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CHAPTER 2

WHAT SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

The New Urgency of Some Old Disputes

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author considers the question: "What do teachers of our subject(s) need to know?" This question has taken on new urgency as policy initiatives are threatening to institutionalize systems designed to eliminate social studies and bypass the role of education faculties in teacher preparation. It will be shown how these initiatives depend on conceptualizations that rely on invalid dichotomies such as "curriculum" versus "instruction" and "content" versus "methods." Such conceptualizations must be challenged and supplanted with a more viable understanding if we are to succeed in demonstrating the kinds of knowledge and ability that teachers need for teaching social studies.

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INTRODUCTION

The burden of this chapter would seem to be an easy one: to identify what social studies teachers need to know. Others have addressed this precise question very capably (see, e.g., Wilson & McDiarmid, 1996). Institutionally, the knowledge requirements for social studies teaching have been incorporated into standards for the review and accreditation of teacher education programs (National Council for the Social Studies: Task Force on Social Studies Teacher Education Standards, 2000a,b), and for more seasoned master teachers, we now have the standards for National Board certification (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1998, 2001a,b,c).

Given the impressive fruits of all these worthy efforts, it might seem that my task could be simply one of synthesis and summary, with perhaps some updating here and there, along with pointing out some gaps that might need to be filled in for a more complete mapping of what teachers need to know for teaching social studies. This sunny outlook is disturbed, however, by challenges from disparate quarters—involving not just disagreement and criticism of the approach generally shared by those mentioned above, but active programs designed to circumvent and obviate the entire system of teacher preparation, certification, and program accreditation which those efforts seek to inform.

Like it or not, in these circumstances it would be blindly irresponsible for us, as researchers and social studies teacher educators, to conduct our own inquiries and deliberations on the question of what social studies teachers need to know, without considering that question within the context of controversies and initiatives that threaten to preempt even our own roles in preparing social studies teachers. Indeed, it can no longer be assumed that "social studies teachers" will even exist in the future, in light of current efforts to establish separate subjects such as history, geography, and economics, in place of social studies as an integrated subject in the schools. Do these alternatives make any difference, in terms of the knowledge needed by those who teach these subjects? We now need to see this as the contested question that it is. The question: "What do teachers of the social subject(s) need to know?" avoids complacently assuming that these will be social studies teachers (although, to avoid verbal awkwardness, I will continue referring to "social studies teachers" in a general, inclusive sense, and rely on context to indicate when this refers to social studies, more distinctively, as an integrative cross-disciplinary subject in the schools).

CONFLICTING VIEWS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

The "Battle between Scholars and Ed School Professors"

In an article reporting a grant from the federal Teaching American History Grant Program, the Dover newspaper quoted University of Delaware History Professor Raymond Wolters, who explained, "We're trying to work on the trickle-down effect. . . . If teachers know the subject matter a little better it will trickle down to the students." After reporting that "The five-day sessions will focus on traditional history, such as military and political events, and will feature seminars, discussions, guest speakers and films," the article continued quoting Wolters: "For a century there has been a battle between scholars that emphasize the content and ed school professors who emphasize the methods," Mr. Wolters said. "What this program does is emphasize the content" (Cooke, 2002).

It may be difficult for those of us who work in schools of education preparing social studies teachers to recognize Wolters' statements as a factual description of what's actually happening now. In my own course on social studies education for undergraduates preparing to teach in grades K–8, for example, we have used the book *Doing History* by Levstik and Barton (2001), and I confess that I do not understand how the attention to "methods" in that book, or in the class in which we use that book, in any way detracts from a constant emphasis on history content. Hazel Hertzberg (1988) concluded her book chapter on the question "Are Method and Content Enemies?" by pointing out "the need to reunite method and content by using a language that illuminates rather than obscures" (p. 38), but the historical account making up the bulk of her chapter demonstrates the historical reality of a century-long conflict articulated in terms of method *versus* content.

The hoary legacy of this supposed "battle between scholars and ed school professors" might lead some to discount its significance. If we have always faced that kind of criticism, do we really need to be concerned about its current manifestations? As we will see, the conflict over what social studies teachers need to know is now more serious, in terms of both the severity of possible outcomes, and the chances of these outcomes being determined without regard for what we understand on the basis of our experience, research and scholarship as social studies educators. These prospects are best appreciated by observing current developments concerning teacher education in general, and not just with respect to social studies teachers. Before we take that broader look, however, we will maintain our focus on the knowledge needs of social studies teachers, in particular. That way, there will be no doubt about the relevance to our own field of the broader conflicts over teacher education generally.

Conflicting views of the knowledge needs of future history teachers can be observed in *Perspectives Online*, "the electronic newsletter of the American Historical Association." The May 1999 issue of *Perspectives* featured an article by Charles Myers describing how the new standards recently adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) "are expected to raise the level of history content knowledge and understanding of beginning teachers in the years ahead" (Myers, 1999a). Myers explained that:

> Both sets of standards are substantially different from those that they have replaced and both are more demanding of college teacher preparation programs. They were developed by NCSS and NCATE for the express purpose of ensuring that future beginning teachers of history, comprehensive social studies, geography, civics and government, economics, and psychology understand their subject matter, are able to teach it well, and have positive dispositions toward doing so. Both organizations recognize that their previous standards did not emphasize content knowledge enough and these new standards are intended to address those weaknesses.

Myers noted further how these standards would function within a cohesive approach common to a number of coordinated efforts:

> The two sets of standards are virtual mirror images of each other and tie directly into the following: the NCATE teacher education accreditation process, state standards for licensing (certifying) new teachers, nationally administered tests for prospective teachers, and parallel standards-setting efforts of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Rather than welcoming these standards as a development that would support preparing teachers with the knowledge they will need, those responding to Myers were skeptical, at best. Cornell University history professor Mary Beth Norton (1999) commented in the September issue:

> Yet the indefinite nature of the standards Myers describes—that "they do not prescribe specific courses or require a minimum of courses, credits, or hours" (46) and that "the history standard does not prescribe specific content to be covered" (47)—seems to permit teachers to be thrust into a history classroom without an adequate background in history but with a valid credential. AHA members might assume that even under the indeterminate NCSS/NCATE standards teachers would not be sent into history classrooms without formal education in the discipline. But nothing in the standards Myers lays out precludes that from happening.

Norton, a trustee of The National Council for History Education, found the NCSS/NCATE standards to be inferior to recommendations of the NCHE (National Council for History Education, 1996), which envisioned content knowledge preparation in terms of future teachers taking required history courses identified as the courses in which they would learn the specific content they would later be responsible for teaching.

Writing in the October issue, Martel (1999) opened by quoting the NCSS standards for school curricula (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994) that were used as the basis for the standards for teacher preparation: "*'The national curriculum standards in the social studies... [t]o paraphrase a famous question,... specify what students should know...*" (emphasis added). His conclusion: "In response to the 'famous question' in the opening quotation, the NCSS standards are inadequate, because, to take liberties with Gertrude Stein's famous answer, 'there's no *what* there.'" Martel argued that:

> Standards are of little value if they cannot be easily translated into assessments of the *concrete knowledge* they supposedly describe. The 10 "thematic standards" [NCSS] are linked to *no* concrete knowledge; therefore, they don't inform the prospective teacher *what*—that is, what content—they are supposed to know. They only know *how* they are supposed to know everything!

Responding to both Norton and Martel, Myers (1999b) countered that "The [NCSS/NCATE] history standard requires greater historical understanding and expertise of a prospective history teacher than the alternatives that Martel and Norton propose." Pointing out that "both Martel and Norton ignore the pervasive movement in education and teacher education reform toward performance-based accountability that has been driving education policy for the last two decades in the United States," Myers noted that "They still describe teacher quality in the form of course-by-course prescriptions of what prospective teachers should have listed on their college transcripts and of which classes they should pass. Martel refers to this as 'concrete knowledge.'"

Martel (1999) sees the ten thematic strands of the NCSS standards as antithetical to "concrete knowledge": "This approach seems to reflect a discomfort with the concrete stuff of history or a fear of facts. Instead, teachers are offered an abstract pan-disciplinary thematic template as key to being a successful 'social studies' teacher." If it is not clear how the NCSS approach could be seen to reflect a "fear of facts," this does seem reminiscent of "the deep aversion to and contempt for factual knowledge that pervade the thinking of American educators," according to E.D. Hirsch (1996, p. 54). Hirsch sees this as one aspect of "the monolithic Thoughtworld" (p. 16) which has come to "monopolize the thinking of the American educational community" (p. 13). In answering his own question, "Why do educa-

tors persist in advocating the very antifact ... practices that have led to poor results ... ?" (p. 69), Hirsch explains that:

> Professors of education, surrounded in the university by prestigious colleagues whose strong suit is thought to be knowledge, have translated resentment against this elite cadre into resentment against the knowledge from which it draws its prestige. This displaced antagonism has expressed itself rhetorically as populist antielitism, which, added to endemic anti-intellectualism, further derogates traditional book learning. (p. 116)

The success (not defined in terms of evidence or criteria) of Hirsch's "Core Knowledge" schools is cited by Martel (1999) in support of his argument against the NCSS approach. In fact, the Core Knowledge Foundation has developed its own vision of what social studies teachers need to know, in the form of syllabi for college courses in Geography (Gritzner, 2002), World History (Gagnon, 2002a,b), and U.S. History (Stern, 2002a,b) for future elementary school teachers. The National Council for History Education (1996) simply recommends that "Elementary school teachers should successfully complete at least three college courses in U.S. History, Western Civilization, World History, or their equivalent," and that "The minimum qualification for every middle and high school teacher of history classes within social studies, should be the successful completion of at least a college minor in history, and preferably a major."

Problem, Prescription, Diagnosis, Evidence

The concern over teachers' knowledge of the content they are responsible for teaching is occasioned by a severe problem seen as evidenced by recent test results, such as the NAEP test scores for civics, geography, and U.S. history (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2002b,c). As National Assessment Governing Board member Diane Ravitch (2002b) characterized the 2001 history results, for example,

> ... high school seniors registered truly abysmal scores, and showed no improvement since the NAEP history assessment was last given in 1994. Since the seniors are very close to voting age or already have reached it, one can only feel alarm that they know so little about their nation's history and express so little capacity to reflect on its meaning.

For mass media coverage of these results, sample items are typically selected as shocking examples of questions students are unable to answer. Here is one of those items from the 2001 U.S. History test, as featured in a front page story in *USA Today* (Henry, 2002):

> **Don't know much about history** When the United States entered the Second World War, one of its allies was: A. Germany B. Japan C. The Soviet Union D. Italy 52% [of high school seniors] failed to pick the correct answer, C.

The article ties students' "abysmal" test results to their teachers' lack of content knowledge: "Unqualified teachers are cited as one reason for the poor performance. Education Department statistics show 54% of junior and senior high school students in 1996 were taught history by teachers who neither majored nor minored in the subject" (Henry, 2002). The NCHE Web site features a speech by Ravitch (1997) in which she identifies "the preparation of those who teach history" as the "the most important variable that is within the purview and direct control of public policy." Ravitch argues, on the basis of NCES data, that

> The typical social studies teacher has an undergraduate degree in education and, if she or he has a Master's degree, it too is in education.
>
> At this point, it seems important to ask: How can teachers teach what they have not studied? How can students learn challenging subject matter from teachers who have not chosen to study what they are teaching? How can teachers create engaging, innovative and even playful ways to present ideas that they have not mastered themselves? How can teachers whose own knowledge of history is fragmentary help students debate and think critically about controversial issues? ...
>
> What I wonder is: Why do state officials grant teaching credentials to people to teach a subject that they have not studied? Why is teacher certification based on completion of education courses rather than on mastery of what is to be taught? Why not require future teachers of history to have a major or at least a strong minor in history?

The NCHE recommendations for teacher preparation would seem to follow irresistibly from the logic of this argument, just as Martel (1999) cited Ingersoll (1999) to the same effect in support of his argument for similar policy conclusions.

Martel (1999) argued that "NCSS should produce evidence from comparative studies with controlled variables that document how these [NCSS and NCSS/NCATE] standards produce more competent history (and geography, etc.) teachers." That seems reasonable enough, but, by the same token, shouldn't the proposition that students majoring in history or geography make more effective teachers also be treated as a testable hypothesis? Given the apparent importance of this question, it seems curious that publicity has not been given to the NAEP data showing that "average geography scores for fourth-grade students taught by teachers with an elementary education major or minor were higher than those taught by teachers who did not" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002b, p.

53), while the opposite is true for those whose teachers specialized in geography or history (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. NAEP Geography Test Results by Teacher Undergraduate/ Graduate Major or Minor/Special Emphasis, Grades 4 and 8: 2001

	Percentage of Students	*Average Score*
Grade 4		
Geography or geography education	7	204
History or history education	15	206
Elementary education	93	211
Grade 8		
Geography or geography education	28	263
History or history education	71	263
Social science or social studies education	55	263

Note: Adapted from National Center for Education Statistics (2002a; 2002b).
Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 Geography Assessment.

And "at grade 8, just over one-quarter (28%) of students were taught by teachers with a graduate or undergraduate major or minor in geography. Within this grade, there was no statistically significant relationship between teachers' major/minor and their students' NAEP geography scores" (NCES, 2002b, p. 53). Corresponding data are not included in the most recent reports on test results in U.S. History and Civics.

Believers in the "trickle down" approach might well have trouble understanding these results. When students fail to answer test questions with the correct information, it has been inferred that this is because the students never had a chance to learn the information—that the knowledge never was passed on to the students because their teachers themselves had never learned the necessary content. If that's the problem and the diagnosis, then the obvious remedy is to change pre-service and in-service programs so that teachers will be given the information, which can then "trickle down" to their students.

If the NAEP Geography data fail to support that diagnosis and prescription, a little reflection on the publicized test items should cast doubt on the basic premise. Recall the celebrated example of the question about the Soviet Union as one of the Allied Powers in World War II. Commenting on that question in her *Today Show* interview the day after the NAEP results

were released, Ravitch (2002a) noted that "the chances are, almost all of these young people took a course in American history the previous year. Everyone—almost everyone takes an 11th grade American history course, so they missed one of the basic points about World War II, which was that the United States and the Soviet Union were allies. And, in fact, we were at war with all three of the other countries. They weren't even neutral countries." Ravitch concluded that "there's something terribly wrong here," and "we need to fix it," and to do that "we need to have better qualified teachers. By that I don't mean more certified teachers, but more teachers who have studied history."

We can be sure, however, that every one of the students who did take an American history course that "covered" World War II *was* given this information about our allies and our adversaries. The problem cannot be that teachers lacked the information and therefore failed to pass it onto students. If anything, the example should call into question the very idea of history education as a matter of delivering factual information to the students.

The Larger Stage

In his remarks at the U.S. Department of Education's First Annual Teacher Quality Evaluation Conference, Secretary of Education Roderick Paige repeated a quotation that he uses frequently in speeches:

> The teacher is the real soldier of democracy. Others can defend it, but only he can make it work. (Paige, 2002, quoting World War II General Omar Bradley)

It would be a mistake, however, to read this as a sign that the Education Secretary, recognizing the crucial importance of those who teach social studies, can be expected to support schools and colleges of education in preparing those teachers to perform in such a crucial role.

Thornton (2001a) has raised several aspects of the questions we are addressing here:

> In addition to general requirements in their professional education such as psychological and social foundations and student teaching, what specifically do *social studies* teachers need to know and be able to do? What, in particular, do they need to study in the subject matters of the social sciences (defined here, for purposes of brevity, to include history and geography), and what should they learn about its effective direction to desired results, that is, method? (p. 72)

When Thornton addresses such questions in *Theory into Practice,* as I do in this chapter, we are writing as social studies educators and researchers who

work in schools of education, and we are writing largely for an audience likewise employed. The initiatives promoted by Secretary Paige and others at the White House conference, however, are designed not so much to support or to inform our teacher preparation efforts, but more to bypass our very role in teacher preparation, if not even to eliminate our schools of education altogether. Indeed, as AACTE President David Imig (2003) reports:

> Criticism of education schools by the Bush administration has intensified since summer. In the most recent assault on education schools, G. Reid Lyon, Branch Chief for a Division of the Early Childhood Development Institute of the National Institutes for Health called for federal legislation to "blow up" schools of education [(Lyon, 2002)]. Widely applauded by his Bush administration colleagues for his statement, Lyon has consistently criticized education schools for failing to make use of scientifically based research in their preparation of teachers. (p. 3)

The Department's mission is to enforce the provision of the No Child Left Behind legislation that requires a "highly qualified teacher" in every public school classroom. But Secretary Paige's report to Congress on teacher quality makes it clear that for him and the administration in which he serves, "highly qualified" teachers are those who have a quantity of content knowledge of a certain kind; it is assumed that the kind of knowledge required is something that teacher education students do not get in courses within schools of education, and that time spent in education courses is little if any better than just wasted time devoted to content-free "methods" or procedures:

> In defining "highly qualified" as having passed a raft of pointless methodology courses, the states have encouraged their prospective teacher corps to abandon a curriculum of *what* to teach, replacing it with an academically empty curriculum of *how* to teach. In the process, they have placed a barrier in front of a lot of bright, academically proficient would-be teachers who haven't leaped through the required hoops. (The *Arizona Republic*, 2002, summarizing this diagnosis of the problem in Paige, Stroup, & Andrade, 2002)

"Methods," along with topics addressed in "foundations" courses, may be regarded as "the 'sharpening pencils' phase of teaching," as opposed to the all-important "content, content, content," according to an article by Susan Goldsmith (2002) posted on the Web site of the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), which was set up by the Fordham Foundation in 2000, and has led an effort, with a $5 million grant from the Department of Education, to create a national system for credentialing teachers on the basis of tests administered by a new American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (Blair, 2001). According to the Department of Educa-

tion press release, "At the end of the two-year project, the ABCTE will implement two levels of certification in teaching. The Passport System for New Teachers will provide aspiring new teachers a passport, usable anywhere in the nation. This certification will attest to their mastery of particular subjects and their grasp of professional skills needed for classroom effectiveness" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). At the White House Conference, NCTQ president Michael Poliakoff (2002) explained that "the Passport credential will be especially useful to schools and districts interested in opening public school classrooms to career changers (like those in Troops to Teachers) and talented new college graduates (like those in Teach for America)." While the Passport credential is supposed to attest to both content knowledge and "professional skills," however, Poliakoff further explains that:

> we resist the presumption that completing a particular set of education courses or being familiar with a particular set of education theories is the key to classroom success. We will test for basic competence in handling classroom dynamics and knowledge of school procedures, and then allow new teachers to get the training that professionals agree matters most—on-the-job training. All new teachers, however they enter the profession, benefit from mentoring and induction. ABCTE will get promising candidates to that stage ... fast. (Poliakoff, 2002)

In other words, "the 'sharpening pencils' phase of teaching," is best learned on-the-job, instead of in the years of education courses that are presumed to be devoted to such matters.

Beyond the Passport level for beginning teachers, the ABCTE will also run a program for awarding national certification to master teachers. As Poliakoff (2002) explains:

> In identifying master teachers, ABCTE's program will rest upon the two pillars of teacher excellence: outstanding knowledge of the subject he or she teaches and proven ability to impart skills and knowledge to students. The system we are designing requires clear evidence of both.
>
> We will test candidates for their subject-area expertise, because a reliable signpost for a teacher's success is his or her own academic achievement. It is the first pillar of teacher excellence....
>
> Are there other attributes of great teachers? Of course. Among other strengths, great teachers help all students, of differing needs and ability, achieve. For ABCTE, the second pillar of teaching excellence is results—the teacher's success in helping students learn.
>
> ABCTE will not attempt to judge teachers' style or the methods they use to help students learn or how they define their art as teachers. Controversies about effective pedagogy have raged for decades and are likely to continue....

> Today's dogmas may be revealed as tomorrow's errors. ABCTE will therefore assess teacher skill by the only truly reliable measure: the extent to which he or she adds value and increases learning.

Earlier in this chapter we noted recent expressions of the kinds of criticism that historians and other academics have long been raising against social studies teacher education, and which now are directed against the cohesive system of standards and certification developed by the NCSS, NCATE, and NBPTS. Now, however, we see such opposition mounted from a political power base, not just from academic criticism; we see the attack on social studies subsumed within a broader effort directed at teachers in all subjects, and we see these efforts directed toward the establishment of institutions and programs designed to provide alternatives to, and ultimately to displace, the kinds of teacher preparation and credentialing now done under the auspices of NCATE and the NBPTS. To meet the federal law's mandate for a "highly qualified teacher" in every classroom, public school districts will be encouraged to hire ABCTE-certified teachers at both beginning and master teacher levels. At both levels, there will be tests to measure teachers' subject matter knowledge. For national certification as a master teacher, the measure of pedagogical effectiveness will apparently be based on how well the teacher's students score on standardized tests. There will be no need for the kinds of substantive standards for pedagogical competence employed by the NBPTS or in NCATE-accredited teacher preparation programs.

As Yinger and Nolen (2003) remind us, such developments are not happening only at the federal level:

> Those of us who have been working seriously on teacher education reform for the past 15 or so years have until recently viewed this work as an internal university agenda—how to improve our campus-based programs. The game has changed radically. In Texas, where we work, school districts, regional educational service centers, community colleges, and for-profit companies now provide almost one-third of the teacher education programs. In the last legislative session, a bill was narrowly defeated that would have allowed Texas school districts to hire anyone they thought could do the job, regardless of credentials, and then decide what teacher education these teachers needed. We have lost our exclusive franchise, and most states are in similar situations or not far behind. (p. 386)

Following Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001), Yinger and Nolen see "politicians, the media, and scholars ... currently polarized over the issue of teacher education reform," with one side advocating "the professionalization of teaching," and the other side pushing for "the deregulation of

teacher preparation and an end to the monopoly that institutions of higher education have held in this area" (pp. 386–387).

But deregulation is not the only form in which the authority of universities and schools of education over teacher education has come under attack. In Colorado, for example, the state's Commission on Higher Education announced a decision "to cut 44 of the 55 majors available to University of Colorado—Boulder students seeking certification as elementary school teachers" (Curtin, 2001b). Under that decision, students preparing to teach elementary school would be permitted to major in history, geography, or economics, but not in other fields such as American studies, ethnic studies, international affairs, political science, psychology, sociology, Spanish, or women's studies. Responding to "a firestorm of controversy" touched off by this decision, "and charges by one CU regent that the commission's decision was 'anti-teaching, anti-CU-Boulder, anti-women and anti-minority,'" the Commission re-approved seven of those forty-four undergraduate majors for future elementary school teachers, including American studies, political science, psychology, and Spanish, but not others such as ethnic studies, sociology, or women's studies (Curtin, 2001a).

ISSUES CONFRONTING SOCIAL STUDIES

Whatever might be said for or against any of those college majors in the preparation of those whose future teaching will include social studies, we can now recognize these developments in Colorado as part of the broader movement to bypass, displace, or even to eliminate social studies teacher education in the schools of education (see Saxe, 2000, esp. pp. 49–51). In the face of this movement, what do we have to offer?

According to prevailing public discourse, future teachers get their content knowledge by taking history and other arts and science courses, while school of education faculty teach "methods" courses that are all process, devoid of any content. In writing about this, I need to confess that I have trouble recognizing such characterizations as having any relationship whatever to the reality that I have seen. For one thing, I have never seen the kind of "methods" course condemned by the critics. The course I teach now at the University of Delaware is "Elementary Curriculum: Social Studies." This is not a "methods" course as described by critics of the Schools of Education; and I must truthfully confess that I don't personally know if any such courses actually exist anywhere.

Thornton (1997) reminds us that the term "methods" has been used in reference to a variety of things over the past decades. While urging a return to Dewey's conception of method as "concerned with the effective

direction of subject matter to desired results," Thornton (2001a, p. 76) does observe that,

> Treatment of method today, however, has become too distant from subject matter, too often emphasizing disembodied skills and special concerns such as "higher-order questions," "individualized educational programs," and "CLOZE" tests to gauge reading difficulty in isolation from the principal subject matters of the curriculum (see Thornton, 1997). Teachers see this approach as too divorced from the realities of classroom teaching while subject matter specialists condemn it as process at the expense of content. Both charges have validity unless method is directly tied to the materials of instruction.

I should certainly concede that such content-free methods courses may exist somewhere, and that I have simply not had the bad fortune to experience them myself. In a time when Reid Lyon and others are making such ostentatious demands for evidence, however, the existence and prevalence of such courses might be regarded as empirically verifiable matters for which evidence and documentation might be in order. Not having seen such content free methods instruction, I have difficulty imagining how the practices of social studies pedagogy could be separated along the lines of content vs. process. I referred earlier to Levstik and Barton (2001) as an example of a text that I have used in my own pre-service social studies course, and I would be genuinely interested in seeing how anyone could describe that book as dealing with process as opposed to content, or how anything within the book could be identified as presenting "method" as distinct from subject matter.

To use a specific example: Consider the problem of kids learning to draw historical conclusions on the basis of evidence. Barton (1997) reports that even when students have learned how to analyze historical evidence, there is still a strong tendency for them to leap to conclusions about historical questions on the basis of some other kinds of expectations, without regard to evidence. When future teachers work on practices that help students learn to understand questions in history as questions that do require evidence, and to acquire not only the skills, but also the intellectual habits of reaching conclusions on the basis of evidence-based judgments, would this somehow be considered an example of them dealing with "teaching methods" *as opposed to* the "content" of history? If so, how should we understand the conceptualizations of content and methods that render such a verdict possible?

Perhaps the answer is that content consists of historical facts, such as the fact that the Soviet Union was one of the Allied Powers in World War II. Perhaps then we could come up with a conclusion that if half the high school seniors missed that question on the NAEP, it is because their teach-

ers had not themselves learned enough history content. Given the virtual certainty, however, that all of those high school seniors had been presented with this factual content, we might still wonder whether that is where the problem lies. Is it reasonable to expect that those seniors would have got the question right if their teachers had taken twice as many history courses prior to their certification? Or ten times as many?

Those who emphasize "content, content, content" as opposed to the "pencil sharpening" aspect of teaching often do recognize that, in addition to the content knowledge itself, teachers also need the ability to "create engaging, innovative and even playful ways" to present the information (Ravitch, 1997). In the mass media and popular imagination this ability might take the form of the entertaining theatrics of Richard Mulligan's character in the movie *Teachers* (McKinney, Hiller, & Russo, 1984). In that movie, Mulligan plays an escaped mental patient passing for a high school history teacher. Showing up for class in costumes dressed as Franklin, Washington, or Lincoln, Mulligan's character puts to shame the duly licensed teacher (nicknamed "Ditto") who sits in the back of his classroom while his students diligently fill out worksheets—with so little pedagogical engagement that his death in the middle of one class goes unnoticed until he fails to get up and go home at the end of the day.

It may well be the case that historical facts such as the Soviets' alliance with Britain and the United States will "trickle-down" and be retained more effectively if teachers dress up like Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill. Be that as it may, however, such techniques for presenting factual information in more entertaining and memorable ways do not represent the focus of social studies education classes in the schools of education. That view preserves the spurious dichotomy of content vs. method, or curriculum substance vs. instructional technique—a dichotomy that also underlies an idea that practices of cooperative learning, inquiry learning, or "constructivism" generally is promoted merely as methods for imparting information, methods that become ends in themselves when the information content is neglected.

"Pedagogical Content Knowledge" of the Subject(s) to be Taught . . .

In what we saw earlier described as a conflict between "professionalization" and "deregulation" approaches to the improvement of teaching, the discourse of deregulators typically distinguishes between content and method in this way, while the professionalizers' discourse on the professional knowledge of teachers does not observe such a dichotomy. A good overview of thinking about teachers' professional knowledge is provided by

Sosniak (1999), who emphasizes what, since the mid-1980s, is referred to as pedagogical content knowledge, which defies any such dichotomization.

Sosniak notes the development of the concept from 1985, when "Shulman identified pedagogical content knowledge as, 'the particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability' [(Shulman, 1986, p. 9)]," to 1987, when he "identified pedagogical content knowledge as 'that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding' [(Shulman, 1987, p. 8)]" (Sosniak, 1999, pp. 194–195).

In their contribution to the AACTE's 1989 *Knowledge Base for Beginning Teachers,* Shulman and his colleagues commented that "it would appear that there are intimate connections between content and pedagogy that neither arts and sciences faculty nor teacher education faculty currently address" (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989, p. 25). Although there have been a handful of papers and dissertations on pedagogical content knowledge in the social studies subjects (see, e.g., Gudmundsdóttir, 1988, 1991; Lee, 2000; Wilson & Wineberg, 1988), this has not been studied to the extent that it has been in other areas, such as math or science education.

The pedagogical content knowledge needed for teaching social studies would seem to be a vast area for potentially important research. Moreover, it would seem logical to think that this might be a topic on which professionalizers and deregulators might converge, since it is concerned with important subject-matter knowledge rather than content-free "methods," and since a demonstrable need for such knowledge might be met through deregulated market mechanisms, and not only professional credentialing.

Recalling the test case of students' failure to identify the Soviet Union as one of the Allied powers in World War II, however, we may have reason to wonder if there may not be a more fundamental problem, a problem that is not really addressed by mastery of pedagogical content knowledge. The idea of pedagogical content knowledge recognizes that a teacher of physics, math, or history might need to acquire a command of the concepts in those disciplines that are in some way more profound, robust, and versatile than would be needed by a non-teaching physicist, mathematician, or historian. It is not enough for the teacher to have the same command of disciplinary concepts that may suffice for advanced practice within the discipline; beyond that, the teacher must be able to communicate those concepts through a variety of representations that will effectively promote learning by students struggling to acquire and understand the basic concepts of the discipline. Such mastery is no doubt essential for effective social studies teaching, but is it responsive to the basic problem?

... but What Is/Are the Subject(s)?

Research by Neil Houser (1995) in Delaware showed that social studies was put on the "back burner" in elementary schools largely because teachers and administrators did not view it as important, relative to other subjects. History and social studies were regarded not only as relatively unimportant in themselves, but also as uninteresting and boring to the students, so that students got less out of time spent on social studies, compared with other subjects. If this is how elementary teachers and administrators view social studies, it is not surprising if such attitudes are carried by the students into their high school years. Kozol (1980) reports dialogue in which one class of high school students express their view:

> I ask this question to a class of Twelfth Grade pupils in a school in upper New York State: "What is the purpose of your work in history? What is history in your point of view? Why do you study it? What is it for?"
>
> "History is everything that happened in the past and now is over." "History is cycles ... processes ... inevitable patterns ... " "History is what is done by serious and important people."
>
> I ask this question: "Is it in your power to *change* history? Is it in the power of someone within this class?"
>
> The answer: "No ... not us ... Not ordinary people."
>
> I ask them, then: "Who *does* bring change into the world?" One student says: "I guess ... the leaders do." I ask: "Could *you* be leaders, if you wanted to be leaders?"
>
> He answers: "No ... None of us comes from the important families." (p. 82)

Clearly, there is a basic failure here. But is the answer to be found in the teacher's pedagogical ability to effectively communicate the discipline of history? This is how the problem is generally formulated by Ravitch and others who recognize that teachers do need this kind of pedagogical ability, along with deep and extensive content knowledge. Kozol's further observation, however, suggests a different problem:

> On one corridor in the social studies section of this modern, antiseptic, nearly all white school, there is a poster: "Occupations to Which Interest in History May Lead." The list is devastating, perfect and consistent with the words and comprehensions of the children that the school turns out. If the children work hard, and can demonstrate an interest in the field of history, then they can expect one day to be one of these kinds of specialist or expert: (1) archaeologist, (2) historian, (3) curator, (4) writer, (5) critic, (6) anthropologist, (7) research assistant, (8) librarian, (9) teacher of history.

> Nowhere in the list do I find two words to suggest the possible goal of being one who *enters* history. Every job or dream or aspiration listed here is one of narrative description: critic, commentator, teacher, curator, librarian ... not union-leader, student-organizer, rebel, revolutionary, saint or senator. "Why study history?" asks the wall-sized poster. The answer that we get is plain and uncomplex: in order to *teach* it, *total* it, *tell* it in writing, *cash* it in for profit, or *list* it alphabetically on index cards. (Kozol, 1980, p. 83)

Kozol's observation reveals a problem far more fundamental than the commonly recognized need for "pedagogical content knowledge" for helping students learn and understand conceptual content from the academic disciplines. The idea of social or historical education preparing students with the competence that they will need as participants in social life—in its historical, political, economic and other dimensions—calls into question the conception of history education as early training in the academic discipline of history. As Mark Krug observed in commenting on Bruner's "structure of the disciplines" approach applied to history:

> Bruner and his associates are constantly emphasizing the importance of the child "doing" mathematics or physics instead of learning about them. The student should "do" the things on the blackboards or in the laboratory that mathematicians and physicists are doing. That sounds reasonable and exciting. But how does this apply to history? Christopher Jencks, in his review of Bruner's book, *Toward a Theory of Instruction,* made an acute observation. "The analogy," he wrote, "between physics and history is at bottom misleading. The men who really 'do' history are not, after all, historians. They are politicians, generals, diplomats, philosophers. It is these people whom the young need to understand, far more than they need to understand the historians who judge them." (Krug, 1966, p. 404; cf. 1967, p. 122)

Comparable questions arise when we consider the range of social science disciplines along with history. Again, Kozol (1980) notes how schools implementing this approach came to present visitors such as himself with "almost a standard 'pitch' in this regard: 'We are learning to be social scientists. We are learning to do independent research'" (p. 141). As Kozol sees it, "the purpose is to teach them how to gather information, not in order to take action but in order to increase the body of material that they possess already" (pp. 144–145). As one teacher tells him:

> The colleges love to see that stuff about the Independent Research. They like it most when it ties in with something like the Urban Crisis. It looks so good! It knocks them out.... Think what they say at Yale and Wesleyan and M.I.T. when they find out how much our kids are like their own professors! (p. 146)

Indeed, when Kozol asked one group of high school students what they were learning from "a year-long research-project into 'Urban Crisis and Race Turmoil in the Nineteen Sixties,'" one student told him, "We're the ones who get the good end of the deal. The losers, those down at the other end—let's face it—they're the ones who work for people like our mothers and our fathers" (pp. 145–146). In other words they learned, in effect, that sociologists are better off than many others in society.

The purposes of social studies are successfully achieved in these examples, despite Kozol's dissatisfaction, if the defining purposes of social studies are to teach the social sciences and history as academic disciplines. But this is only one of the conflicting views of social studies that have been articulated over the past century (Nelson, 2001), and this view has been rejected by the NCSS in its formal definition of social studies as a subject in which study of the social sciences and humanities is *integrated* for the purpose of promoting *civic competence*. Knowing the content or structures of the academic disciplines as such is not the ultimate purpose in itself; rather, "the primary purpose of social studies is to help 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. vii).

In his argument against the NCSS standards for social studies, and the NCSS/NCATE standards for teacher education, Martel (1999) claims that "The 10 thematic [NCSS] standards dilute and merge seven major disciplines into one interdisciplinary amalgam called 'social studies.'" Claiming that each of the seven disciplines "is downgraded to a theme," he provides chart that purports to list "each of the first 10 'thematic standards' next to its designated parent discipline."

This reduction of the ten thematic themes to seven "parent disciplines" is a gross misrepresentation of the NCSS and the NCSS/NCATE standards, with severe implications for the knowledge teachers need for teaching social studies. To take just one of these themes as an example: The theme that is labeled "Production, Distribution, and Consumption" is by no means a "downgraded" offspring of the academic discipline of economics. While economics surely does have special importance as a source of knowledge, understanding, and insight into matters encompassed by this theme, it is by no means the only source. The information and understanding of these matters that citizens must take into account to arrive at personal and social judgments and decisions comes importantly from the discipline of economics; but it also comes from history, politics, business, labor, journalism and other sources beyond that one academic discipline.

As explained by its own advocates, the design of a more strictly disciplinary approach to economics standards and curriculum for grades K–12 would not even attempt to accomplish the civic competence objective of

the NCSS standard (see, e.g., Costrell, 2000). The difference partly follows from a judgment about the teachers' knowledge and understanding. As explained by the principal drafters of the *Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics*:

> The standards attempt to reflect consensus in the discipline.... The final standards reflect the view of a large majority of economists today in favor of a "neoclassical model" of economic behavior.... Including strongly held minority views of economic processes risks confusing and frustrating teachers and students who are then left with the responsibility of sorting the qualifications and alternatives without a sufficient foundation to do so. (Meszaros & Siegfried, 1997, p. viii)

In other words, although the discipline of economics is already narrower than the NCSS theme, it must be simplified and narrowed even further, partly because teachers won't have the knowledge they would need even for teaching just the discipline itself as it really is.

Whether their judgment is correct or not about the realistic possibilities, their argument does show how teaching academic disciplines as such would differ from teaching social studies as preparation for civic competence. We are further told, for example, that "some very important aspects of economics are either quite complex or so controversial that no existing consensus seems to exist. In spite of their importance, such complex or controversial aspects of economics receive less attention in the [Economics] standards for pedagogical reasons" (Meszaros & Siegfried, 1997, p. viii). Since democracy requires, however, that citizens be capable of participating in decisions on matters of public concern and consequence, civic competence—as the purpose for social studies education—requires that students must learn to deal with such matters even, or especially, when they are complex and controversial (Stanley & Whitson, 1992; Whitson & Stanley, 1990).

Costrell's (2002) argument that the academic discipline of economics should define the social subject(s) in grades K–12 is exceptional for its clarity in recognizing that there is an issue here, one that requires taking a position that can be supported with reasonable arguments. More typically, it is simply assumed that a future teacher majoring in economics, history, or political science is ipso facto learning the content that is, as if by definition, the subject matter for K–12 student learning about the economic, civic, or historical dimensions of human being.

The difference between academic disciplines and the school subject of social studies—or at least the possibility of such a difference—has long been salient to those engaged in social studies teacher education (Brophy, 1997, pp. 81–82). As Shaver (1997) reflects on his engagement with this issue:

> For more than 25 years, I argued, some might even say vociferously, that social studies should be defined as the curricular area centered on citizenship education. The counter position, put simplistically, is the definition of the social studies as history and the social sciences simplified and adapted for pedagogical purposes. From that perspective, citizenship as a goal is not rejected, but considered an incidental outcome of instruction. (p. 210)

Shaver explains his more recent "recanting of definitional sectarianism for definitional agnosticism" (p. 215) in recognition of the fact that for most "social studies" teachers or curriculum supervisors, "definitional questions such as, 'Should it be "social studies *is* . . . "or "*the* social studies *are* . . . ?"' lack professional salience" (p. 211):

> So, in regard to definitional purity, one must, from the above hardly new analysis, ask, *cui bono:* To what purpose? For whose benefit? If a major, if not *the* purpose of NCSS is to influence schooling for the benefit of the students and society, then definitional purity, insistence on a citizenship-centered definition (or any other single definition) that denies the existence and appropriateness of teachers' diverse instructional orientations, is dysfunctional. (p. 211)

The issue of what teachers need to know in order to teach the social subject(s) forces us to recognize why the struggle over definitions cannot be abandoned. What they need to know depends on what the subject(s) is (or are) that they are to be teaching. Four years of majoring in history or economics might leave a social studies teacher without the knowledge he or she would need for helping K–12 students prepare for their roles as effective citizens, i.e., as competent participants in the historical and economic life of their societies—however well it might equip them for teaching history or economics as academic disciplines.

The Job Ahead

Although, as Shaver recognizes, these questions have been debated in the past as arcane issues in curriculum theory, in our current context they bear on the most pressing and consequential struggles over public policy concerning teacher preparation and educational accountability. In the public discussion of these issues, we don't usually hear arguments for why curriculum in this area should be defined as teaching certain academic disciplines. More often, a disciplinary definition is simply taken for granted, without justification, as in implicit but necessarily presupposed basis for the policies and programs being advocated.

If, however, authors who actually do argue for a disciplinary definition have not posed arguments against social studies for civic competence as a viable alternative, the fault may not entirely be theirs. Costrell (2000, pp. 187–195), for example, explicitly addresses the question, "Can Economics Standards Be Non-Discipline-Based?" using the "pre-disciplinary" 1997 Massachusetts standards as representing the alternative to teaching economics as a discipline. If those standards do not represent the social studies for civic competence alternative, then where is this alternative represented? What kinds of learning about economic reality do students need for civic competence, and how does this differ from teaching economics as a discipline? And what do teachers need to know to promote such learning ... and how is this knowledge different from what teachers will acquire by learning only economics as a discipline?

The arguments that we do see feature the alternatives as something *less than* disciplinary, as in the "pre-disciplinary" Massachusetts standards, or in Martel's (1999) claim that the NCSS standards "dilute and merge seven major disciplines into one interdisciplinary amalgam called 'social studies.'" To the contrary, social studies for civic competence demands *more than* merely disciplinary education. History, economics, and the other disciplines are indeed indispensable vehicles for social competence and understanding, but they are not sufficient in and of themselves. As Thornton (2001b) points out, the disciplines are sources of essential "content" for social studies, but that content still needs to be incorporated into "subject-matter" for accomplishing the purposes of K–12 social studies.

As Thornton observes:

> The standards makers, and the policymakers they served, also appear to have assumed that the same content would yield approximately uniform subject matter and that that is a desirable outcome. Although they made a nod to standards being only a basis for curriculum making and subject matter selection at the local level, the standards makers essentially cast teachers as conduits through which the standards will flow untainted. (Thornton, 2001b, p. 238; on the problem of teachers being regarded as "conduits," see also Parker, 1987; Ben-Peretz & Connelly, 1980)

Instead of serving as "conduits" for delivery of "content" dictated by specialists in academic disciplines, social educators must know how to integrate material from the disciplines into the subject-matter of a curriculum in which students acquire the competence for effective participation in democratic citizenship. For this, the teacher must not only know the disciplines providing content for the social studies, but must also have the knowledge necessary to perform the essential role of "curricular-instructional gatekeeper" (Thornton, 1991, 2001c; cf. Parker, 1987 on the teacher's role in "mediation").

Cogent as these arguments by Thornton, Parker, and others have been, however, they do not provide accounts of what teachers need to know that are as concrete, specific, and elaborate as what we can see in the literature, for example, on teaching economics as an academic discipline. If we are not content to see instruction in the disciplines supplant education for civic competence, by default—in schools and teacher education programs, as well as in the public discourse—then we will need to develop our own detailed and elaborate accounts of what teachers need to know for the promotion of civic competence.

This chapter began with the idea that the job at hand could be one of synthesizing and identifying residual gaps in a well-developed understanding of what social studies teachers need to know, reflected in the literatures in social studies education and teacher education, and in the standards developed by NCSS, NCATE, and NBPTS. We have discovered, to the contrary, the urgent need for an enormous undertaking that could not be accomplished in a single chapter such as this. As researchers and as social studies teacher educators, we may indeed share among ourselves a well-developed understanding of what social studies teachers need to know; but never before has there been such an urgent need to articulate that understanding—as concretely and specifically as possible—for a much broader public audience.

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