. Textbooks have limited space and do not adequately cover different topics, or tend to dumb down ideas without allowing students to reach their own conclusions. Primary sources can help increase student interest in a particular topic, and also invoke questions that the students otherwise would not have asked. Letters, diaries, or other first hand accounts will lead students to ask more questions of the author and to search for more answers.

## Introducing Primary Sources to Students

To get students to begin thinking about primary sources, ask them what types of primary source documentation exists about them. Do students have drivers' licenses? A card that permits them to rent videos at the local video store? Is there a yearbook for the school? Even for elementary students, there are primary sources about their lives.

Although they may not be aware of it, a birth certificate and a social security number is issued within the first few months of being born. Also, if their parents keep a baby book with mementos, they might find newspaper clippings, a birth announcement, and pictures from when they were young. The family scrapbook is an excellent example of a primary source about the student's family and often times this primary source will span many generations of a family. Once students begin to see connections between primary sources and themselves, they can begin to understand that every individual has an impact on history.

Students should quickly see the value of primary sources for historians.

What do these things tell us about a person? Historians are interested at looking at groups of people as well as the impact of an individual on society. Not every person can grow up to influence a nation as profoundly as George Washington or Thomas Jefferson did. However, without the thousands of people who were living in the United States at the time when Washington or Jefferson were president, neither of these men would be famous. How did workers, farmers, women, children, ministers, or slaves live during the time of Washington or Jefferson? How are these people similar to people today? How are they different? Not everyone has a house such as Mount Vernon or Monticello open to the public for tours, or has volumes written by scholars analyzing and interpreting their lives. Letters and diaries, if they exist, left behind by everyday people give better clues about what life was really like for the majority of people.

One conclusion that students may reach is the difficulty of understanding the history of groups who left no written records. Cultures that left no written records are considered prehistoric. This does not mean that the cultures were primitive. However, there is an added level of difficulty to scholars who want to study these cultures due to the lack of written records.

In Ohio, the prehistoric period does not end abruptly with the explorer Celeron. In 1749, Celeron De Bienville explored the area along the Ohio River and buried lead plates along the way claiming the land for France and also interacted with several American Indian groups living in the region. Gradually, as more explorers, traders, military personnel, missionaries, and eventually settlers moved into the Ohio Country, more is learned about the peoples who were living here.

One account of a move to Ohio comes from Walter Curtis in his *Recollections of Pioneer Life*. Walter was the son of Eleazer and Eunice Curtis, who moved to Ohio from Connecticut in 1791.

At Simerell's Ferry we sold the horses and one yoke of oxen with one wagon... purchased a flatboat about fifty feet long, half covered, in the bow of which we placed one yoke of oxen and some hogs. Aft, under cover, were the families and furniture. We drifted in too close to the Virginia shore when a tree hanging over the bank caught one of the projecting studs and tore a plank off and the water rushed in. My Father coughs up a feather bed and stuffed it into the hole. The women and children were put through hole made in the side of the boat for dipping up water and place on a canoe. <sup>1</sup>

Also, primary sources give students the opportunity to connect to the past. In the following letter, a student, Boyd, is studying at school in Hillsboro in 1844 and writes to his friend, Mary, in Cynthiana, Ohio, about how school is going.

...I have to study very hard for all my studies are very new and I think them very hard. I will give you a list of them but perhaps they won't appear difficult to you. Moral Science Astronomy Algebra Arithmetic

Botany and Grammar. We have to study two hours and a half outside school and six in school and I can tell you it keeps a person very busy indeed... I do believe it is never agoing to get summer it look so dreary to for it is snowing like everything and I am so cold back here I can not half write for my hands is so numb... show these line to no one and excus bad writing for I had to write under the desk. <sup>2</sup>

Most students can sympathize with Boyd in this selection. He feels overwhelmed by school, is waiting for summer and a break from school, and is writing a letter to a friend instead of studying.

### Analyzing the Document

When analyzing a document, there are several questions that need to be addressed. Who wrote the document? For what audience was it intended? What are the physical characteristics of the document? What date was it created? After students have examined the document for physical features as well the author and date, then they can begin to analyze it more closely. Actively have students discuss questions such as: list three (or more) things the author said that students think are important; why the document was written; list two (or more) things that the document tells students about what it was like in Ohio or the United States when this document was written; and lastly, have students ask a question of the author.

Since sources are not always reliable, students need must attempt to verify the information by comparing it to other sources. Is the document accurate or did the author have a certain agenda? Does the author have a personal bias?

The following two selections are from prisoners of war who were located in the prison on Johnson's Island in Lake Erie during the Civil War. One provides an officers' perspective; the other, insight into the treatment of enlisted men.

Debarking from the cars at Sandusky and walking, slipping, creeping and crawling to Johnson's Island by a night march on the ice, an exercise we never experienced before we reached the island and were herded in front of the prison gate, where the roll was called alphabetically, we standing in the bleak night winds of Lake Erie waiting each his turn. At last my name was called, I answered and entered; it was about ten oclock. I was being ushered in a crowd towards a hall holding 160 men when some one forked my left arm as if he would tear it from the socket... But "hush, hush" hearsely whispered Lieut. Kent, who had been captured at the Battle of Missionary Ridge over a year before, had seen by name in the list of prisoners, which had been telegraphed to the Sandusky Times which he had read in prison, had waylaid me that I might be kept out of the 160 Mess Hall and housed in his own, (for a prison) a comfortable room... They divided their blankets with me, their beans, their boiled hog's jowl and vinegar and I slept with them...<sup>3</sup>

Compare this with an enlisted man's account of prison life on Johnson's Island:

...we were settling into our temporary shelter and that is when we first experienced the horrors... of the damnable oppression. And as an introduction to what one may feel about prisoners I must say here that prison guards are generally made up of raw excitement when they are thrashing the flesh of a condemned prisoner... (the guards) are cowardly or too corrupt to be trusted at the front...<sup>4</sup>

Both accounts are accurate, but they give readers different insights as to a prisoner's life on Johnson Island. It is impossible to get all the facts from two accounts. Many more sources would need to be consulted in order to get an accurate overview of a prisoner's life. However, students could begin asking specific questions to the authors that they want answered. Why were some prisoners in temporary shelters? How long had the enlisted man been in the camp before he wrote the letter? Did a specific event trigger the second man's anger?

### **Accessing the Documents**

Often, it is difficult or impossible to get original letters or diaries from a library or institution. Repositories are charged with the responsibility of preserving documents while allowing for the public to access to them. Depending upon the condition of the document, copies sometimes can be made. Often, letters must be transcribed in the library. Also, with some types of materials, copyright is an issue. Before planning a visit to a repository, call first. Check with any institution to find out their rules and regulations for accessing and using their archives. Librarians can also be very helpful letting patrons know the types of collections that are housed there, as well as how best to access the information.

Some teachers have success by taking their class to go to the library to do research. When librarians know that a group is coming, they can prepare and pull documents that relate to a particular topic and that can be handled and examined by students. Also, many librarians will help students as they analyze documents.

When starting to look for documents, public libraries are a good place to start. Local historical societies, colleges, universities, and museums all keep documents too. Depending on the type of research, documents can be found in churches, schools, courthouses, and corporate offices. If you do not have success at one institution, ask the librarian to recommend another that might have what you are looking for. Also, many repositories place parts of their collections on the Internet.

### **Conclusion**

Finding primary sources relevant to classroom curriculum can be difficult at first, but the reward is great. Leading students to discover information on their own helps to create excitement in the classroom. Primary sources can connect

students to history in a way that textbooks cannot. Excitement is generated, interest is increased, and students can begin to realize that they too may have impact on history.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Curtis, Walter. *Recollections of Pioneer Life*. circa 1870. Vertical File Manuscript 1241, Ohio Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> Boyd (last name unknown). Letter to his friend, Mary. March 22, 1844. Vertical File Manuscript 1130, Ohio Historical Society.

<sup>3</sup> Hayden, S.A. *Account of Capture, Imprisonment, Release and Return Home*. 1928. Vertical File Manuscript 1018, Ohio Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> Hathaway, Leeland. Letter to his family in Kentucky. 1863. Vertical File Manuscript 1272, Ohio Historical Society.

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\*Weitzman, David. *My Backyard History Book*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1975.

\*Denotes that book is appropriate for students.

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# Computer Software for Classroom Use

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University of Toledo

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**C**omputers in the classroom are the norm and most students are extremely comfortable with this medium. Of course, software isn't cheap and neither is the expenditure of time to figure out which programs are worth using. This article reviews some of the more appealing social studies titles available free through my Educational Resource Center (ERC). A list of Internet accessible organizations that make software available free to teachers throughout Ohio is included at the end of this review. For those inclined to buy rather than borrow, the prices of each title vary greatly depending on the type of user license purchased. For the latest pricing information contact the publisher using the contact information provided at the end of each review. The software reviewed are older versions that will run on most systems used today. General guidelines for individual operating systems include:

*Windows:*

CPU with 486 processor  
8 MB of RAM  
Windows 3.1, or Windows 95

*Macintosh:*

Macintosh Power PC  
8 MB of RAM  
System 7.1 or later

## **International Inspirer**

When it comes to geography much can be learned on the computer screen. Geographical Information Systems have revolutionized how cartographers, marketing departments, and census takers do their jobs. However, there are some things that cannot yet be replaced by a monitor and a mouse, specifically the interpretation of a printed map and accompanying data tables. After logging onto International Inspirer the first action a student takes is to put pencil to paper and

record information gathered from specific maps that are included in four separate workbooks.

International Inspirer might best be considered as a scavenger hunt with heavy emphasis on developing critical planning skills. The goal of each session is to journey from one contiguous country to another by searching for specific economic, environmental, social, political, and geographic characteristics. These characteristics include topics such as greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, cigarette and alcohol consumption, AIDS, exports and imports, trade deficits and surpluses, GDP; culture and daily life, religion, divorce rates, educational spending, and more. All of this activity takes place with the goal of ending the journey in a country with characteristics that are specified by the game.

The students are encouraged to work in teams since there are multiple ways of planning the journey. In this scenario only one computer is needed for the entire class and its function is to record moves and keep score. The teacher is free to monitor and assist each group.

The program loads easily, but unlike some of the more intuitively designed interfaces found in word processing or internet browser software, reading the manual was necessary to figure out how the game was played. Included are a CD-ROM; seven sets of four different workbooks filled with maps, charts, and geographic information; a comprehensive Teacher's Guide, lesson plans, and reproducible worksheets.

Company: Tom Snyder Productions  
80 Coolidge Hill Road  
Watertown, MA 02172-2817  
1-800-342-0236, Fax 617-926-6222  
<http://www.teachtsp.com>

Suggested Age Group: Grade 6 or higher

## Capital Hill

*Capital Hill* is a role playing adventure that introduces the world of our legislative branch of government to one player at a time. The player acts as a freshman member of the House of Representatives, finding himself or herself on Capital Hill during the opening day of Congress. After being sworn in the player is given the chance to meet the other members of Congress before having to list a first choice in the office assignment lottery. After the formalities of this first day, the player gets down to the business of legislating. On every screen is a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) icon. By clicking on any command button the players can access all of the programs features including:

First Day - Get sworn in, meet their peers, and pick an office.

Orientation - Get an overview of Congress, everything from its organization,

to how a bill becomes law, its rules, and standard operating procedures.

Your Office - Visit the new office and get acquainted with its features.

Capitol Tour - Take a walking tour around the Capitol Building.

Power Play – Players test their political savvy and plays a dice game to become Speaker of the House!

Terms - Scroll through a list of definitions and study them.

Once a PDA command is chosen, there is even more to explore. There are a number of choices while in the office. Click the objects on the desk to see a blueprint of the office, review budget information, answer the telephone, review the legislative calendar, refer to information files, or contact other members of Congress. Throughout the day, regardless of what the player is doing, icons representing the real pressures of a congress member's life are presented as pop-up icons on the screen: a telephone to listen to messages from lobbyists and other members, a gavel signifying that an important vote is taking place, and an envelope to read mail from constituents.

Entirely self-contained on CD-ROM, *Capital Hill* loaded directly from the CD and did not crash once during the three hours it took to review it. While it does not come with lesson plans or a separate guide booklet, the software interface is intuitive and does not need explaining, even for the most computer phobic. Capitol Hill includes more than 45 minutes of video clips, and nearly five hundred photos, plus narration and original music. The one drawback is that information on members of Congress is dated and reflects the Congress as it was in 1993

Company: We2 Productions, LLC  
PO Box 628, Fairfax, CA 94978  
<http://www.we-2.com>

Suggested Age Group: Grade 7 and higher

## Exploring Ancient Cities

The software developer Sumeria and *Scientific American* magazine are the forces behind Exploring Ancient Cities, an interactive CD-ROM about four ancient civilizations; Petra, Teotihuacán, Pompeii, and the Bronze Age palaces of Crete. Articles that originally appeared in *Scientific American* are presented side by side with imagery of the cities in question. This CD shows hundreds of photos and a small amount of video of the original articles' subjects, such as Minoan writings, Teotihuacán murals, Pompeian frescoes, and Nabataean tomb architecture. Large scale geographic, and smaller scale city maps enable students to explore the streets of Teotihuacán, the houses of Pompeii, the craggy hills of Petra, and the coastal palaces of Crete. The most interesting video segment can be accessed in the Petra section of the CD. Listed on the menu bar as UPDATE it is an interview with the director of an organization of archaeologists that provides assistance on site at Petra.

For those who would rather not read through the forty plus pages of text accompanying each city, an option exists that activates narration by Academy Award winner Rod McKuen. Unfortunately, the voice was very difficult to understand, even after ensuring that the sound equipment was functioning properly. The accompanying music was clear and distinct, more like a stereo quality CD than the typical overly synthesized computer sound. Each musical segment was appropriate to the culture being presented and helped to set the mood.

Company: Scientific American/Sumeria Software Co.  
329 Bryant Street, Suite 3D  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
415-904-0800, Fax 415-904-0888  
<http://www.sumeria.com/PRODUCTS/ACITIES.HTM>

Suggested Age Group: Grade 6 and higher

### **Seven Days in August**

Best described as an electronic textbook, Time Warner's *Seven Days in August*, which MacWorld magazine named one of the ten best CD-ROMs of 1993, is a presentation of the seven days in August, 1961 when the Berlin Wall was constructed. It includes eyewitness accounts, profiles of those involved, a historical timetable, discussion by policy makers, and games that allow students to act as participants in the event.

The disk chronicles the story of the Berlin crisis through six main sections, which are organized into eight key "days"—the seven days of the 1961 crisis and the day the Wall fell in 1989. For example, "The Wall" provides a day-by-day account of the construction of the wall through photomontage and spoken narration. Two other sections - "Berliners" and "Berlin, Wisconsin" - use oral history interviews and old photos to contrast the lives of Germans at the heart of the crisis and Americans in a small town thousands of miles away.

"Home Front" provides seven, five- to six-minute "mini documentaries" in the form of slide shows on such diverse topics as backyard fallout shelters, the Freedom Riders, and Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris's race to beat Babe Ruth's home run record.

"Roundtable" presents a group of experts in a discussion of the events. Chaired by *Time's* Editor-at-Large, now U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott; the other participants are NPR senior analyst Daniel Schorr, (a reporter in Berlin during the crisis), Russian journalist Valentin Berezkhov; and government officials such as McGeorge Bundy, National Security Adviser to Kennedy during the crisis, and Egon Bahr, an adviser to Willy Brandt, the mayor of Berlin.

"Profiles" offers biographical information on the key players in the crisis such as JFK and East German leader Erich Honecker. This is the only segment that

is presented in written text rather than spoken narration. The texts of actual written documents such as Willy Brandt's letter to John F. Kennedy are included in an "archive," but they can only be accessed once in the entire presentation.

Two games, "First Lady of Fashion" and "For the Record" ask the players to serve as fashion adviser to Jackie Kennedy or demonstrate their knowledge of baseball trivia.

*Seven Days* stands out for its expensive production values (it reportedly cost more than a million dollars to develop in 1992), its ease of use, and its broad vision of what interactive software on the Berlin Crisis might entail. Rather than place the story in an exclusively diplomatic context, the program conveys a sense of what the summer of 1961 was like for ordinary people in both Germany and America.

Company: Warner New Media/Time Inc.  
3500 West Olive Ave.  
Burbank, CA 91505  
1-800-593-MEDIA

Suggested Age Group: Grade 9 and higher

### **CampOS Interactive Geography**

A few years ago a game titled *Myst* was popular. The premise of this game is that the player has fallen through time and space, and arrived in a different world. The visual feel of *Myst* is repeated in *CampOS Geography*. However, while the presentation is very polished and fun to view, the subject matter here is very straightforward and definitely of our world. Of all the titles reviewed for this article, it is the most structured. For better or worse, it is designed to be the primary instructor. Teachers are given the opportunity to set individual standards for each student. This information is used by the program to determine what level of sophistication to expose students to. The program's database tracks and saves each student's progress, which allows each student to proceed at his or her own pace. Students are first presented with a challenge test. If their score meets or exceeds the threshold set for that individual by the teacher, they can proceed directly to the main activity. If their score is under the threshold they are given a block of instruction before proceeding to the activity. Each section ends with the original challenge test.

The content is based on the National Geography Standards released in 1994. While not an exact match, the themes used in this program are consistent with the eighteen National Standards. The five themes are:

Location - Position on earth's surface  
Place - Physical and human characteristics  
Human/Environmental Interaction - Relationship within places

Movement - Humans interacting on earth  
Regions - How they form and change

The program includes animated graphics and realistic sound effects and a narrated picture glossary that helps build vocabulary and aids in comprehension. The interface is intuitive and easy to navigate; however, in order to get the most out of this package the user may have to spend some time digging through the manual. The tools provided to the teacher, including the ability to set standards and assess progress for each student, are significant and can only be accessed with a password set by the teacher.

Company: Pierian Spring Software  
5200 SW Macadam Ave.  
Portland, OR 97201  
1-800-472-8578; Fax 503-222-0771  
<http://www.pierian.com>

Suggested Age Group: Grades 6 and higher

### **Internet Sites**

The following Internet sites are starting points for assistance in the larger communities throughout Ohio. These organizations exist to help teacher's incorporate technology in the classroom and many of them provide free software rentals for teachers. Also included is a link to an organization that specializes in educational software reviews.

Cincinnati - <http://www.wcet.org/edserv/>

Columbus - <http://www.wosu.org/ie/education/k-12.html>

Bowling Green - <http://wneo.org/>

Toledo - <http://www.wgte.org/ERC.html>

Cleveland - <http://wviz.org/>

Statewide map of Educational Technology Agencies - <http://wneo.org/staff/edtech1.htm>

The SchoolNet Software Review Project (SSRP) - <http://www.enc.org/ssrp/>

# Ohio Council for the Social Studies

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City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Institution/School District \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Fax/Internet \_\_\_\_\_

Send check payable to OCSS to:

Jan Ribar  
2211 Arthur Avenue  
Lakewood, Ohio 44107

## **Become a More Active Member of OCSS**

**We are looking to fill several vacancies as a district representative. If interested, please contact OCSS President Tom Shreve at Orange High School or at the address located inside the front cover.**