



THE SOURCE

Civic Learning

A Publication of the California History-Social Science Project - Summer 2013



The Source

A Quarterly Publication of The California History-Social Science Project

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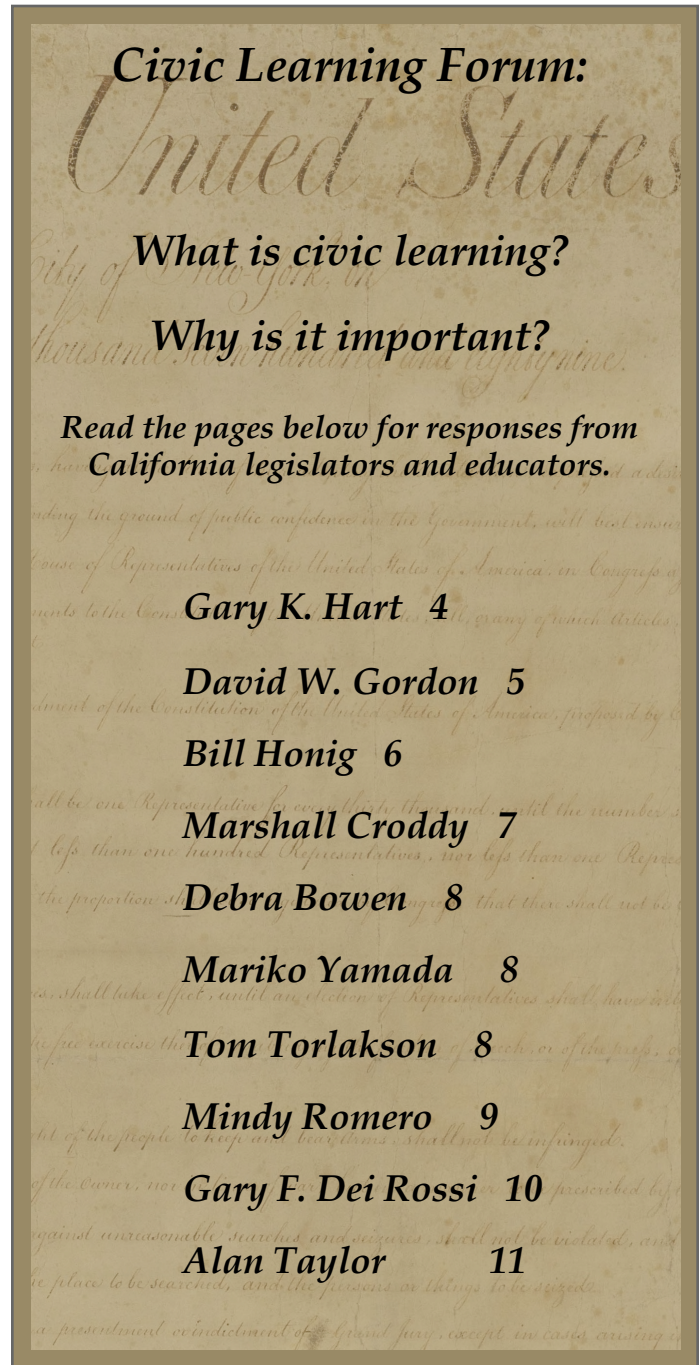
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Advisory Board News

Taylor Retires, Resendez Appointed



Alan Taylor

CHSSP Faculty Advisor **Alan Taylor** will retire from UC Davis in 2014 and join the faculty at the University of Virginia as the Thomas Jefferson Chair. A scholar of early American history, Taylor has published six books, including the Pulitzer Prize winning *William Cooper's Town*. Taylor has served as the CHSSP's Faculty Advisor for seven years, providing valuable guidance, insight, and support. We will miss him greatly! The CHSSP is very pleased to announce that **Andres Resendez**, Professor of History at UC Davis, has agreed to assume the statewide faculty advisor position; sharing the job with Alan Taylor for now and taking over full responsibility in 2014. Resendez is a scholar of borderland history in the Americas, and has been on the faculty at UCD since 1998. Resendez has published two books: *Changing National Identities at the Frontier* and *A Land So Strange*. His forthcoming book: *The Other Slavery*, explores the enslavement of indigenous peoples in North America from the time of Columbus to 1900. A respected scholar and teacher, Resendez has worked with K-12 teachers many times over the years. We anticipate accomplishing good work together, and want to welcome Resendez to the CHSSP family.



Andres Resendez

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What is Civic Learning?

"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

– Thomas Jefferson

In 2011, *Newsweek* magazine gave 1000 adult American citizens the US citizenship test. 38% of them flunked. Among the results:

- 70% didn't know what the Constitution was
- 81% couldn't identify one power of the federal government
- 67% didn't know that the US has a capitalist or market economy
- 59% didn't know who Susan B. Anthony was

As disappointing as these numbers are, they shouldn't surprise us. According to *Newsweek*, yearly shifts in civic knowledge have averaged less than one percent since the end of WWII. Many Americans don't know much about our government, our history, or our economy and their parents and grandparents apparently didn't either.

These are questions this special issue of *The Source* seeks to consider. We've expanded this edition in order to provide a written forum for our community and state educational leaders to share their views. As you read this edition, we encourage you to think about what civic learning means to you, your students, your school, and your community. We want you to share your thoughts with us and teachers around the state, by posting your feedback on our Facebook page, or writing to us (chssp@ucdavis.edu) so we can include your letter in our next edition. Do you try to promote civic learning and engagement in your classroom? If so, let us know what works. We look forward to hearing from you...

Platitudes are Killers

by Gary K. Hart

Civic learning concerns how our governments' work (local, state, national) and what our rights and responsibilities are as citizens. These seem like straightforward educational tasks but there are challenges:

- Governments today are more complicated than ever before and understanding how they work (and don't work) is not easy --- especially given the limited time available in the curriculum for civics.
- The level of cynicism about politics and government (why learn if it doesn't matter?) is very high, perhaps highest among young people.
- Platitudes are killers with students and civics is especially prone to platitudes ("every vote is important," "equal protection under the law," "freedom isn't free").



Gary Hart speaks to teachers at the State Capitol.

What is to be done to establish dynamic civic learning in our schools?

- Emphasize that government plays a major role in determining the outcome of issues that young people care about: good paying jobs, affordable higher education, safe neighborhoods, a planet not overwhelmed by global warming. Students need to understand that they have skin in the game.
- Students should get out of the classroom and into the community as part of their civics education. Identifying neighborhood problems, observing local government in action, contributing through community service are all activities that need to be essential parts of civic learning.
- As part of critical thinking in history classes, students ought to examine and appreciate government leaders' wise decisions (e.g. Hamilton's banking policies, congress enacting the Homestead Act) and effective citizen organizing efforts (e.g. Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Sierra Club). Our history can help foster a positive attitude about the American experience and American political institutions.

Our leaders today pay great attention to math and language arts skills development but neglect and take for granted civics education. Thomas Jefferson would be appalled at this state of affairs but some of the blame rests with us who have not better articulated nor fought for civics learning in our schools. The ball is in our court.

A former state legislator and Secretary of Education, Gary Hart is founder of the California State University Institute for Education Reform, and is currently a CHSSP Board Member and Chair of The Public Policy Institute of California.



We Must Bring Back Civic Education

by David W. Gordon

For the past several decades, our country has spent billions of dollars promoting democracy around the world. But what are we doing to promote it at home? Research shows that our young people only vaguely understand their rights as citizens. So, that means we must do a better job of teaching. If we don't, we are shortchanging our young people and America's future.

In recent months, retired Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor spoke at a civics summit in Sacramento. During her remarks, she called for quick action to step up civics teaching. Justice O'Connor called the state of civic education in America a "crisis" and it is hard to disagree. Results from NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) show that a majority of our students don't have a clear understanding of their civic rights, duties and responsibilities. Judges increasingly report that

potential jurors are often uneducated about how the judicial system operates, or how the Judicial Branch is even separate from the Executive and Legislative Branches of our government.

We need to renew our dedication to enhancing civic education in our schools. A major campaign is underway to rededicate our schools to better preparation of our students for their roles as citizens. Several bills have been introduced in the Congress and the California state legislature to help accomplish this.

We must make a quality civics education a part of every child's education at every level. Researchers have identified "promising approaches" that have demonstrated success in improving student civic competencies. Their recommendations include classroom and non-classroom approaches such as legislative hearings, mock trials, mock elections, and presidential decision-making activities to learn how the processes work. Students involved in these activities are more civic minded than students who are not involved.

Our students need to know what it means to develop good character and be a good citizen. They need to know how laws are made and enforced and how our government, economic, and political systems operate.

As educators, we are letting our children – and our country – down by not emphasizing civic education in public schools. We must make civic education a priority and make it a central theme in our overall curriculum. We also need to develop better assessments to evaluate what our young people know. We owe it to our kids and to our country.

Students need to know and appreciate how they can make their voices heard in our democracy. We need to make sure students understand that human rights must be respected and that they must have concern for the common good. That's what a solid civic education provides.

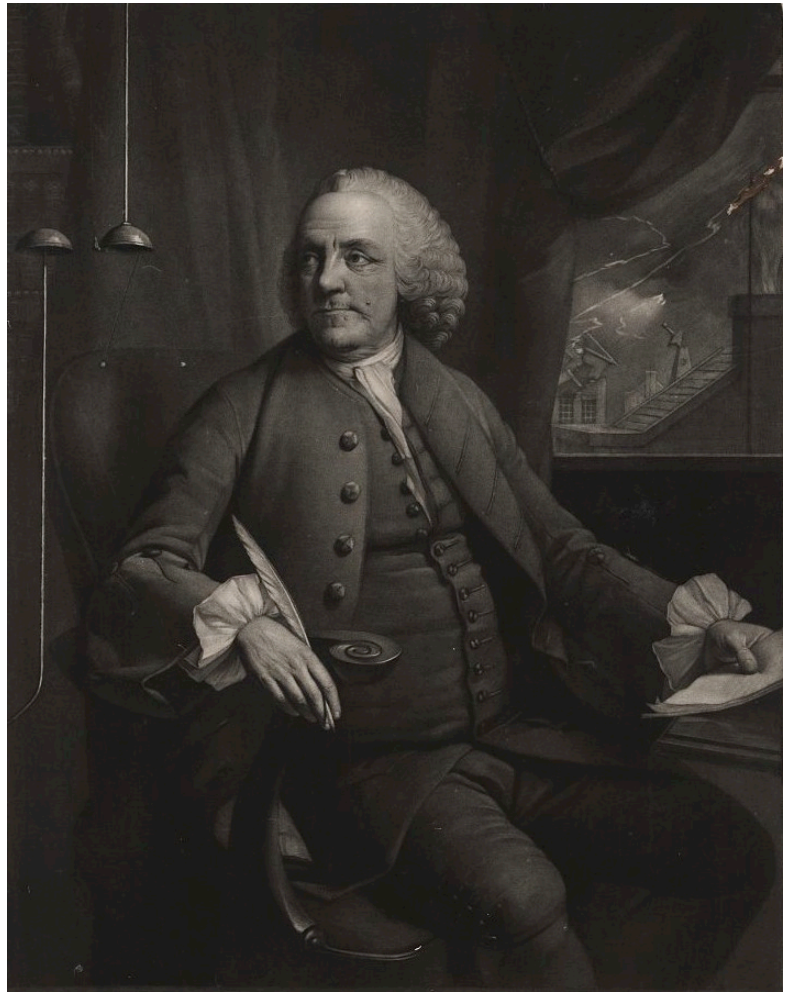


David W. Gordon is Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools

Democracy is Fragile

by Bill Honig

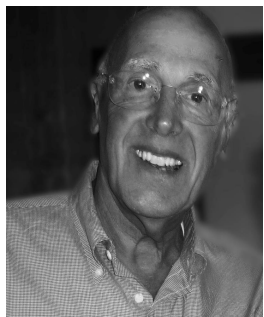
Ben Franklin, when asked by a woman after the Constitution was drafted, “Doctor, what do we have--a republic or a monarchy?” To which Franklin replied, “A republic if you can keep it.” His admonition is still sound. Democracy is fragile and sustaining it takes work and demands much of its citizens—what used to be called the values of civic republicanism such as self-discipline, participation, voting, willing to engage in democratic discourse and compromise, and respect for the rights of each individual citizen. Every generation needs to learn about the importance of these values, practice them, and attach to them. Potential citizens in school should not just understand how our federalist form of government works but should also encounter the historical unfolding of the democratic narrative—the people and groups who have fought for a broader, more vibrant democracy and the ideas which have driven them. Students should not only learn the skills of democratic participation and discourse but also become aware of the



Benjamin Franklin, of Philadelphia. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003674083/>

major issues which have confronted and still confront our nation. Crucially, students should recognize the acute suffering which occurs generally when a democracy fails which could directly harm them and the citizens of this country. They should also come to see themselves as guardians of the democratic idea--participants willing to do their part in the multi-generational, continuous grand effort to answer what Lincoln stated as the most American question—whether government of, by, and for the people can survive and with it the freedoms so many have striven for.

Democracy requires that the various groups which make up society can be fairly represented in democratic decision-making. Students in school quickly figure out that their individual vote will almost never determine the outcome of an election (even though we always say each individual vote is important). The obvious

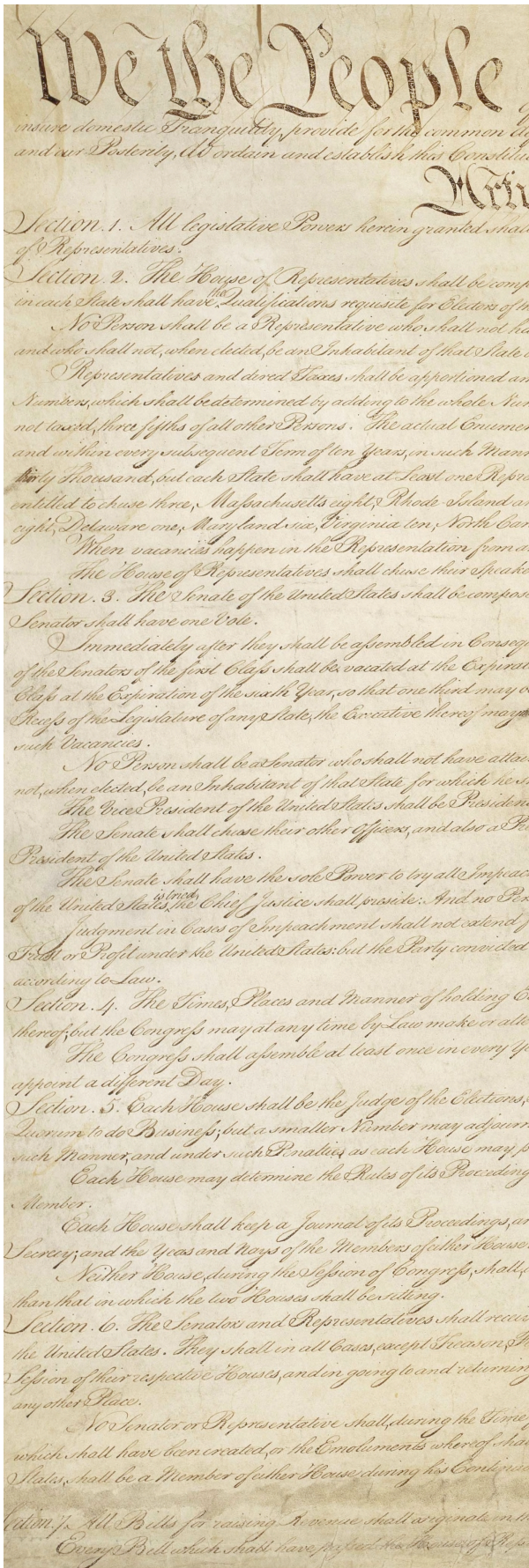


rejoinder is that if everyone felt that way the system would quickly break down. So the health of a democracy rests on a mutual pact between each individual and the nation: if enough citizens are willing to participate and practice republican values, democracy will survive. If enough members of each group participate, the interests of their group will be represented and the individual member of the group will benefit. Parents, schools, and the country must persuasively make this case to all potential citizens in each new generation so that every youngster understands what is at stake and becomes willing to commit to this democratic agreement.

Bill Honig is Chair of the Instructional Quality Commission, and a former Superintendent of Public Instruction for California.

Empowering Citizens

by Marshall Croddy



Civic learning prepares young people to be informed, skilled, and engaged participants in the civic life of the nation and their communities. Drawing on the content of history, law, economics, and other disciplines, it educates about our constitutional heritage and principles, the workings of government, the rule and processes of law, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. To develop student civic competencies and capacities, high-quality civic learning employs research-proven methods, such as discussion and deliberation about political and social issues, simulations of democratic practices and processes, and civic-based service learning. It engages students in the development of skills necessary for participation in the political, social, and economic domains by emphasizing analysis, critical thinking, problem solving, effective presentation, working in heterogeneous groups, advocacy, negotiation, compromise, and taking action. It seeks to instill the dispositions necessary for the preservation and improvement of a diverse constitutional democracy, such as respecting lawful authority, seeking justice, toleration of diverse views and groups, political participation, defense of individual rights, patriotism, and the freedom of conscience.

The Founders of the United States believed that education about our Constitution and its principles was essential if the republic was to endure. The original rationale for public schools included the need to civically educate children. Our governmental institutions, elections, and the public policy process require informed participation of the populace. Moreover, effective participation is necessary to redress wrongs, advance interests, and promote equality. This is particularly true for underserved populations, which are disempowered if they are not prepared to effectively participate. Just as schools and education can serve as a gateway for greater economic opportunity, they must prepare all students to be informed, skilled, and engaged participants in the political process. Their futures and the future of our country and world depend on it.



Marshall Croddy is president of Constitutional Rights Foundation, co-director of the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, and a member of the Civic Task Force on the development of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for the Social Studies.

The Value of Civic Learning

Mariko Yamada, Assemblymember, 4th District



Civic learning is a lifelong process which includes educating ourselves about the history of our country—both good and bad; the development and evolution of the three branches of our government, and our rights and responsibilities as citizens in a free and democratic society.

We are here in the greatest country on earth because of the service and sacrifice of all generations before us.

Civic learning, which has been de-emphasized in our education systems over the years, should be as important as the “3-R’s” as students take their place as tomorrow’s voters, taxpayers, and leaders. Empowering our youth to advocate for their beliefs and priorities is critical to an active and engaged citizenry, with a focus on solving the local, state, national, and global problems facing the world’s populations.

**Tom Torlakson,
California State Superintendent of Public Instruction**



Our schools truly are community centerpieces – they are at the center of so much about our great state. And the students they are reaching and teaching are the future of California. They are the teachers, the doctors, the mothers and fathers, the elected leaders. If they grow up with strong civic learning, they grow up with an appreciation and an ability for civic engagement. And that means California will be in very good hands indeed.

Official photos courtesy of respective offices.



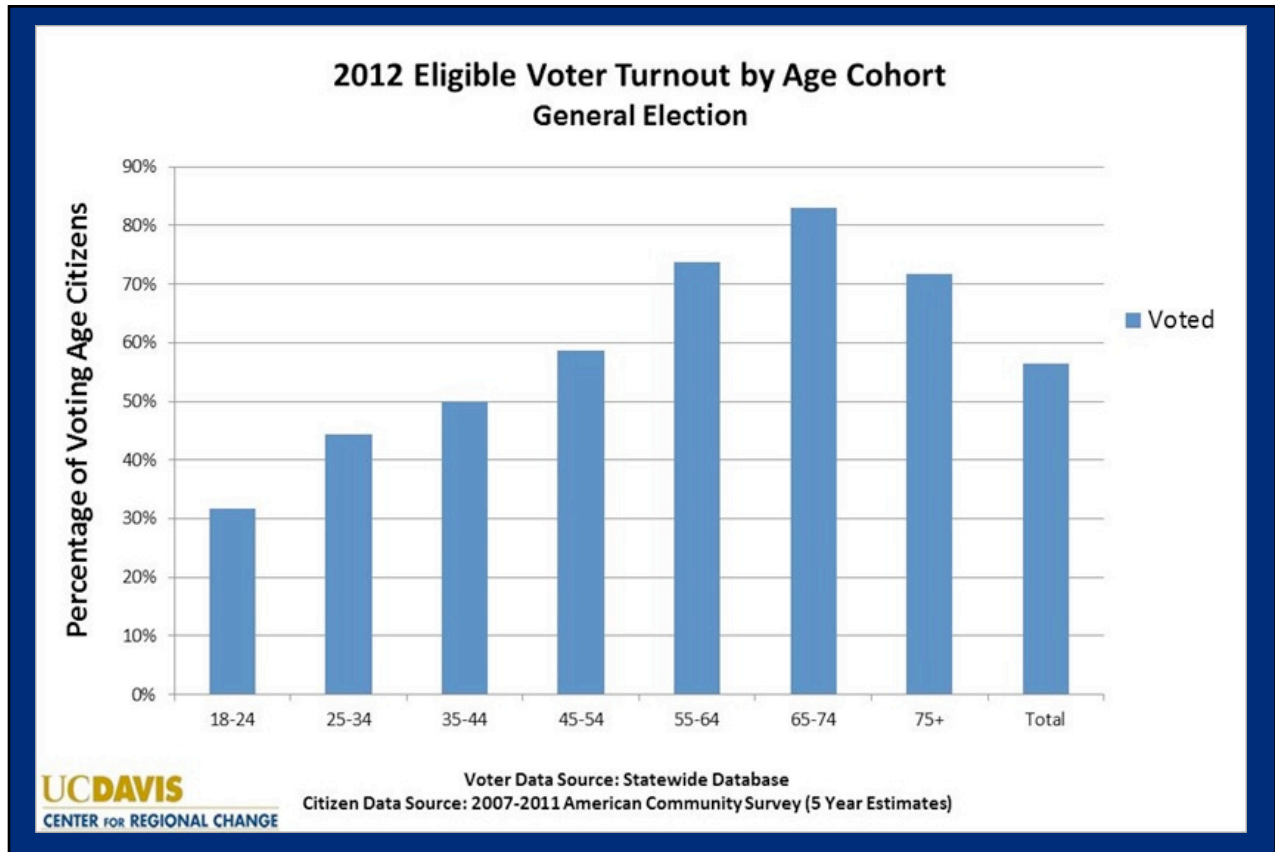
**Debra Bowen
Secretary of State**

Not every child grows up with family members who participate in neighborhood watch, volunteer on the parent-teacher association, or even vote in every election. Civic learning recognizes that, to be at its best, a society needs everyone’s involvement. Civic learning is about giving young people the tools to engage and igniting a spark of inspiration that will hopefully remain throughout their lives.

Through the statewide student mock election that my staff and I conduct each election year, I have witnessed the excitement of civic learning when students realize their potential power at the voting booth. Educators and administrators are in a unique position to reach all children and teach them about our rights and duties as citizens, how government works and the impact we make on our communities by deciding to take action or not. The student mock election is one example of how educators can bring civics alive in the classroom, preparing young people to be lifelong voters and active participants in their communities.

Civic Learning and a Representative Democracy

by Mindy Romero



Increased attention to civic learning in our schools has strong benefits for both students, as well as our state's long-term democratic health. One of the fundamental challenges for California is its lack of a fully represented electorate. The state's youth (ages 18-24) participate in the electoral process at rates significantly lower than other age groups. Perhaps what is more concerning is that even greater disparities in participation exist *within* the youth population. Youth of lower income, lower family education and youth of color both register and vote at rates much lower than their fellow youth. Additionally, in California, many underrepresented youth reside in communities that have some of the poorest outcomes for youth (such as high drop-out rates and low college going rates) in the state. Their lack of political representation means they have limited opportunities to contribute to the policy decisions that affect their lives and their communities.

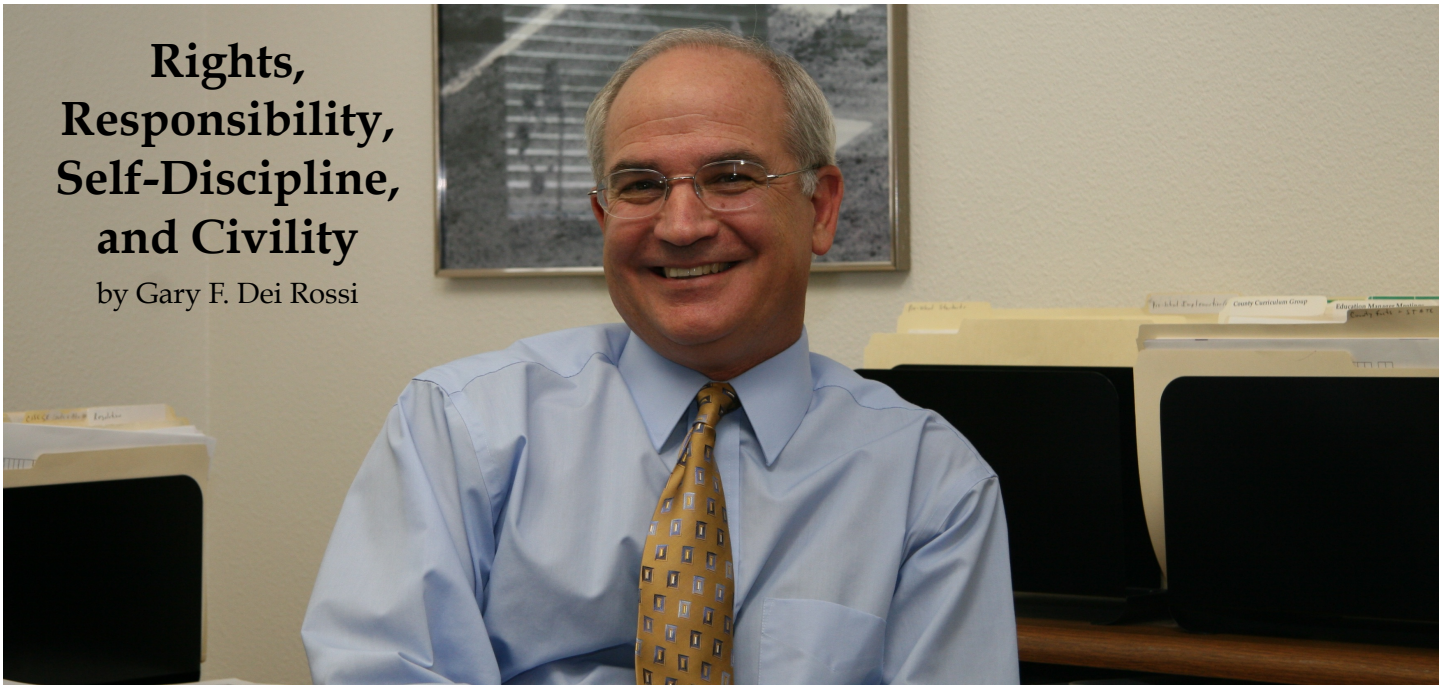
Key to reducing this participation gap is improving the opportunities youth have to learn about and navigate our civic structures. Much of this work needs to be done before youth turn eighteen, while still in secondary school. Research shows us that high school civics education is a highly successful tool in reaching youth, particularly underrepresented youth, and transitioning them to voting when they become eligible. We know that schools achieve the best results in fostering voting, and civic engagement more broadly, when they rigorously teach civic skills, ensure an open climate for discussion and encourage the importance of the electoral process.

Increasing civic learning in our schools will help further engage youth in early and meaningful connections to the electoral process, particularly for youth in underserved communities, so that young people will engage in the political process both now and throughout their lives, enriching the state's democratic fabric.

Mindy Romero is Project Director for the California Civic Engagement Project, Center for Regional Change, UC Davis

Rights, Responsibility, Self-Discipline, and Civility

by Gary F. Dei Rossi



Civic learning is the knowledge one attains when he or she learns how to become a responsible and productive community member and citizen. Civic learning provides the intellectual skills that enable people to evaluate, think critically, analyze various positions and make compromises. It teaches people about the law and how the rights of all individuals matter. But it also teaches about individual responsibility, self-discipline and civility. It allows people to learn about the struggles of all people and how various groups have dealt with those challenges. It highlights the lives of historical figures and how they helped shape our country.

One of the basic reasons for public schools in America is to teach about democracy and what individuals need to know to maintain their commitment to this form of government. Without a sound civic learning program in our schools democracy will not continue to grow and flourish. Most states set up provisions within their constitutions to provide for a system of public schools for the very reason of helping people acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to preserve our form of government.

The benefits for our students are immense. They learn character, they learn how to debate in a fair and open arena, they learn about their responsibilities to their family, community and nation, they learn about treating all people with fairness and dignity, they learn about candor and judgment, they learn about civility and they learn that as a citizen in a democracy you have certain rights but you also have huge responsibilities.

The research that has been done on civic education shows that students who take part in civic learning—vote more, participate more and are productive caring citizens.

Civic education is essential in maintaining and improving our democratic way of life. Without it our nation will not continue to grow and flourish.

CHSSP Board Member Gary F. Dei Rossi is the former Deputy Superintendent of San Joaquin County Office of Education. Dei Rossi chaired the HSS Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee for California County Offices of Education and co-chaired the 2009 HSS Framework Revision. He is the author of San Joaquin, A-Z, which depicts the history, geography, cultural, economic, and interesting facts about San Joaquin County.



Civil Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, 1965. Image from Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph>.

Active Citizenship, Grounded in Historical Knowledge

by Alan Taylor

The question is how best to achieve civic engagement and whether learning history has a role to play in that. My own sense is that history affords a "depth perception in time" that gives true meaning to contemporary citizenship. By depth perception in time I mean that people in the present have a much clearer sense of who they are and how their government and courts operate if they know how the nation originated and what challenges it has faced in the past. A sense of development through time and an understanding of past crises (such as the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Civil War, the Civil Rights movement, or the McCarthy purges) will best persuade students that they have an ACTIVE rather than a PASSIVE role to play as citizens.

If we simply preach the importance of civic roles to young people, they will tune it out. If we want to engage them, we need to reveal civic roles in actual case studies of the past, when people struggled to achieve or to defend citizenship. If we want people to value citizenship, we need to show them actual cases of when people in the past suffered for want of it. Students will be far more interested if they understand that people in the past had to make some very hard choices - rather than if we implausibly insist that citizenship is a simple matter of rote learning and rote performing.



Alan Taylor is a Distinguished Professor of History and a Pulitzer-Prize Winning Author at University of California, Davis



Key Dates in the History of Voting Rights

- 1790: Voting reserved for **white male property owners**.
- 1850: Property ownership and tax requirements no longer required for right to vote.
- 1855: Connecticut becomes the first of many states to require **literacy tests** for voting.
- 1870: The **15th Amendment** prohibits states from denying a citizen the right to vote because of race.
- 1889: Florida is the first state to implement a **poll tax**.
- 1913: The **17th Amendment** establishes the direct election of U.S. Senators (previously by State Legislatures).
- 1920: Women gain the right to vote under the **19th Amendment**.
- 1924: **Native Americans** gain the right to vote in federal elections as part of the Indian Citizenship Act.
- 1957: A Civil Rights Act establishes the Civil Rights Commission to investigate voter discrimination.
- 1961: The **23rd Amendment** grants D.C. three electoral votes in the presidential election. As a special federal district, D.C. does not have a Senator, but does have one Representative with limited voting ability.
- 1965: The **Voting Rights Act of 1965** outlaws discriminatory voting practices – poll taxes, literacy tests and other measures – and appointed federal examiners to enforce voting rights in the southern states where minority votes were below 50%.
- 1971: The **26th Amendment** lowers the voting age from 21 to 18 for all state and national elections.
- 1974: U.S. Supreme Court rules that disfranchising convicted felons is not in violation of the 14th Amendment.
- 2012: For the first time, the proportion of **African-American voters** outstrips that of white voters (66.2% & 64.1% respectively).

Flag over Fort Knox, Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002004476/PP/>

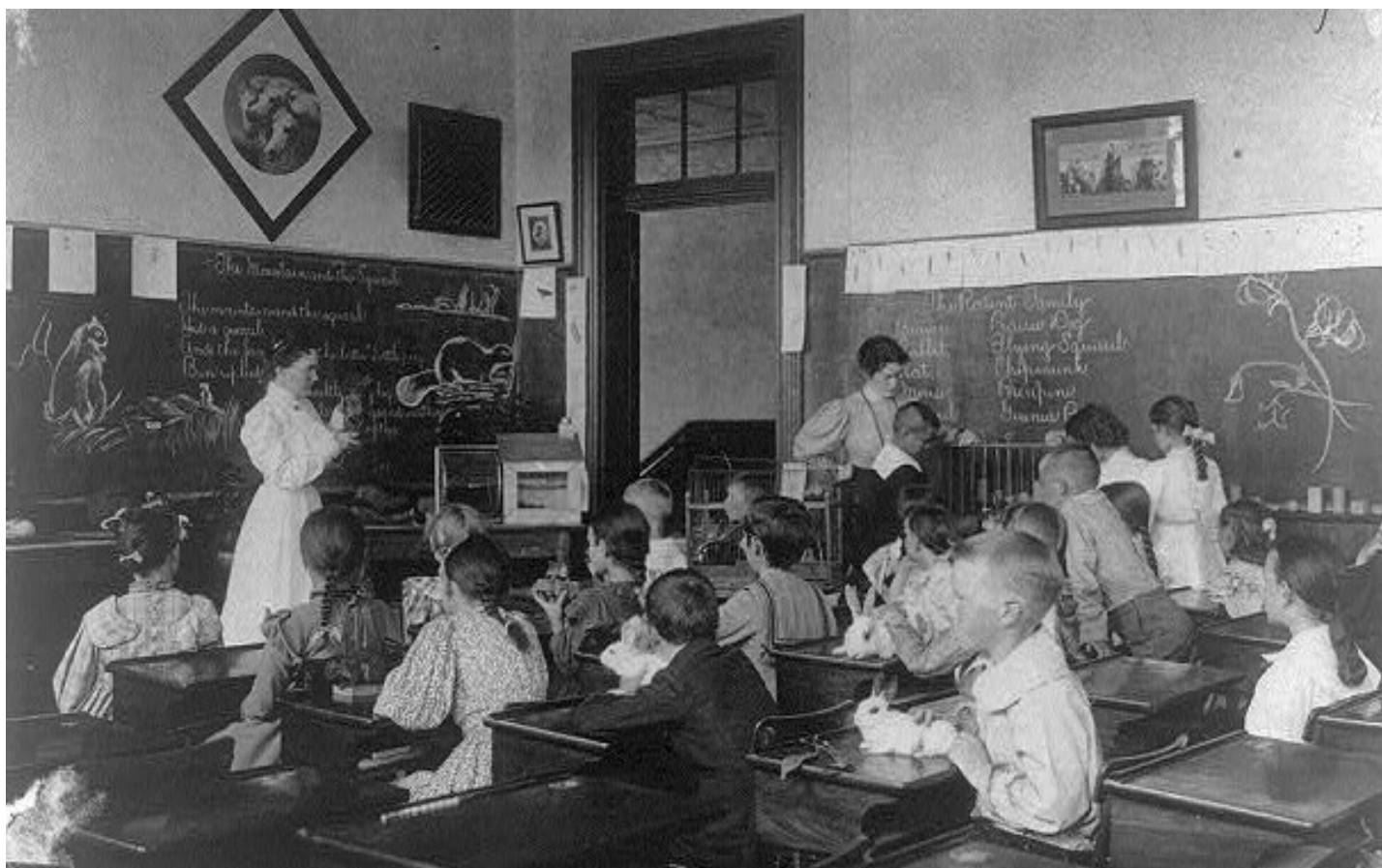
The History of Teaching History

by Pamela Tindall, Site Director, The History Project at UC Davis

Contemporary debates over the best approaches to civic education are only the most recent examples of competing forces that have struggled to shape the public school curriculum since the late nineteenth century. Providing students with an understanding of sacred antiquities and classical literature stood as the central aim of schooling prior to professional groups constructing guidelines for teaching history. Both the content and methodology served to transmit dominant ideas about American culture, patriotism, and good citizenship. But the late nineteenth-century convergence of industrialization, immigration, and modernism raised concerns about school transfers and college admissions. These concerns inspired the first studies of school curriculum. In 1894, the National Education Association (NEA) “called for a national commission to deal with the rational development of both high school and university

curriculum.” The NEA’s report established history as a legitimate discipline for secondary schools and core curriculum for all students, regardless of whether the students were college bound. It described the benefits of studying history as offering an opportunity for “growth of discriminative judgment, for weighing of evidence, for training in patriotism, and as a medium for literary expression.”¹

At the NEA’s request, in 1896, the American Historical Association chartered a subcommittee on teaching history. Their committee promoted a modern and scientific view of history as an alternative to the then popular view of history as “literary art, as cultural embellishment, as dry chronicle, or as simple chronological outline.”² They recommended four blocks of history instruction: ancient, medieval, modern and American with an emphasis on helping students to “think historically.”



Turn-of-the-century classroom, Washington, D.C. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001703644/>



1949 school girl, Chicago. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3d02345/>

The tension between these two camps, one that advocated using history as a means of building character and patriotic pride to reaffirm “the rectitude and world mission of American and Western civilization,” the other that viewed “history as something to be analytically constructed” shaped early twentieth century debates over the history curriculum.³ Advocates of “social efficiency” argued for using the past to illuminate current events, to illustrate moral or civic ideals, and to engender patriotism. Historians, on the other hand, charged that history should not be “controlled by present interests and problems.” Rather, these critics argued, “history, taught well, encompasses every value claimed for social studies.” In fact, they asserted, “it

treats every problem now confronting society, but can better help develop the habit of ‘weighing evidence’ because of the distance it provides from matters ‘not now in the field of controversy.’”⁴

By the 1980s, reports of schools’ failure and students’ underachievement bolstered the conservative school reform cause. Addressing the nation’s governors in 1989, President George H. W. Bush declared, “The time has come to establish clear national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive [and] second to none in the twenty-first century.”⁵ If national standards were inevitable, many historians reasoned, it was best to be involved and influential in their creation. Gary Nash and Charlotte Crabtree of the National Center for History

in the Schools at the University of California, Los Angeles, co-directed the National History Standards Project. They sought to build consensus among members of a council comprised of academic historians, veteran teachers, parents, educational groups, librarians, curriculum specialists, and individuals involved in the debate over history in the schools. Though the coalition at times engaged in protracted and messy debates, its deliberations represent what some have called “a characteristically American exercise in civil discourse. It was a public debate among educator-citizens, not a closed-door wrangle settled by high officials of state.”⁶

Despite contentiousness and controversy, the project moved forward producing the National History Standards amid a storm of controversy. Created to reflect the historical profession’s post World War II inclusiveness, scholarship, and methodological sophistication, the Standards confronted issues of global history and multiculturalism, and addressed the false dichotomy between “historical facts” and “historical thinking.” By defining five standards for historical thinking as the tools students use to access content and offering content-embedded teaching examples, the Standards sought to merge process and content in ways that would actively engage the nation’s students.

The same tension is present in today’s debates over the centrality of history in the history-social science curriculum. Advocates of civic education emphasize the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the structure of our government. They emphasize a history that is bound in America’s story and the

nation’s founding documents. In their view, student participation in mock trials, elections, and hearings should be more prominently featured in state adopted curriculum.

High quality history instruction effectively prepares tomorrow’s citizens by equipping students with both knowledge of our foundational documents *and* applied practice of critical skills. Historical investigations and interpretation require students to consider multiple perspectives, analyze and interpret information, draw conclusions, and to support their arguments with evidence. In other words, these strategies are designed to prepare students for participation in our pluralistic democracy or at least guarantee that they take part in some of democracy’s key features.⁷

Perhaps a middle ground exists between the proponents of civic education and those who advocate for a discipline-based approach to history instruction. Civic education advocates should be delighted that students who are apprenticed to think, read, and write more like historians develop the critical skills needed for a literate citizenry. For our K-16 community of history educators in the CHSSP, we might be more explicit about making the connection between the practice of “doing history” and the preparation it provides for tomorrow’s citizens. Through such a humanistic approach to study, students can acquire the cultural knowledge and conceptual skills to improve their personal and social situations and become active participants in civic life.

¹ NEA, 1894, as cited in Evans, R. W., *The social studies wars: What should we teach the children?* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004).

² O.M. Keels, “Herbert Baxter Adams and the influence of the American historical association on the early social studies,” *International Journal of Social Education* (1988): 3, 37-49.

³ G. B. Nash & R. E. Dunn, “History Standards and Culture Wars” *Social Education*, 59, 6 (1995), p. 26

⁴ Evans, 34-35.

⁵ B. Weintraub, “Bush and governors set education goals,” *New York Times*, 29 September 1989, A10.

⁶ Nash, 174.

⁷ K.C. Barton and L.S. Levstick, *Doing History: Investigating with children in elementary and middle schools* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2005): 10.

How Teachers Define Civic Learning

by Dave Neumann, Site Director, The History Project at CSU Long Beach

What is civic learning? In thinking about this important topic, I decided it would be helpful to survey several teachers to get a fuller perspective. I contacted a dozen teachers from four different school districts. While this group by no means constitutes a representative sample, it does provide a cross-section of the history teaching experience. The men and women who responded range in classroom experience from five years to more than thirty, teaching grades 6th through 12th in a variety of urban and suburban settings. Most are teacher leaders and several have taught in the teacher education program at CSU Long Beach, so it's likely that their views have influenced the beliefs and practices of other area teachers. In analyzing the teachers' responses to what constitutes civic learning, I discerned five patterns: the nature and function of government, the responsibilities of "global citizenship," opportunities for participation, the importance of critical thinking, and, finally, the role of historical understanding. The first three factors emphasize *what* teachers should encourage students to know and do. The last two factors shift to a discussion of *how* to develop the understanding that will allow students to engage effectively as citizens. Such engagement requires deep knowledge and critical thinking, skills best developed in history classrooms.

The Nature and Function of Government

One common response focused on the most conventional notion of civic learning: the importance of understanding the nature and function of democratic government. This ideal appears throughout the California state framework and standards, so its prominence here is not surprising. Of course, this is closely tied to the fact that our republic encourages participation. One teacher succinctly captured this by describing "the democratic ideals, principles, and understandings that help students become fully functioning citizens in our democracy." Several teachers invoked the language of citizenship. This makes sense, as *civic* and *citizen* are cognates, both suggesting the importance—perhaps even the obligation—of active engagement in government decisions. A teacher who linked civic learning to citizenship commented on the "responsibilities that come with being a responsible member of society," while others discussed attention to public issues and encouraging students to "see themselves as part of the body politic." Suggesting that engagement might be contentious, one teacher described the need to "be prepared for civic debates in the present." A passionate government teacher concurred, invoking the language of the 2003 Civic Mission of Schools: "It is about helping [students] develop moral and civic virtues that 'strike a reasonable balance between their own interests and the common good.'"¹



Class in citizenship and English, NY, 1943. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2001015668/PP/>



Students participating in a parliamentary debate, Sutter Middle School, Sacramento City USD

Global Citizenship

While the majority of teachers clearly understood civic engagement as a feature of national or perhaps local citizenship, a few teachers articulated a notion of global citizenship. One teacher acknowledged that “I tend to think of civic learning more broadly, in terms of being a global citizen,” while another talked about encouraging students to think about “the role they play in the global community.” The teachers who discussed citizenship from this standpoint all teach world history, particularly AP World History, which is genuinely global in scope. It’s possible that their broader sense of civic identity drew them to teach world history; it’s just as likely, however, that teaching world history has challenged their traditional understanding of citizenship. Since there is technically no world polity that grants citizenship, global citizenship seems basically metaphorical. But that does not imply that global citizenship is an empty label. Instead, it suggests that globalization challenges the nature of social engagement. As one teacher commented after acknowledging the reality of national civic responsibility, “In an increasingly globalized society, [students] should also learn that civic learning and civic engagement transcend national boundaries. The decisions made in one country impact others and vice versa.”

Participation

As the comments on global citizenship already hint, many teachers were eager to move notions of citizenship beyond simple involvement in voting. Sometimes that might mean broadening the definition of political engagement to encouraging students to participate “through community service, PAC’s, and interests groups.” But frequent use of the word *participation*, often paired with *society* rather than *government*, suggested much broader and more flexible notions of engagement. Some teachers talked about students learning to work with other people and contributing to their communities. Others suggested that simply being kind and thoughtful to those around one—good neighborliness—might constitute civic engagement. One articulate teacher commented that “it is about facilitating their understanding and connectedness to their local community and government to encourage their contributions to a civil society. It’s about action at whatever level they feel they can impact. It’s about teaching them the hows, whos, whens, and wheres of that action (advocacy)...It’s about getting them to see that we all have a responsibility to each other.” Clearly, the broad notion of citizenship envisioned here requires more than simply providing practical tips to students; it involves reshaping the way students think—a much more challenging task.

Critical Thinking

This leads to the fourth point: civic learning involves knowledge and critical thinking. It is not enough to know how to engage in social issues, or to be motivated to do so. Students also need to be able to engage effectively. Teachers frequently said that civic learning includes students becoming informed. They talked about “informed, intelligent and analytical thinkers,” an “informed citizenry,” “informed and thoughtful consumers/ producers of information,” and people who “make informed decisions.” While this language might imply that students simply need more information at their disposal, teachers’ full responses made it abundantly clear that being informed requires the ability to think critically. One teacher contemptuously dismissed the usefulness of factual information in isolation, referring to such tidbits as “factoids.” Several talked about critical thinking or analytical thinking. They also recognized the need to sift through rival claims to assess their veracity, so students might become “thoughtful consumers of information.” The teacher who articulated this most thoroughly argued that “civic learning is understanding developed through reasoned inquiry,” which is developed, in part, when students learn to “analyze sources with multiple perspectives coming from varied contexts.”

The Role of History Education

The focus on critical thinking, assessment of rival arguments, and analysis of multiple points of view leads to the fifth and final point: the importance of history instruction. All too often, civic education evokes only the government classroom, rather than the larger history-social science framework in which history plays a crucial role. The teachers who shared their thoughts all wisely avoided this pitfall. They recognized the importance of “the use of history/social science as a tool for developing the type of democratic ideals, principles, and understandings that help students become fully functioning citizens in our democracy.” Several teachers referred to the role of the history classroom in helping students understand the complexity of the world, since history shows students the contingent process by which past possibilities gave rise to current realities. Others explicitly recognized the link between the past and the present, referring to learning “the lessons of a shared past” or “learning our history which informs our civic action.” In short, nearly all the teachers recognized that history provides an indispensable tool for developing the depth of knowledge, context, and critical thinking required for the kind of ideal civic engagement they envision.

Conclusion

The teachers who shared their thoughts provided a rich range of responses on the meaning of civic education. The first three factors included an emphasis on the nature and function of government; the responsibilities of “global citizenship” in an increasingly global world, where challenges do not always follow national borders; and opportunities for a wide range of participation in society—from advocacy, to community service, to simple neighborliness. The last two factors seem to shift from what to do (and why) to how to do it. Effective participation requires contextual knowledge and critical thinking, skills students develop in the history classrooms that explore the complexity of the past through rich engagement with primary and secondary sources. Wise civic engagement only comes through a thoughtful, critical engagement with the past. As Bruce Barton and Linda Levstik point out in *Teaching History for the Common Good*, democratic citizenship —“citizenship that is participatory, pluralist, and deliberative”—is a contentious process that requires preparation that history instruction provides. “[T]he study of history is especially well suited for such preparation because it allows students to ‘drink at the great wells of human experience’—a process that has potential both to develop reasoned judgment and to promote an expanded view of history.”² This kind of reasoned judgment provides guidance to students as they attempt to participate wisely in the civic sphere—whether on the local, national, or global level.

¹ <http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/the-campaign/civic-mission-of-schools-report>

² Bruce Barton and Linda Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 40.

What Does Civic Learning Look Like in Alternative School Settings?

by Nicole Gilbertson, Site Director, The UC Irvine History Project

"Alternative education is often considered the dead-end of teaching and rarely given any support. The limited support that we receive invariably isn't practical and does not focus on content – instead it focuses on behavior. This program is different. Every session I find something to inspire me... This program has provided stability and inspiration for me as I engage in very challenging work."

-Alternative Education Teacher, Orange County

What does it mean to teach civics to students who have been left behind by the system, or who have broken the law? What should the curriculum look like, and how will it engage these students? These are some of the questions we've explored in Understanding American Citizenship (UAC), a four-year Teaching American History program run by the UCI History Project. Although Orange County as a whole is relatively affluent, the students in alternative schools are high need and low performing. Many students are removed from regular schools for disruptive and criminal behavior, and require intervention to acquire the intellectual skills and the desire to become informed and engaged citizens.

UAC offers a professional home for up to thirty alternative education teachers who work with students in a variety of educational settings—from continuation high school, independent study, community day school, and juvenile hall. The program is designed to increase teachers' content

knowledge of American history while enabling them to develop and implement rigorous standards-aligned curriculum specifically designed for alternative education students.¹ As a member of this impressive community of educators, I have been inspired by the thoughtful and engaged commitment of these teachers.

"I discuss with my students everyday their responsibilities as a citizen," explains one UAC teacher "I stress the importance of being a voice, voting, acting appropriately so that people will want to hear them." History teachers responsible for working with alternative education students cite specific teaching priorities, such as developing in students a sense of community responsibility and respect for others, and developing life skills that support being a contributing member of society. Through a summer institute, monthly meetings, coaching and lesson study, and local study tours, UAC focuses on providing teachers with historical



Understanding American Citizenship Cohort.



Manzanar Relocation Center from tower. Image from the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695969/>

content knowledge, an engagement with historical methodology, and training in academic literacy. Teachers have commented that they have learned about different historical paths to citizenship by American individuals and groups and this study has provided them with a variety of points of view. In turn, they take this knowledge and share it with their students. One teacher recounted, “I have really tried to provide my students with more time to think things over. Allowing them to form conclusions on their own rather than just presenting the information to them. I really want them to become lifelong learners and to be able to think for themselves.”

Moments of tension in the story of American citizenship, such as Japanese internment during World War II, are of particular interest for these teachers and their students. Following content presentations by scholars, a visit to the Japanese American National Museum, and a guest lecture by Karen Korematsu, teachers implemented a variety of sources on this topic. Students engaged in reading *Farewell to Manzanar*, Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066, and a document-based activity, “Stand Up for Justice: The Ralph Lazo Story,” about a Mexican American teenager who followed his friends to the

internment camps. By integrating these texts into their curriculum, teachers have made meaningful connections for their students as they strive to define and identify their own notions of citizenship and belonging.

UAC teachers have come to believe that at its core, teaching and learning about citizenship centers on listening to and learning from others, considering and weighing evidence and viewpoints, and developing and sharing ideas as individuals and a community. This emphasis on open dialogue, valuing discussion and dissent, and a support for multiple perspectives, has made an impact on students, UAC teachers assert, and on their own development as learners, teachers, and citizens. Teacher Niccole Connally reflected, “Overall I’ve become much more aware of what it means to be an American citizen...each person has a story that contributes to the greater picture...every story is profound and meaningful.”

Nicole Gilbertson serves as the Director for the UC Irvine History Project, and spearheads the UAC program. The program will end June 2014, but is open to additional teachers in the coming year. Contact Nicole at gilbert@ucdavis.edu to learn more.

¹ This curriculum can be found at the UCI website: <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/history/ucihp/tah/UnderstandingAmericanCitizenship.php>

Teaching Resource: Using Supreme Court Cases in 12th Grade Government

by Michele A. Fichera

Editor's Note: The following is an article and unit map from Michele A. Fichera, Government Teacher, Capuchino High School; Fellow, Teacher Research Group, UC Berkeley History Social-Science Project



Several years into teaching 12th Grade American Government, I realized that I was as bored as the students with the explanations and drawings of the Three Branches of Government “triangle.” It was time for a new approach that ensured all students achieved at a high level while challenging their critical thinking skills and engaging them in civic mindedness.

My colleague Andrea Gonzales Alfars and I teach American Government at Capuchino High School in San Bruno, California. Our school is a traditional comprehensive high school, whose student population mirrors the changing demographics of the state. Although our API has steadily increased in recent years, the number of seniors graduating with A-G eligibility is under 50%. In the quest to provide students with more engaging material, Andrea and I gathered our professional development curriculum resources and our literacy teachings from the UC Berkeley

History-Social Science Project (UCBHSSP), and with the Common Core as a guide, we re-conceptualized our Government course for Fall 2012.

The dramatic face-lift resulted in a more rigorous course for our students. We focused the course content on individual rights in order to emphasize how government affects the lives of our students, and on skill development that promotes civic engagement and discourse. Our re-invented 12th grade Government course is comprised of several three-week units -- each anchored with a recent Supreme Court case (supported by historical and political context) and a curated source set, which students use to develop evidence-supported claims, structured discussions, and formal written assessments. The summative assessments emulate college requirements for written and oral discourse.

The instructional approach, aligned with the Common Core, that Andrea and I developed is comprised of components that can be integrated into *any* History Social-Science course.

Thematic organization

Supreme Court cases, which focus on individual rights, form the main text of each unit. We include the primary case, such as *Morse v. Fredrick* (2007), which ruled on the limits of free speech in schools, along with past precedent cases. Students analyze their individual rights, coupled with the government’s role in granting, protecting, or inhibiting those rights, by examining the Justices’ opinions (past precedents). Supplementary news articles provide a broader range of viewpoints and additional information. Our goal is to prepare our students to approach the reading of nonfiction texts with a sense of independence and confidence.

1. Unit Map with a “To what extent . . .” focus question

The UCBHSSP emphasizes a teacher-generated graphic representation of the unit of instruction. The unit map enables us to display instructional sequence, incorporate focus questions, and demonstrate the thinking skills involved in formal assessments. Each unit’s focus questions use the command term “*to what extent. . .*”. This focus requires students to argue the merits to **both** sides of an issue and offer a judgment by evaluating the strengths of certain arguments over others.

2. Student-centered Instruction

Even at the 12th grade level, students need significant time to process content and grapple with higher order thinking skill levels. We provide students many opportunities to engage in collaborative conversations; use technology to gather, evaluate and scrutinize research; and assert/defend claims. It’s our opinion that students always need to be “doing” -- particularly when presented with challenging texts such as Supreme Court opinions.

3. Research Skills

Students answer the focus question after selecting and analyzing relevant research. Researched sources include additional Supreme Court cases, point-of-view opinion pieces, and published articles. Our librarian created a webpage dedicated to government-related resources: [Oyez](#), a multimedia archive on the Supreme Court; POV articles, [a database of articles](#) on current events that include a topic, argument, and counterargument; and [News Source](#), which contains full news source articles. Curiosity often extends the research even further. Seniors prepare both oral and written presentations of the knowledge they have gained.

4. Structured Discussions

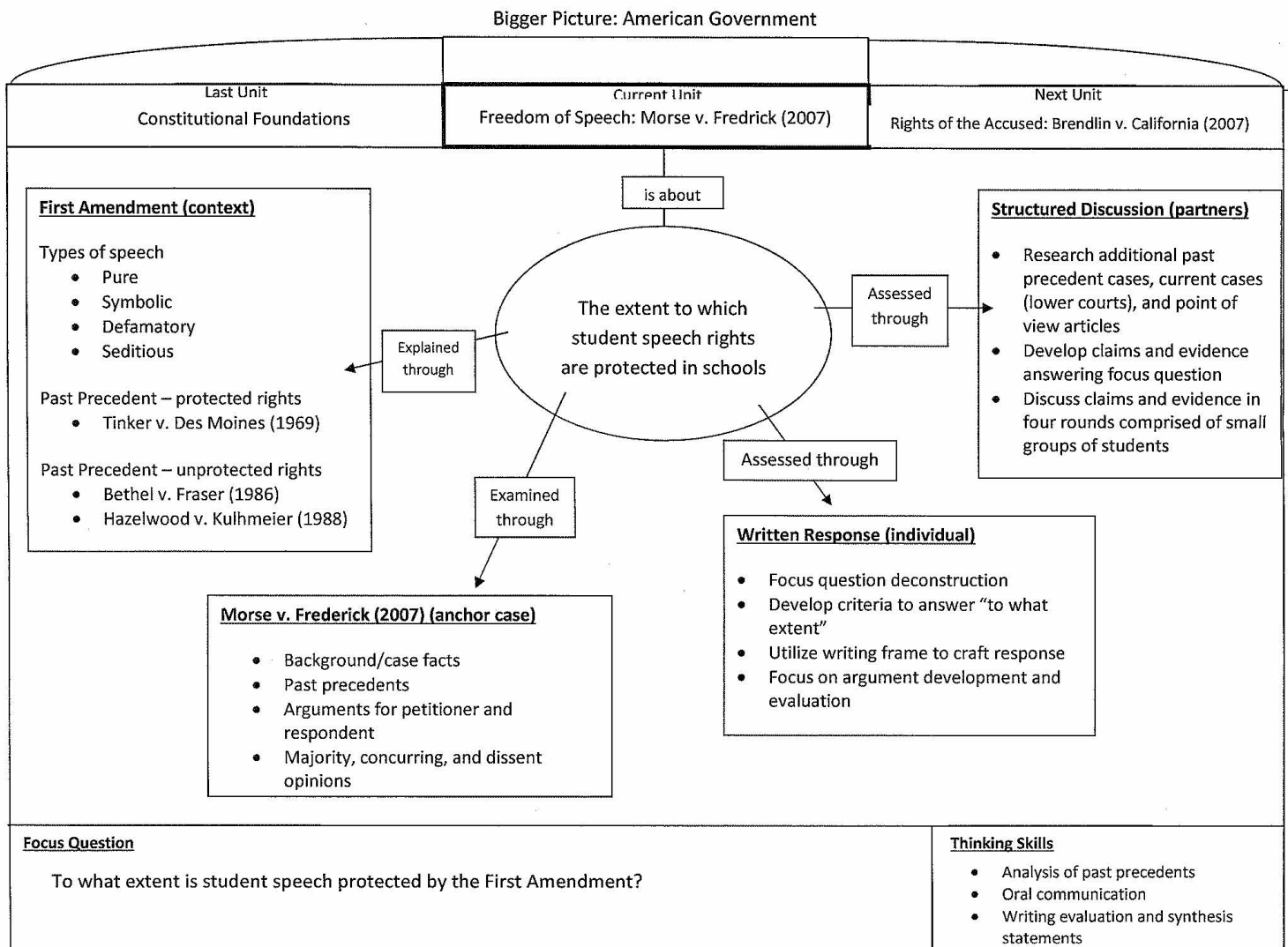
Student research enriches the development of thought-provoking claims and evidence expressed during structured class discussions. Modeled after a seminar course of sixty minutes and four discussion rounds, students cite past precedent cases and argue the extent to which student rights are protected. Students complete an argument discussion frame that includes sentence starters for making claims and citing evidence. Students share and develop their opinions through this discussion. All students use “discussion cards” with the same sentence starters to help them develop their speaking confidence. Lastly, debriefing is essential. Students decide the criteria by which they will weigh arguments and make their final claims.

5. Formal Written Assessments

Students utilize a writing frame to construct an argument in which a claim is analyzed and supported by evidence. We collaborate with students by modeling complex sentence structures and phrasing required at the college level. Students use completed writing frames to write the formal in-class essay. The assessment de-emphasizes the memorization of facts, instead focusing on claim development, selection of evidence, and the use of critical thinking skills in a timed/structured scenario.

During weekly collaboration meetings, Andrea and I design student-centered instruction that is focused on skill development. We share student written assessments noting problem areas and adjust the instruction accordingly. We do not always agree; we jokingly challenge each other to clarify our thinking. We are committed to our re-imagined course, and collaboration meetings provide us a forum to work professionally and collegially. Just like the students, we have learned and questioned so much this year. One student, Alyssa Cabatic, reflected: “Once we actually started to dive deeper into individual’s rights, the course definitely pulled me in. . . . The class made me especially interested because we focused about juveniles’ rights as citizens of the United States.” Andrea and I, in turn, are excited by a class that has found a way to relevantly engage students in rigorous content of study and the two of us in rigorous planning and instruction.

Fichera, Spring 2013



Unit Map, Freedom of Speech: Morse v. Fredrick

"I like to think about it as teaching democracy..."

An Interview with UCLA Education Professor, John Rogers

by Emma Hipolito and Mary Miller, Co-Directors, UCLA History-Geography Project



*John Rogers, Associate Professor,
UCLA School of Education*

In thinking about civics and the meaning of civic education, we at the UCLA History-Geography Project thought it was important to tap into the different voices speaking about this issue. One of the perspectives that immediately came to mind was that of Dr. John Rogers, associate professor in the UCLA School of Education and the Director of UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA). Drawing on the work of John Dewey, Rogers explores the meaning of, and possibilities for, democratic education today in his work, including his new project, the First Vote Project.

"What are the characteristics of a good citizen?"

"What is the role of voting in social change?"

This spring we asked Rogers to reflect on the project's first year, which involved U.S. government teachers in six different urban high schools in Los Angeles. Over the Fall 2012, teachers implemented curriculum developed by Brian Gibbs (graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, teacher educator, and teacher leader for the History-Geography Project) that uses character-based Socratic seminars to engage students in dialogue with one another from the perspective of different historical personae. Students explored such questions as "What are the characteristics of a good citizen?" and "What is the role of voting in social change?" Dr. Rogers noted, "Using characters in dialogical seminar allowed students to push on some questions that may have been difficult for them to introduce in their own identities. One example of this was asking "to what extent official citizenship status conveyed by the state means that you're a good citizen?" Or, conversely, "to what extent does not having official papers means that you cannot be a good citizen?" These types of questions lead to a different kind of conversation in the classrooms, Rogers observed. "The discussion became about the issues that young people and the broader community cared about vitally, but in a way where they could come at it from [different] angles."

Rogers also noted that the other distinctive feature of the First Vote Project was that "the classes partnered with community-based organizations that were doing voter education. In some cases they did voter registration on campus, but more often they went out into the community [where they also] did voter education and/or walked door to door or did phone banking and talked to neighbors about the election." Rogers highlighted this aspect of the project and compared it to the research he has done with youth organizing groups. The youth organizers that he interviewed spoke to the personal impact of doing outreach work. "A lot of young people talk about how that process moved them from being that shy person to having this other sort of public voice, and I think doing door-knocking has that same dynamic. I think the lack of structure, lack of predictability and the ambiguity [of talking to strangers while walking door to door] is fertile ground for learning as long as it doesn't become so scary that you back away. You need support structure around that too." According to Rogers, the high school students benefitted "from the deeper engagement in

the electoral process. And [from] re-envisioning elections as something beyond individual actors voting. I think that is significant.”

In his work, “Building Power, Learning Democracy: Youth Organizing as a Site of Civic Development,” Rogers makes a distinction between the civic knowledge and skills that enhance civic participation and those which challenge or transform prevailing civic life. Rogers argues that “it’s important to think both about to what extent we are trying to enable young people to participate in the existing social and political institutions and to what extent we are trying to enable young people to engage in the transformation of existing social and political institutions. You want young people to understand how you move an idea across different complex organizations, and then (and this is very much tied to the Common Core) you want them to do knowledge work—to gather, analyze and report data. There are similar types of knowledge and skills that relate to transformation, [such as] the ability to recognize power within social relations, the ability to analyze root causes of problems, and the ability to understand schema for social change. While Rogers sees the first two as “appropriate” skills to develop in public schools, Rogers argues that “it is difficult for public school teachers to [provide knowledge of the latter on their own]..., but certainly if students are reading about people that have been involved in...[creating social change] it is at least an introduction.” Rogers believes that public schools are probably best served by connecting to other organizations that would expose young people to these opportunities to challenge race and social class and inequality, to embrace a sense of solidarity with others who are oppressed, to envision self as part of a movement for social change.”

Dr. Rogers recommends the following resources on civic education:

- Levinson, M. (2012). *No Citizen Left Behind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Moses, M. and Rogers, J. (2013). “Enhancing a Nation’s Democracy through Equitable Schools,” in Prudence Carter and Kevin Welner eds., *The Opportunity Gap*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 207-216.
- Rogers, J., Mediratta, K., Shah, S. (2012). Building power, learning democracy: youth organizing as a site of civic development. *Review of Research In Education*, March 2012 vol. 36 no. 1, 43-66. Available for free online at <http://rre.sagepub.com/content/36/1/43>
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2), 237–269. Available for free online at <http://www.democraticdialogue.com/DDPublications.html>



Civic Learning in the 21st Century: Preparing California Students for College, Career, and Civic Life

by Michelle M. Herczog, Ed.D

Editor's Note: Michelle Herczog, HSS Consultant for LACOE, has long been one of the most vocal and passionate advocates for civic learning in California. CHSSP asked Michelle to not only explain her vision of civic learning, but also to provide specific examples of how it would look in the classroom.

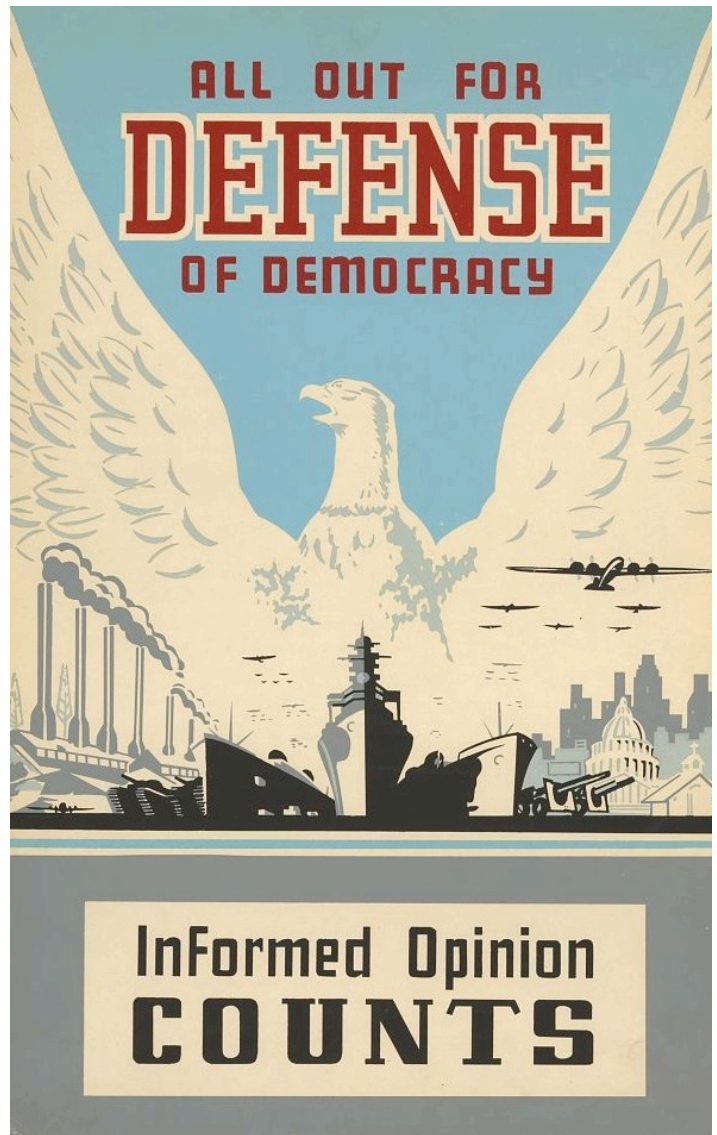
The Source: What is civic learning?

MH: When we study history and reflect upon our American way of life, we begin to think deeply about our rights, privileges and responsibilities in a democratic society compared to life in other times and places. History reveals a rich story of peoples' quest for basic rights of freedom, justice, and equality. Greek and Roman philosophers and Enlightenment scholars informed the establishment of democratic principles we know today. Our own Founding Fathers (and mothers), abolitionist leaders, civil rights advocates, and thousands of servicemen and women, past and present have overcome much and sacrificed greatly for us to live and participate in a representative democracy. But as retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor often says, "Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do."

The Source: Why is it important that we teach civic learning? What are its benefits to students?

MH: ...the goal of civic learning is to provide young people with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become responsible, actively engaged citizens. *Guardian of Democracy, The Civic Mission of Schools Report* produced by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools in partnership with the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Conference on Citizenship, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, and the American Bar Association Division for Public Instruction outlines the rationale and benefits of civic learning, the research-based

proven practices that constitute well-rounded civic learning, and policy recommendations for instituting high quality civic learning for all students. It declares that students need to have a deep knowledge of history, government and law to inform and ground their understanding of democratic principles and foundations. They need to have civic competencies to engage in civil, productive dialogue about controversial issues. They need to know how to work



WPA Poster, produced between 1935-1943. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008678732/>

collaboratively to gather, evaluate, and utilize evidence to address issues and problems in our society. They need to know how “democracy works” and have opportunities to *flex their civic muscles* guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution to work with policymakers and take informed civic action.

The Source: What is the relationship between civic learning and the Common Core State Standards?

MH: The Common Core State Standards Initiative¹, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills², the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools³, and the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards⁴ all speak to these same important goals for education by emphasizing the importance of acquiring deep, rigorous content knowledge and building critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and technology skills to apply content learning in meaningful, relevant ways. The newly released C3 Framework presents social studies as an inquiry-based discipline that calls for (1) developing questions and planning inquiries; (2) applying disciplinary concepts and tools; (3) evaluating sources and using evidence; and (4) communicating conclusions and taking informed action. All of these dimensions are necessary for preparing students for college, career, *and* civic life.

Furthermore, research reveals that civic education, especially when it is interactive and involves discussion of current issues, is an important way to develop non-civic skills that young Americans need to succeed in the 21st century workforce.⁵ It is also important to note that implementing civic learning in elementary and middle school with a focus on civic responsibility increases the likelihood that students will not drop out of high school.⁶ And though there are a number of exemplary civic learning programs and practices across California, research reveals that race/ethnicity, academic track and socio-economic status often determines a student’s opportunity to engage in civic learning, thus creating a “civic opportunity gap” that must be addressed.⁷

The Source: What does Civic Learning look like on the ground, in the classroom?

MH: Gone are the days when we merely ask students to memorize and recite the Preamble and ask basic comprehension questions about the causes and effects of the Revolutionary War. Civic learning calls for students to understand the U.S. Constitution deeply; to understand its foundational underpinnings, its challenges, and its impact on democratic and undemocratic societies around the world today.

A civic learning opportunity for fifth graders asks students to create a *constitution* for their school and a *bill of rights* for students. They begin with historical study and analysis of the events that led to the Revolutionary War and the writing and ratification of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. A close reading of these primary source documents leads to deep understanding of the foundations of our American democracy while building important reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills needed for comprehending and applying complex informational text. Once grounded in understanding the historical foundations of democratic principles, the role and responsibility of government and the role and responsibilities of citizens, students can apply their knowledge to understand how democratic systems and structures are necessary for achieving the goals of a civil society today. They proceed to investigate why and how the governance of a family, school, and country protects and defends the rights of its members and that there are consequences to bending or breaking the rules and laws of a society:

How would you feel if there were no rules or laws at home? At school? In the community? In the world?

Who is responsible for making good rules in your home? In your school? In your community?

What is the role and responsibility of your school? Of your teacher?

What is the role and responsibility of students?

Are there times when the rights of your school, your teacher, or students are threatened or violated?

Students conduct research, interview peers and adults, and spend time collaborating to analyze and synthesize their findings to create their own school constitution and student bill of rights. They share their work with their school community, collect feedback, revise and publish their final documents. Explanatory essays and opinion writing combined with formal presentations using technology and digital media provides students opportunities to take “informed civic action” to convince their school to ratify (or adopt) their constitution and bill of rights.

Students in other grade levels can use a similar protocol to investigate a variety of current issues and problems steeped in historical study. Studying ancient civilizations, comparative government, and the rise of democratic ideals informs civil dialogue about current controversial issues and students’ ability to take informed civic action. Inquiries such as these spark critical thinking in historical study and develop students’ cognitive and participatory skills to become informed, engaged citizens:

How does the issue or point of view support or deny the rights of citizens in an oligarchy? A monarchy? A republic? A constitutional government?

What is the role of a constitutional government in resolving this issue?

What is the role of citizens living in a democracy in resolving this issue?

How can the issue be resolved in a constitutional manner that protects the rights of individuals while also promoting the common good?

The Source: *Is there anything else you’d like to say about the subject?*

MH: An effort led by California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye has brought together California educators, school board members, legislators, law enforcement, business, labor, immigrant communities, and the general public to realize the urgent need to provide high quality civic learning opportunities for all students at all grade levels, and not just for a lucky few. To meet this challenge, it becomes necessary to revisit and update California state standards, frameworks, professional development, instructional materials, assessment and accountability systems to include civic learning in intentional, meaningful ways.

Our democratic republic will not be sustained unless students are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments, know the past, read, write, and think deeply, and act in ways that promote the common good. Working together, we can achieve this universal goal of education - to ensure that all students leave high school as engaged, informed, and participating citizens in the 21st century.

¹ Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Common Core State Standards Initiative, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010.

² Partnership for 21st Century Skills, p21.org

³ Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, Educating for Democracy, civicmissionofschools.org

⁴ “College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards,” Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013.

⁵ Torney-Purta, J. & Wilkenfeld, B.S. (2009). Paths to 21st Century Competencies Through Civic Education Classrooms: an Analysis of Survey Results from Ninth-Graders (A Technical Assistance Bulletin).

⁶ Charlane Fay Starks, “Connecting Civic Education to Civil Right and Responsibility: A Strategy for Reducing High School Dropout Among African American Students,” (2010), via www.csus-dspace.calstate.edu/xmlui/handle/10211.9/512.

⁷ Kahne, J., Middaugh, E. (2008). Democracy for Some: the Civic Opportunity Gap in High School. CIRCLE Working Paper 59.

Michelle Herczog, Ed.D., is the History-Social Science Consultant III for the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and Vice-President of the National Council for the Social Studies in line to be president in 2014-15. She has also served as Vice-Chair of the California Instructional Quality Commission and a member of the Social Studies Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction Committee of the Council of Chief State School Officers.



Using Evidence to Promote Civic Learning

by Nancy McTygue, Executive Director of the California History-Social Science Project

This summer, the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) will release the new *Vision for College, Career, and Civic Life*, or *C3 Framework*, which offers an inquiry-based approach to history, geography, economics, and civic instruction. The *C3 Framework* is the latest in a series of state and national documents, following on the heels of the *Common Core State Standards*, new *English Language Development Standards*, and the *Next Generation Science Standards*. (And other fields, such as the Arts, are working on their own national guidelines). Situating these reforms in the current national educational context requires consideration of the growth of charter schools, the increasing influence of private educational foundations, reconfiguration of accountability measures, and new teacher evaluation protocol. Layered on top of all that, of course, is money – funding for public education during the recent recession was cut significantly and how the state will launch both major educational reforms and pay its overdue bills is still an open question.

Like the *Common Core* and *Next Generation Science Standards*, the *C3 Framework* places great emphasis on teaching children how to use evidence to make an argument or interpretation. All three documents promote the development of critical thinking through

the use of evidence, in opposition to what advocates perceive to be the current system's focus on random facts. Proponents of the new framework as well as multiple bills focused on civic education currently proposed in Sacramento argue that our democracy's future requires explicit and extended attention to civic learning activities in order to prepare tomorrow's citizens to willingly vote, serve on a jury, and engage in public life. I agree with each of these goals – teaching children to use evidence, promoting critical thinking, and developing citizens are all laudable and appropriate objectives for our public education system.

As state leaders begin to debate these civic learning proposals in earnest, however, I would encourage them (and all of us) to evaluate proposals using those same criteria – will each of the proposed programs, laws, and documents lead to improved critical thinking? Is there evidence that these particular and specific programs will result in a more engaged citizenry? And, when taken together with the plethora of educational reforms currently, will they get lost in the rush to reform everything all at once?

If you've read my columns in the past, you'll likely remember that I've tried for years to push back against the marginalization of history-social science. Like my colleagues across the state, I've grown tired waiting for administrators to realize that their narrow focus on English / Language Arts and Mathematics has produced a generation of children with little or no knowledge of our past and no ability to understand expository text, or marshal evidence in support of an argument. I know and have seen that these skills can and have been developed through an in-depth study of the past, one that promotes a shared history in a nation of immigrants, teaches a habit of mind that demands a focus on evidence, and provides multiple opportunities for students to make their own interpretations of the past.

And while California's current History-Social Science Framework and Standards certainly need updating,



Image from Library of Congress:
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ds.00763/>

I'm not yet convinced that current proposals are the way to go. The *C3 Framework*, for example, does not build upon the current strengths in our own state documents. It provides much less specific content than our existing Standards and Framework. It also suggests that time should be devoted equally to the study of history, geography, economics, and civics. This would shift California's current course organization, necessarily reducing time for children's study of topics like the civil rights movement, the founding of the country, the age of enlightenment, the world wars, and the dangers of colonialism while increasing grade-level courses in economics, civics, and geography. And, while I certainly agree that we could beef up student access to these individual disciplines, I would also argue a more integrated approach, one that incorporates geography into the study of the past, for example, would promote a more authentic and appropriate instructional model. Moreover, given the absence of specific attention paid

to English learners, I'm concerned that these proposals won't fully detail how our shared disciplines can improve student literacy and achievement across the board in a state where one out of every four students is learning English as a second language.

Civic learning can be a powerful tool to improve student understanding of our democratic system, provide children with the skills necessary to be active and engaged citizens when they become adults, and promote a spirit of community and service necessary to the American way of life. Do we have the evidence that current civic learning proposals will produce these results? In our rush to reform, are we using appropriate and substantive evidence to evaluate the quality of these proposals? Have we seriously considered the current context for learning and its impact on any additional reform effort? I'm not yet convinced.

As of early June 2013, four bills were under consideration before the California legislature:

SB 696 - Requires Superintendent of Public Instruction to recommend by July 2015 a project-based assessment to measure civics learning objectives in the history social-sciences framework, for grades 1-12.

SB 619 - Requires the California Department of Education to develop by July 2015 an online civics orientation on federal and state government for all new and re-classified state employees.



AB 137 - Tasks the Instructional Quality Commission to ensure that a revised history social sciences framework will include - for all appropriate courses and grade levels - teaching students "how to interact, in a political manner, with state and local governmental agencies and representatives to solve problems and to petition for changes in laws and procedures." Provision for civics learning experts to inform the development of this framework.

SB 521 - Same text as AB 137, and would also require that those minimum standards for courses in American government and civics include "the teaching of the comparative differences between the rights of citizens in America and those in other countries, and the connection of civics and American government to western civilizations."

Legislative session ends in early July; to track this legislation visit <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html>



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