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Critical Thinking in Civic Education

Allen G. Hubert
Bethel University

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ALLEN G. HUBERT

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ALLEN G. HUBERT

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Thesis Advisor: Sean Dikkers, Dr.

Program Director: Molly Wickam, Dr.

Abstract

Given the consistent call for and appreciation of the need for critical thinking in education, closer examination of leading approaches shows this curriculum is diverse in its framing, its definition, its goals, and in classroom implementation. Yet, critical thinking remains important for higher order thinking skills and tools to be effective decision makers. Hubert does a meta analysis of critical thinking definitions and implementation across the globe finding common ground and best practice in critical thinking education leading towards the current framework of Active Citizenship. How to implement it effectively remains in question and Hubert begins to outline differences and proposes a path forward to advance the research around this topic.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." (Aristotle)

Understanding how to teach critical thinking has been considered essential in education from the global level down to the state level. International bodies of education have stressed the importance of critical thinking; INCA insists that the highest calling of active citizenship must involve critical thinking and "… learning which encourages young people to be critical, enquiring and reflective" (Nelson and Kerr, 2006). Within the United States., the National Council of Social Studies defines the overall purpose of social studies to be "help[ing] 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" (NCSS, 1994). This standard is reflected in the Minnesota state standards that require students to be able to "think critically about important issues and communicate their findings, and engage in the processes of problem solving and discipline-based inquiry" (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). At all levels, critical thinking is considered essential. While the need for it is in consensus, the where, when, and how critical thinking is to be taught are not necessarily clear nor agreed upon.

Within critical thinking and civic education, there are questions that researchers have examined of trends and policies that have been adopted by public education communities. How do educators view critical thinking in their classrooms? How is critical thinking defined across

the world? What is the best practice to implement critical thinking in the classroom? These questions will be addressed and explored throughout the paper using experts in the field.

Different theorists have very different views of critical thinking in the classroom. One of the seminal writers on the subject, Robert Ennis, states that critical thinking is defined as, "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis, 2015). This definition is just one of many that are offered as critical thinking's definition can change depending on the context and culture of the person defining it. In addition to impacting how it is defined, culture also impacts whether critical thinking should be taught at all, and intentionally teaching critical thinking is not universally accepted. For example, researcher Dwight Atkinson (1997) does not see a benefit in teaching critical thinking and views it as only a western culture approach. Atkinson (1997) asserts that "not only is critical thinking a culturally based concept, but many cultures endorse modes of thought and education that almost diametrically oppose it." In the available research, some educators work to define and promote critical thinking, while others deconstruct and resist its teaching in the classroom. Before educators can even approach the teaching of critical thinking in the classroom, a comprehensive understanding of how it is commonly defined needs to be established, along with a working definition. Furthermore, it is important to understand how critical thinking is viewed by teachers and educational professionals. Until those foundational aspects of critical thinking are known, it will not be systematically possible to incorporate it in pedagogies consistently.

Chapter 2 - Definitions

Critical Thinking

Ruggerio, who wrote one of the first books on the subject in 1975, defines critical thinking as "the process by which we test claims and arguments and determine which have merit and which do not (Ruggerio, 2012)." Ruggerio uses this form of critical thinking to take a "data analysis approach" to societal problems. However, this method leaves some questions, as Ruggerio makes the assumption that people would be able to determine whether the argument has merit without having background information beforehand. Critical thinking, then, could be done without regard to quality as long as there is a process. Consequently, using Ruggerio's critical thinking approach could lead to merit being awarded based on the trust and power of the individual or group giving you the information to assess, rather than data itself.

Years later, Atwater, who has a background in government education, takes a more broad approach with critical thinking, stating that "critical thinking is identifying, evaluating, and constructing an argument (Atwater, 1991)." This definition includes the source of information that Ruggerio omits. Atwater's definition could solve some of the questions presented by Ruggerio's one-step approach, which only questioned if something has merit or not. Atwater proposes that critical thinking is a three-step process: starting with identifying the argument and finding background information, then evaluating whether the argument has merit, and finally determining if the students agree with the statement being made. Atwater's definition is used for teaching critical thinking in the college/higher education systems and could be too broad for middle and high school students to understand. It also begs the question of what that evaluation

process would and can look like and what system could be used.

Offering a middle ground between Ruggerio's narrow and Atwater's broad definitions, Moreno provides a third approach and asserts that "critical thinking is a process of *systematically* assessing the information and drawing an inference based upon evidence (Moreno, 2015, italics mine)." Moreno outlines a way for multiple steps to define the facts behind an argument and to make an evaluation based on the evidence found. This definition could better address current issues of fake news and conflicting news resources, giving students the system to analyze a news source and determine bias from facts. Using Ruggerio's definition, students would only determine merit of a source, which would require little to no critical thinking. Atwater's definition, on the other hand, could be too broad and complicated to teach to students in a way that would be effective. Accordingly, Moreno's definition is used for teaching critical thinking to educators and also offers a higher level of thinking that is attainable to both middle and high school students.

Not all people see a benefit in critical thinking; one of these researchers is Dwight Atkinson, who states, "not only is critical thinking a culturally based concept, but many cultures endorse modes of thought and education that almost diametrically oppose it" (Atkinson, 1997). Atkinson's claim partially agrees with researchers such as Kadir, who recognizes that there are different types of critical thinking in different cultures. Although Kadir states that there are different definitions of critical thinking, he does not propose that there are some cultures opposed to critical thinking as a whole, as Atkinson would suggest. Another researcher, Sarah Benesch, writes in response to Atkinson that " in taking this position, Atkinson excludes students from examining their thinking and behavior and possibly challenging the status quo. Critical teachers

take an opposing political position, encouraging students to consider and question processes of daily life so that their thinking and behavior will be informed" (Benesch, 1999). In response, Benesch states that thinking critically allows students--no matter their background--to be able to question daily life and think critically so that their everyday behavior will be informed by logic.

Critical Thinking Around the World

In the area of government and citizenship, critical thinking can have many different strategies and approaches across the world. These definitions can be shaped by the types of government in these countries, and the cultures of the local people groups who control education (Johnson and Morris, 2010). This can also be further complicated by differing views on how critical thinking should be implemented in the classroom; these differences are explored through many studies across the world. For example, Australia is an English-speaking country with a western mindset, yet they are simultaneously dealing with an intermixing of non-western ideas about critical thinking (Kadir and Akshir, 2016). Attempting to encompass both ideas of thinking, the Australian curriculum defines critical thinking as, "criteria [that] include clarity, precision, relevance and logical coherence in the act of thinking critically (Kadir and Akshir, 2016)." In contrast to Australia, Singapore is an eastern culture with a newer education system that is attempting to move critical thinking away from being used in literature and towards teaching their students to adapt to an ever changing world economy (Baldin and Sim, 2009). Baldin reflects on how teachers are reluctant to teach critical thinking, because it is difficult to test in a culture where testing is paramount (Baldin and Sim, 2009). Moreover, the teacher still is the primary delineator of what constitutes "clarity", "relevance", "adapting," who, how much,

and which worldview determines what is the focus. These definitions seem to be focused on topical threads.

In a contrasting approach, the Netherlands has experienced a changing demographic of "adapting citizens" and transitioning their children into "critical democratic citizens" (Leenders et al, 2008). Fueled through critical thinking promoted by the education system, this transition is essential to the process of learning citizenship and government. Both of these countries are attempting to bring minority groups up to speed in the process of becoming full citizens. South Africa and the Netherlands share a common thread in their prioritization of both critical thinking and the importance of a free-thinking populace for a democratic society (Johnson & Morris, 2010). This transition is supported by critical thinking that the education system promotes as essential to the process of learning citizenship and government and raising citizens that can make decisions (Leenders et all, 2008).

For this paper I am using the definition of critical thinking presented by Moreno, who presents the definition that best fits the aspects of critical thinking taught within social studies education: "Critical thinking is a process of *systematically* assessing the information and drawing an inference based upon evidence (Moreno, 2015, italics mine). This definition provides a general framework that agrees with most of the definitions offered by other researchers. Furthermore, Moreno's definition explains important concepts that enable students to assess information and then draw inferences based on the evidence they find. This skill is evidenced in Peiser's article where he has students evaluate four different sources and develop an argument from those articles. Lastly, this definition explains the steps that have to be involved in order to critically think. Moreno proposes that a student must first understand the information in

order to then be able to draw inferences based on that information. This two step process is attainable within education when teachers help their students learn a certain amount of information before they expect their students to think critically on that content.

Within critical thinking in education, the first problem that is encountered is defining the term. With each researcher using a different definition of the term, depending on their area of enterprise and agenda for their paper, it can be difficult to find a consensus for how educators should define critical thinking. Furthermore, when examining the definition across the world, the meaning behind critical thinking can change depending on culture and the goal of public education within that country.

Citizenship

What does it mean to be a citizen? How does this relate to the teaching of Critical Thinking? According to J.J. Giroux, citizenship is defined as a "historical contract between the individual and the state and is expressed in the continuing participation of individuals in the co-management of public affairs" (1995). Historically, this definition is similar to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in his book *The Social Contract* (1762) states, "What, then, is the government? An intermediary body established between the subjects and the sovereign for their mutual communication, a body charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of freedom, both civil and political." Rousseau claims that a government only works because of a contract signed between the governed and the government.

Reflecting a more modern interpretation of that contract, Giroux's definition offers a narrower view of citizenship that gives a more complete picture of the purpose of citizenship in a

modern nation-state. Giroux emphasizes that “citizenship and democracy need to be problematized and reconstructed for each generation... The education system, through curricular, is the ideal platform to introduce and nurture the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of good citizenship by reaching the masses of the children of the nation (p. 6). Understanding the deeper meaning of citizenship for that time is vital to the education system, which then must teach the next generation the skills desired to be a good citizen.

For educational applications, Christopher Anderson gives a more complicated picture of how citizenship is viewed, since the study uncovers that “given the centrality of citizenship to social studies education, it is perplexing that we were unable to locate empirical studies that directly examined teachers' conceptions of citizenship education” (Anderson et al, 1997). This confusion over an agreed upon definition of citizenship within education can lead to a breakdown in how educators teach the subject. Furthermore, this confusion is not felt about the importance of learning about citizenship by teachers, as over “83% agreed that citizenship was the most important result of social studies” (p.356).

Similarly, Laura Johnson and Paul Morris (2010) state that in their research the term citizenship can vary widely from a technical use of the term to more of a participation aspect of the term. Johnson and Morris offer one of the reasons that citizenship is hard to define as “citizenship is now often expected to achieve a far more complex set of purposes which broadly reflect changing conceptions of what it means to be a good citizen” (p.78). Identifying a significant change in citizenship, Johnson and Morris note that ”beyond a concern for membership of a nation-state include: the emergence of global and cross-national bodies such as the UN and the EU, creating pressures for schools to promote forms of supranational citizenship”

(p.78). Subsequently, they find that being a citizen is no longer just being a part of a nation-state, but being a global citizen. They argue that in order to prepare students for this new reality of being global citizens, schools must provide critical citizenship education that will give students the tools to thrive in an ever changing world.

Furthermore, Jasmine Boon-Yee Sim agrees with Wood's assessment, as she contends that "unless we focus specifically on the tangled contexts of the classroom, it is difficult to get a sense of the most viable instances of citizenship education, particularly given the value-laden nature of the citizenship curriculum" (2011). According to Sim, the values that define what it means to be a good citizen fluctuates, depending on teachers' and national values. Sim offers context of how Singapore may define active citizenship when explaining that "Singapore . . . has a reputation for strong political rule, a tightly controlled education system, and a highly prescriptive citizenship education" (p.221). This context could help explain the trends that Wood and Sim have proposed with the evolving nature of active citizenship within a given education system.

As an example of the trend, in the European Union, active citizenship is defined as "balancing rights and responsibilities" (EU, 2011). Within the old British commonwealth, Nelson and Kerr purport a similar portrayal of active citizenship in their study, which finds that "active citizenship is coming to be viewed as the process by which an education for citizenship can be made active" (2006). Both of these definitions are similar in that they are seeking to define a term that is challenging to define within one country, but seek to find a definition that would fit at least 14 countries, with respect to Nelson and Kerr, and 27 countries for the European Union. Yet even with these broad definitions, they share a common strand of freedom

and individuality. This commonality cannot be said about countries with different political ideologies.

Contrasting the views held in the EU and the old British Commonwealth is Ukraine, where the ideals of totalitarianism are still fresh in most people's minds, as Janmaat and Piattoeva argue in their study on the Ukraine and Russia post Cold War (2007). Wagner, who writes recently after the collapse of the Communist Bloc, states that there are two types of citizenship a country would seek: "state citizenship" where citizens are merely legally recognized, and "democratic citizenship" where citizens are expected to be political actors constituting political communities as public spaces" (Wagner,1995). The former being touted by harsh authoritarian regimes, and the latter being used by democratic countries who seek active citizenship in order to function as a state. This conflict supports Wood and Sim's assertion that the definition of citizenship changes from nation-state to nation-state.

After reviewing research on active citizenship, the problems uncovered by Sim seem evident. The definition of active citizenship can be dependent on the nation state and the teacher. For example, researchers in western ideals seek to define citizenship as more of a higher calling for a person to achieve or a democratic citizenship. (Nelson and Kerr, 2006) (Wagner,1995). These schools of thought seek to build future productive citizens who will be able to participate in the social/political institutions using critical thinking strategies and autonomy provided to them from the education system.

Alternatively, an eastern approach would favor loyalty to the government over questioning of authority. (Janmaat and Piattoeva, 2007). This state citizenship, as Wagner lays out, is intended to have citizens be passive in government and local issues with the extent of their

involvement not expected outside of their jobs and daily life (1995). Therefore, the teaching of active citizenship can be broken down into curriculum that is presented by the education system, the teacher, and the teaching methods of government education within the nation-state.

Returning to J.J. Giroux's definition could offer a more functional and usable definition of how citizenship should be delineated, using the perception of the national board's meaning along with a more day-to-day working stipulation of the word citizenship. Understanding the complex meaning of citizenship could allow for better teaching practices in the instruction of citizenship education.

Accordingly, Browyn Wood states, "however, active citizenship in its various forms remains an ambiguous notion: just what does it mean to be an active citizen and how should citizenship educators implement this aspect of the curriculum when the very nature of active citizenship is contested and variously interpreted?" (Wood et al, 2013). She argues that one of the hardships of teaching active citizenship is first finding a definition and qualities that should be instructed by the education systems. Wood refers to a key study conducted by Nelson and Kerr when discussing the problems the educational system has run into with finding a definition of the term, "Even when there is a single curriculum document, teachers have multiple interpretations of active citizenship" (p.85). Ultimately, this brings us back, as with critical thinking, to a definition that is essentially up to the individual teacher, their world view, their politics, and their goals in teaching youth. Politics and differing views of education have clouded the ability for the education system to find a united way to define active citizenship.

Citizenship, as with critical thinking, has many definitions which do not agree on the main idea of what constitutes citizenship. As demonstrated with the study by Nelson and Kerr,

curriculum documents alone will not solve the problem of finding a common definition. Furthermore, the definition of citizenship can be altered by political factors of the teacher or country who are instructing the topic. The lack of agreement on a standard definition is not the only hardship facing educators, as evidenced by some definitions in Minnesota which are lacking in scope regarding instruction on citizenship.

Citizenship and Critical Thinking in Minnesota

As definitions are diverse, perhaps a local glimpse narrows the focus and provides more direction for educators. Within the Minnesota education system. one of the standards for a sixth grader is to define citizenship within the United States; the definition offered by the Minnesota Historical Society is ”the status of being legally recognized as a citizen of a country” (MNHS, 2013). This definition seems similarly generalized to the Merriam Webster definition, “the position or status of being a citizen of a particular country.” Both are a state or status of being, not a set of responsibilities or actions expected. What then is to be taught? This can cause confusion within education as the broadness of the term could leave educators in the difficult position of finding their own definition, which likely could conflict with another teacher's definition. This breakdown of teaching citizenship will be explored in more depth later on in the paper.

Minnesota state standards are based on concepts developed by Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy and enable students to slowly work their way up the levels of thinking as they have repeated exposure with the same information, allowing for more higher order thinking. Aspects of critical thinking in citizenship education are found scattered throughout the state standards.

An example of this is found in the high school curriculum for government education with the benchmark asking the students to "analyze the meaning and importance of rights in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments; compare and contrast these with rights in the Minnesota Constitution" (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). Students are asked to analyze and recognize the importance of the Bill of Rights. They are then asked to take this first argument they identified, apply it to the local state Constitution, and compare and contrast similarities and differences. Within these benchmarks, higher order thinking skills are found with students being asked to use level four of Bloom's taxonomy--analyzing, comparing, and contrasting. Another benchmark that uses these higher order skills is to "evaluate the role of interest groups, corporations, think tanks, the media and public opinion on the political process and public policy formation" (p. 105). This benchmark asks students to look into their current lives to evaluate how much of the public opinion is shaped by outside sources. Both of these benchmarks first require that a student has prior knowledge and then they are expected to apply this information in order to think critically about the information.

If educators look to specific definitions of citizenship for Minnesota instruction, the only definitions that are given are general and incomplete. This vagueness is concerning, since the writers of the standards state that the main goal of these standards is to be "guided by a vision of citizenship and college- and career-readiness" (p. 3). If Minnesota is to move forward with this vision, they need a more complete definition of citizenship and delineated strategies of teaching critical thinking to all levels of social studies. To better evaluate some curriculum that the State

of Minnesota produces within social studies, it is valuable to examine the one textbook that they created, *The Northern Lights*.

Curriculum Review of Northern Lights Textbook

The first variable in teaching citizenship and active citizenship is curriculum. In the Minnesota education system, the first exposure for most students to social studies as a class is during the 6th grade with Minnesota Studies. The *Northern Lights* textbook is written by the Minnesota Historical Society and examines the history of Minnesota, along with geography and local civics lessons. *Northern Lights* has twenty chapters, with sixteen of the chapters focusing on Minnesota history, three on civics, and one on historiography. The textbook addresses the terms of citizenship and active citizenship in chapters 8 and 12, but it only offers definitions for these terms in the appendix at the end of the textbook. Citizenship is defined as "the status of being legally recognized as a citizen of a country" (MNHS, 2013). Furthermore, the textbook states that the rights a citizen has are "freedom of expression, freedom of religion, right to vote, and to serve on a jury" (AP. 5). To balance this, the responsibilities are also listed: "obey laws, respect rights of others, pay taxes, vote in elections, and participate in the political process" (AP. 5). On the same page, the textbook emphasizes the importance of active citizenship and what students can do before they are able to vote and hold office.

The textbook offers students an opportunity to use critical thinking strategies as outlined by the Minnesota state standards in all twenty chapters, using investigations and workbook activities. These activities require the students to "gather a variety of primary and secondary sources related to questions, analyze sources for credibility, identify possible answers, use

evidence to draw conclusions, and present supported findings" (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). This emphasis of critical strategies and challenging students to develop their own ideas is one of the central ideals behind the social studies curriculum for 6th graders. These activities are questions that have the students examine either a visual primary resource, such as a propaganda poster, or a written source, such as a newspaper. For example, in the chapter on World War One, the investigation has the students examine two propaganda recruitment posters and pick which one they think would be the most effective to its target audience. They are then asked to back up their choice with information they already know or recently learned. These activities offer students an opportunity to begin to think critically with scaffolding provided by the teacher and the textbook.

In order to start examining critical thinking in civic education, it is vital to first reflect on the curriculum that is provided by the education system in Minnesota. Regarding citizenship, Minnesota gives a broad definition that leaves teachers in a position to determine what aspect of citizenship to emphasize. Also, with critical thinking the *Northern Lights* offers many activities to promote critical thinking. These activities, along with the state standards, reinforce the importance of critical thinking in Minnesota.

Government/Citizenship Education

The second variable in developing active citizenship is government/citizenship education. Historically, government education was viewed by Andy Green as "the primary role of citizenship and civics education in nation-states . . . linked with the process of state formation and designed to build a common identity, inculcate patriotism and loyalty to the nation" (Green,

1991). The definition would shift in the global era, as Green states, "it is now often expected to achieve a far more complex set of purposes which broadly reflect changing conceptions of what it means to be a good citizen" (p. 45). While the first definition by Green asserts that citizenship education was meant to build patriotism and loyalty towards the nation, as the world became more global, Green points out that the educational system has to adjust to the changing views on what a good citizen is.

One of the modern definition of citizenship education is offered by Perveen and Awan: "thus all who are involved in education for democracy need to know what citizenship is, how it is to acquire or loose in various political system, what rights, responsibilities and duties are entailed by it, and how it is connected to the institutions of particular nation-states, especially their own" (2017). The authors outline what each citizenship class should entail and the importance that this class holds with the "education for democracy" as being vital to maintain the current government structure. Perveen and Awan emphasize that teaching citizenship should intentionally avoid swaying students' outlook on politics and that "the curriculum development in the context of citizenship education has fine implications in the sense that no external pressure can force the child to implement the curriculum as such" (p. 189). The author's prioritization on creating intrinsic learning techniques to allow students to develop their own ideas on political issues is apparent.

In a similar study, Abiodullah outlines the fundamental goal of citizenship education as "to prepare dynamic citizens who should have the ability to create a peaceful atmosphere in their society" (Abiodullah et al,2018). The stated importance of citizenship education is to develop citizens who will be able to adapt to create a peaceful society. Abiodullah outlines the way in

which this class should be created in that “this objective can only be achieved by developing higher order thinking skills which can guide the learner to become reflective and avoid deceptive information” (p. 141). Similar to Perveen and Awan, Abiodullah advocates to develop the same skills of intrinsic critical thinking focused on the students. Additionally, they both point out the need for students to develop techniques to discern information as accurate or not.

With the new changes defining citizenship, government education has had to shift with it. This shift is illustrated by studies done by Perveen and Awan along with Abiodullah, who emphasize the importance of intrinsic focus in order to avoid state sponsored propaganda. The main emphasis of teaching good citizenship should be to allow the student to develop their own ideas using skills developed through the government class. Furthermore, Green emphasizes that the main goal of education is building citizens who can engage productively in society. Creating a system that can adapt and prepare the students to grow and become citizens is the greatest goal of citizenship education, as demonstrated by Green and Abiodullah.

Chapter 3

The following research is divided into three categories: Teachers' Perspectives on Critical Thinking within Education, Active Citizenship, and the Impact of Critical Thinking. All three topics were covered using research already presented by scholars in their fields. The intent of each section is to cover the guiding question: How do educators view critical thinking in their classrooms? How is critical thinking defined across the world? What is the best practice to implement critical thinking in the classroom?

Keywords: Active Citizenship, Critical Citizenship, Critical Conversations

Critical Thinking within Education Teachers' Perspective

In 2018 Perveen used a mixed method study to document the elements of critical thinking that are being used by the Pakistani school system within the class of citizenship education. The study uses a qualitative method with the first three sources of curriculum documents, education policy, and textbooks. He analyzed these sources using two instruments, the first of which is a checklist determined by a panel of experts that uses five elements of critical thinking with respect to the context of the class: "The validity of this checklist was found .81 by a panel of experts" (p.144). The second instrument used was a relational analysis model, and "this tool was found very useful for identifying themes/elements/issues found in the curriculum, textbooks, and education policy related to critical thinking for citizenship education" (p. 144) . A quantitative method was used with questionnaires sent out using a Likert scale to 100 teachers to determine

how often they use critical thinking in their subjects. These teachers were selected in 26 different schools across the area of Lahore.

Each source had a different result with the amount of critical thinking emphasized or practiced. For instance,"9th [grade] had 25% and Pakistan studies 10th had 13% content about it" (p. 148). Critical thinking is a minimal element in the curriculum and decreases the older the students get. Within curriculum documents there was "absolutely no mention about this element of critical thinking, i.e. zero percent" (p.148). The teacher survey depicted a presence of "11% of critical thinking within the curriculum"(p.148). The study concludes that "critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level was not mentioned appropriately" (p.152). Of course, an "appropriate" amount of critical thinking education is left to the discretion of the writers. We then are still left with the question of how much critical thinking education is needed or what that may look like.

A limitation of the study is the small sample of the study, which was only done within one province in Pakistan. However, the study offers a chance for researchers to have a comprehensive look at four different elements of education and the ways in which they agree and may disagree. Using a mixed method allowed the authors to analyze both the standards laid out on paper, while also obtaining the real world interpretation of the policy through the teachers' everyday teaching. This approach allows other members of education to reflect on the presence of critical thinking within their own education systems across the four sources evaluated. While this mixed method study provides an overview of how Pakistani teachers perceive critical thinking is being taught, the following quantitative study provides less subjective data regarding critical thinking and how its impact may vary between grade levels and genders.

In 2012 Gedik conducted a quantitative survey of social studies teacher candidates' abilities in critical thinking. The study sought to determine if gender and grade level as an independent variable affected the students' critical thinking skills, the dependent variable. Gedik used a "Cornell Critical Thinking Skills Test-Level X" (CCTSTLX) which "is a measurement scale consisting of totally 71 multiple-choice items each of which is with three options. In the induction dimension, there are 23 items; in judging the reliability of the assertions dimension, there are 24 items; in the deduction dimension, there are 14 items; in the dimension of defining the assumptions, there are 10 items. The administration time of the scale is about 50 minutes for secondary school or tertiary level students" (p.1021-1022). The CCTSTLX was taken by 142 social studies students at one university in Turkey.

Conclusions for the study show differing levels of critical thinking. Regarding the first variable of gender, the study found that "that there is no significant difference between the female and male participants in terms of their critical thinking levels" (p. 1022). In analyzing the second variable of grade level, researchers discovered that "the critical thinking levels of the second and third year students are higher than that of the first year students" (p.1022). Within these findings, Gedik insinuated that critical thinking skills were still lacking within the students, even though they had been improving since their first year at university, stating that,"findings obtained in the present study aiming to elicit the pre-service social studies teachers' critical thinking skills indicate that in general, the pre-service teachers have "inadequate level" of critical thinking skills" (p.1023).

This study has some limitations with the focus being on teacher education programs in Turkey and not on the practice of teaching critical thinking within social studies, yet this study allows for schools to evaluate how their new teachers are being trained in critical thinking. Gedik emphasizes that "hence, critical and creative thinking is of paramount importance" (p. 1023). According to Gedik, in order to teach this subject, a teacher must be a "qualified teacher" which requires a "mastery of the subject," which the study concludes these teachers have not done yet (p. 1021). Furthermore, Gedik finds the importance of mastering critical thinking as paramount to being able to teach the subject, a skill that is universal across the world. Although the last two studies have focused more on teacher candidates' critical thinking skills, the next three articles focus on the perspective of the current teacher towards critical thinking within the realm of social studies, starting with an eastern approach of critical thinking presented by Baildon and Sim.

In 2009 a qualitative case study was done to determine the critical thinking perspectives of teachers. The researchers took 24 teachers who were obtaining their master's degrees, had experience in the field, and were seeking further training in new critical thinking strategies that were being advocated for by the government to create "thinking citizens" (p. 411). The researchers used a variety of methods to obtain this data: "curriculum artefacts; online discussion board entries; researchers' observation notes and memos; audio recordings of group discussions; and student assessments" (p. 412). The teachers' responses and curriculum were narrowed down into different themes: "thinking critically, time and space to experiment, issues related to political and cultural contexts, and teacher identity" (p. 413). These themes were then narrowed down using "quote packages" that were reviewed by the teachers as a whole. Finally, the researchers presented three themes that they determined, stating that "we then narrowed our

analytic categories to three themes that recurred in the discussion, and that seemed most salient to understanding the teachers' views of critical thinking in Singaporean contexts" (p. 413). These views have been shaped by the teachers' experience in teaching and their ideas of what defines critical thinking in Singapore, which could be different than how a United States teacher would view the term.

The results of the survey were categorized with the three themes that were identified by the prior methodology of the study. The first theme was "teaching critical thinking in an examination culture" and illustrated the struggle faced by the teachers with one participant noting "how teaching critical thinking skills has been reduced to formulae by teachers to help their students deal with the rigorous assessment modes and guidelines of the subject" (p. 413). This focus on tests has caused teachers to disregard softer skills that are associated with critical thinking in order to emphasize testable material. The second theme was "political contexts and 'out of bounds markers,'" which centered around what teachers were allowed to discuss in the classroom within the boundaries of the law. The strange contradiction between wanting "thinking citizens" and having "out of bounds" topics is explained by one teacher who "described the contradictions between official rhetoric that calls for critical thinking and official actions that limit it" (p. 416). Yet, not all teachers agree with this sentiment: "one teacher argued that 'OB (out of bounds) markers demarcate boundaries that might invite potential upsets to certain interest groups which in turn might threaten the sociopolitical fabric of Singapore" (p. 416). This theme is not as universally accepted by educators and is a source of conflict within this small class of experienced teachers. The researchers sum up this conflict inside the classroom by stating that "they were aware of the techniques used by the government to limit

personal freedoms yet saw a need for social order and stability" (p. 416). The last theme was "civil service and teacher agency," which illustrates the balance teachers have to maintain in being a representative of the state. In this theme, teachers share their ideas that as an educator "'there is an unwritten code of behaviour that needs to be adhered to. We shouldn't criticize the government openly in school" (p. 417). This idea is closely related to the second theme of teachers being careful about what they say to their students regarding political events. Teachers' own ideas are supposed to be viewed as "politically neutral," and instructors are expected not to influence students towards any ideas conflicting with the state. The researchers describe the essence of this battle: "the notion of being a politically neutral civil servant conflicted with the idea of engaging students in the types of critical thinking that might question power structures, official knowledge, and government policy" (p. 418).

Although this study is limited to a small focus group of teachers within a single class in Singapore, it offers a look into how political structures of governments can affect the classroom and how, at times, critically thinking can even be viewed as dangerous. With a differing political philosophy than the United States, critical thinking is defined and taught differently in Singapore, because they are striving for some contrasting ideals. Nevertheless, this study is used by many of the scholars who are doing their own examinations of themes of critical thinking within social studies. Lastly, it offers a chance to see a different perspective of critical thinking within a country that does not share all of the same cultural and political values as a western-minded country would. Albeit critical thinking is defined differently in a more eastern minded Singapore, the similarities of developing critical thinking as a main goal are still evident in the next article which takes place within the Netherlands' education system.

In 2008 researchers in the Netherlands conducted a quantitative survey of 150 schools about their educational values. These values were then compared to the three types of citizenship put forward by Leenders: "Adapting citizenship, Individualistic citizenship, [and] Critical democratic citizenship" The 150 schools were from different areas of Dutch education, ranging from religious schools to academic and vocational schools. According to Leenders, et. al., this was a "representative sample" of the Dutch educational system. From these schools, a total of 254 teachers from four different education areas--Literature, Art, Civics, and Economics--filled out the surveys. The teachers were asked five questions to determine their education values:

> "Which value-related educational goals are important to teachers?
>
> Do teachers think students attain the goals that the teachers find important?
>
> Are there different groups of teachers that have different educational goals and aim to foster different types of citizenship?
>
> Is there any correspondence between the type of citizenship and the teachers' attention to the social domain in the curriculum?
>
> Are there any differences related to school subject, school type and the characteristics of the teachers?"

The study found that by using the above questions to find the values of the educator, researchers were able to group the teachers into the three categories of citizenship. The results showed that "about half the teachers (53%) were oriented towards a critical democratic position. The other two groups were still substantial. A large group (29%) strove for an adapting oriented type of citizenship, and 18% for a more individualistic one" (p.163). The study also found that the age of the teacher affected which type of citizenship they were likely to emphasize, with

younger teachers leaning towards individualistic citizenship and older teachers preferring critical democratic citizenship. They conclude that "the results show that teachers make clear choices when it comes to the importance they attach to certain values. They want to help students acquire the skills to analyse, communicate and reflect on values. However, they also stimulate the development of certain values" (p. 168). A teacher's personal beliefs, according to Leenders, will affect the values their students learn in school. If a teacher does not value the impact of critical thinking education, then the students will not have a chance to learn that skill according to this research. This impact should be taken into account when schools are reviewing how critical thinking is taught in their classrooms.

Even though this study has some limitations with teachers from different vocations, such as Art and Literature being a part of the survey, the study does offer an opportunity for teachers to be able to reflect the values that they have about education and show how that might be affecting the lessons that they are teaching their students. In the last line of the study, it states that "citizenship education consists of different goals and practices. We must take account of these differences in research into citizenship education" (p.168). Teachers have different values, and, according to Leenders, et. al., education systems must consider that when determining what values are being taught in their schools within citizenship education. This article presents a more multi-dimensional approach into how teaching citizenship can be optimized. The next article presents a more local view of teaching citizenship and how teachers from Minnesota and the nation determine what to focus on in their curriculum.

In 1997, Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, and Sullivan endeavored to determine the perspective of teachers on citizenship education--both within Minnesota and across the country.

The researchers used a Q-method, which is when “respondents sort statements into categories based on their personal understanding of the concept(s) under investigation” (p.337). This particular study asked participants using the Q-method to rank “these statements according to the extent to which each statement reflected their view of citizenship education. The ranking procedure involved sorting the 40 statements along an 11-point scale in a 40-box grid approximating the shape of a normal curve. Teachers were instructed to place statements that are least like their view of citizenship education in piles toward the left side of the grid, those that are most like their view in piles toward the right side, leaving those statements they felt less strongly about in piles toward the center of the grid” (p. 339). The teachers surveyed consisted of 39 Minnesota educators and 800 national educators. To verify the results. a small number of the educators surveyed were then asked open-ended questions about their thoughts on citizenship education and what they thought was critical.

Notably, the results of the Minnesota educators differed from the views of national educators. Within Minnesota, teachers held three different views about citizenship education: first, ”the cultural pluralism perspective has internalized more wholeheartedly the recent emphasis on multicultural education;” second, “communitarianism perspective want(s) to see citizenship education redress the recent emphasis on self-interested, individualistic politics;” and third, “legalism perspective want(s) citizenship education to serve as a vehicle to create law-abiding and obedient citizens” (p. 346). All three of these perspectives have differing views on what the end goal of citizenship education should be. Moreover, these three perspectives only have three values that are shared between them: to "encourage tolerance and open-mindedness,” to “address controversial issues,” and to “develop an understanding of different cultures” (p.

347). There was more agreement within the Minnesota study than within the national perspective, which had a wider range of ideals and had a greater emphasis on critical thinking with an entire perspective devoted to this ideal.

Within the national perspective, two of the four ideals were unique compared to the state survey: critical thinking, which emphasizes questioning of current society, and assimilationists, who encourage patriotism and civic duty above all else. The national survey has four values that each teaching perspective agrees with. Three of these variables are the same as the state survey, with the only exception being to "address the subject of social values" (p. 348). Anderson concludes that "we have established that, despite some common perceptions, teachers do adopt widely varying perspectives on citizenship education." They disagree about some of its most central elements, and occasionally their views are in significant conflict, as is the case with the cultural pluralists and assimilationists on the one hand and the legalists and the critical thinkers on the other" (p. 352). Anderson then concludes the reasons why teachers would follow each perspective "were identified and related to political orientations as well as demographic characteristics" (p.355).

This study is mostly limited by the year that it is conducted, since education has been constantly evolving since 1997. However, this study does offer a comprehensive overview of differing perspectives of teachers from not only Minnesota, but also from across the country. Anderson also offers interpretations of each viewpoint with background information from some teachers to fill in the gaps of political and social identity. Anderson establishes the importance of this study when expounding that "if teachers' perspectives of citizenship education do shape their pedagogy, our research may shed light on the nature of the citizenship education our young

people experience in social studies classroom" (p. 356). This article helps readers understand how teachers view the goal of citizenship education. Within the next article, it expounds on the new trends that are driving citizenship education with an emphasis on teaching Active Citizenship.

In 2013 a report was written about teachers' perceptions of active citizenship and whether it was in concurrence with the curriculum. This article does not have a study built into it, yet it does report on two studies that were previously conducted. Wood, Taylor, and Atkins start by introducing the paper's purpose in order to further the advancement of active citizenship in classrooms: "We propose an analytical framework derived from key citizenship authors to evaluate and critique the degree to which perceptions and practices of active citizenship are transformative or social-justice-oriented" (p.84). Social action or justice is a commonly used term in the local New Zealand school systems that would equate to how active citizenship is used in the United States. The authors then dive into how active citizenship is defined by major voices in the field and how they compare to one another. The authors compare the ideas of McLaughlin, Westheimer and Kahne, Kennedy, and Thomson and Holdsworth--the experts responsible for the four identified field studies. Of these experts, the range of active citizenship is defined similarly with a minimum expectation of a citizen being "primarily to conventional activities, including obeying the law, voting and helping neighbours" (p. 85). These minimal expectations are agreed upon by all of the experts in the table. On the other hand, they start to disagree when it comes to the maximal approach, about which each expert has a different priority determining what citizens should do. One researcher states that "citizens expected to question the decision-making of society and work towards the empowerment of all citizens." This idea is

favored by Westheimer and Kahne, along with McLaughlin; however, it is countered by the idea that active citizens should be involved with "political action or student activism, such as the protests against the Iraq war in 2003 in the United Kingdom," as proposed by Kennedy, Thompson and Holdsworth (p. 86). These two ideas are contrasting in their objectives for how students should be involved in political actions and whether schools should focus on decision making and empowerment or on political and social action. As the article transitions to the next section, the authors emphasize how politics affect teachers' views on active citizenship and their definition of what an active citizen should be.

Within New Zealand, there is a clash between the conservative-minded teachers favoring the definition offered by McLaughlin, while more liberal-minded teachers adhere to the definition presented by Westheimer and Kahne. These differences within the government over curriculum are described by the authors, ""The 1994 draft curriculum described social action as taking 'positive action' to 'influence contemporary and future events" and required students to "participate in the affairs of the community' a description that aligns with Westheimer and Kahne's social justice-oriented citizens. While more liberal-minded educators voiced some support for the 1994 draft, it was strongly criticised by conservatives who considered it engendered indoctrination and social engineering"" (p. 87). When teachers were polled on how they taught social action in their classrooms, most of the teachers favored a more liberal stance, "Most of the reported social actions in Table 2 could be described as 'safe', manageable and conventional activities" which aligns the most with "social movement citizenship to create participatory citizens by Westheimer and Kane" (p.89). This view, shared by most teachers, is the more liberal definition of active citizenship. Yet, during that same poll, teachers were asked

about how involved they were with political action, “Only 12% described themselves as ‘activists’ while the majority (60%) selected ‘occasionally’ (21%), ‘never’ (7%), and ‘not relevant’” (p.91). Teachers were afraid of implementing political activism into their curriculum as there “was the fear of imposing their own values on students” (p. 91). With the majority of teachers avoiding political activism, it seems they favor more political empowerment, as purported in the conservative approach.

This article, along with its included studies, allows researchers to identify the inner conflict about definitions of new curriculum within politics and the ramifications on the teachers who have to implement this curriculum. However, this article is limited by the fact that it relies on studies conducted outside of their own research and makes conclusions based on these studies with limited participants. The article concludes with a middle ground approach as to how active citizenship should be taught, “multiple pathways within programmes and assessments offer more opportunities for young people to ‘opt in’ to aspects they personally choose. This may reduce accusations of indoctrination and honour young people’s diversity and agency” (p. 94). Giving students personal choice to determine what programs they want to support could offer students an opportunity to begin to develop some critical thinking about what aspects of life need changing. Understanding how to teach Active Citizenship in a way that does not promote one political view over another is the common thread of teachers within this article. The next section explores how Active Citizenship is defined and taught across different perspectives.

At each of these levels, the importance of critical thinking is of the utmost importance for the complete life-long education of a student within social studies. Yet, teachers have not all agreed that critical thinking should be emphasized in their teachings, as researchers in the

literature review have pointed out on multiple occasions. Gedik (2012) claims that teacher training programs leave future educators unprepared to fully understand critical thinking instruction. Furthermore, with the lack of agreement about how much critical thinking should be taught with current teachers, as Anderson et al (1997) points out, only one of those approaches of the four contains critical thinking. Leenders et. al. (2008) found that teachers had differing ideas of the importance of critical thinking within their field, with the younger teachers not emphasizing critical thinking in the same ways the older colleagues were in their classrooms. These findings show that if teachers are not careful, the current need in education of critical thinking could slowly die out as advocates retire and are replaced by teachers who do not view this skill as important. Although there is contention over how critical thinking should be taught, the momentum of teaching active citizenship offers a chance for consolidation of educators in teaching students to become critical citizens.

Active Citizenship

In 2006 a thematic study was done across the member nations of the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive, which includes the United States, England, France, etc.. This report was meant to determine the efforts being made by these countries to define and teach active citizenship. This thematic study has been the bedrock of how researchers view educational policy regarding active citizenship with Nelson and Kerr doing a study earlier in 1999 on the same topic. The newer study consists of a background paper, an issue paper, an international seminar, and a final report. The background paper section consists of "summarises relevant literature in relation to active citizenship, and provides a case-study

example of active citizenship policy and practice within England in the UK" (p. III). The issue paper section covered "summarises questionnaire responses received from INCA network country representatives" (p. III). The international seminar section includes "an opportunity for country representatives from INCA countries to meet, share views and experiences of active citizenship" (p. III). The last section of the final report had data collected "through the questionnaire survey of INCA countries in 2005 and 2006, and on discussions and key findings arising from the international seminar in March 2006 (p. III). These four sections of the paper all set out to answer five questions about active citizenship.

- What is active citizenship and how is it defined?
- How is citizenship and active citizenship framed in education policy?
- What implementation measures are there to turn citizenship and active citizenship policies into effective practices?
- What are the issues and challenges in turning active citizenship policy into effective practices?
- How can active citizenship be achieved and what are its outcomes?

These five questions drove each section of the study and the results that were found from these questions varied across the reports and the countries surveyed.

One of the overarching results from the four parts of the study is that "active citizenship is related to shifting notions and definitions of citizenship and citizenship education and its usage is entwined with the progress of citizenship education in INCA countries" (p. IV). In other words, the definition of active citizenship is uniform across the nations and is more connected to how the country teaches citizenship education. Another finding is that in the study "there is

limited exploration of the conceptual underpinnings of active citizenship and, as a result, a distinct lack of clarity and common understanding of where it has come from and what it means" (p. V). With no clarity into what the term means, countries within the study have operated with conflicting understandings of the term with some emphasizing more of patriotic duty to one's country, such as in Japan or Singapore. On the other hand, in the United States, it is simply defined as a legal status and is disconnected with citizenship in general. Additionally, active citizenship could be viewed as striving towards civic cohesion through developing skills necessary to think for oneself and participate in society, as understood in England and the Netherlands. The study also reports that teaching active citizenship is still in the early stages of education policy and will still be developed, as many hurdles exist to create a more uniform international definition for the term. The researchers insist that the highest form of active citizenship that can be obtained is when "active citizenship needs to be understood as much in terms of an active approach to learning which encourages young people to be critical, enquiring and reflective" (p. 60). Nevertheless, the need for critical thinking to be an active citizen is advocated for by all four sections of the study. Another constant the researchers found is the need for nations to create a system to educate teachers on the strategies that they should be using to instruct students within active citizenship.

This study has some limitations since it is older, written in 2006, with the data coming from seminars in 2006. However, it offers an opportunity to compare and contrast the approaches by countries across the globe regarding the topic of active citizenship. Also, the research done in this study offers strategies and ideas about how to transition policy towards creating active citizens who can think critically and participate in civic society. Nelson and Kerr express this

intent of creating a pathway for policy when stating "it is hoped that the outcomes will prove useful not only to those countries that participated but to all those with an interest in this area" (p. 61). Lastly, other researchers have used this study to reflect on more current data to see how far their countries have progressed, as evidenced by Browyn Wood and Jasmine B.-Y. Sim citing this INCA study within their reports on New Zealand and Singapore. Whereas these researchers give a wide view of how Active Citizenship is defined and taught across international borders, the next articles will focus more on local issues of teaching Active Citizenship in schools.

In 2012 a focus-group based study sought to find teachers' views on what active citizenship should be. Wood introduces the importance of this study when elaborating that "studies indicate that teachers' perceptions of citizenship are not always consistent with the curricula documents of a nation" (p.80). Wood also points out that "my interest in this research was to explore how teachers act as curricular instructional gatekeepers' (Thornton, 2005) who control both the content of what is taught and how it is taught in the classroom" (p.81). Wood goes on to explain how she would view this study "with this in mind, I turned to Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theory of practice and his concepts of habitus, capital and field as a way to gain deeper understandings of how the practices of individuals and groups can be seen to be beyond the false antinomies of structure and agency" (p.81). This impacts teachers by "applying these ideas to a focus on teachers' perceptions and practices of active citizenship involved examining their practice within the social context of collective experiences of being part of a curriculum department in a school" (p.81). Wood took four different schools based on two criteria: "diversity of socio-economic and geographic indicators" and "familiarity with, social action and/or community engagement" (p.82). These schools were surveyed using semi-structured

focus groups which "were an important way to gain a sense of the collective beliefs – or doxa – that were shared by members of a school social studies department" (p. 83).

The study reveals that "the patterns of active citizenship discussed in this paper reveal that while teachers held multiple and varying conceptions and practices of social action between the four school sites, they also held surprisingly high levels of agreement within school sites" (p.87). The four schools observed had differences, but overall there were surprisingly more similarities across the country than differences. One of the differences observed was the overall focus of which aspects of being an active citizen were emphasized. For example, "an analysis of the spatial orientation of social action across the four schools reveals that teachers from Colleges A and D had more of a global 'focus to their conceptions and practices of social action, and teachers from Colleges B and C had more of a local' or community focus" (p. 87). The schools would conflict over whether to teach more of a global citizenship view or to focus more on actions the students should take locally or nationally. Another disagreement found between schools was the interpretation of curriculum documents, which were the same across all four schools. Wood, explaining the reason behind this, states that "the local global spatial orientation I have noted between the schools also reflects the relative socioeconomic position of schools, with the lower decile schools (B and C) exhibiting a prevailing local/community focus, and higher decile schools (A and D) more of a global awareness" (p.88). Understanding the background of the school could help explain why a teacher would teach a subject in a certain way, especially active citizenship.

Wood concludes that the socio-economic status of a school impacts the education offered to the students, limiting the ability of the students to simple, knowledge-based local citizenship.

In contrast, in schools with higher socio-economic demographics, students were given skills such as critical thinking and engagement in global/national issues that "aim(s) to develop values, skills and dispositions toward citizenship" (p.89). This study is limited by only examining four schools and relying on the idea that each teacher adapts to the environment that they are in. An idea that Anderson or Sim may disagree with are more individualized teacher surveys, yet, the focus on the differences in skills that are pushed by each school could be a reflection of the curriculum presented by the state or country. The teacher acts as a "gate-keeper," and their ideals will bleed into the skills and ideas taught in that class. Teachers as gatekeepers is a paradigm of schools that assumes teachers control flow of content to students. This may not serve as equally valid as the paradigm of bridge-builder, or translator that assumes teachers work with students who already have exposure to ideas and concepts at home and in the world at large. This paradigm may be limiting the researcher herself. These differences could result in students who are not given the skills, such as critical thinking or engagement abilities, to interact in an ever changing republic. Given the results of this study, the differences in education and focus between four different schools is continued in the next article, which focuses more on the students' perspective instead of the teachers'.

In 2010 a qualitative study was conducted on the students' views of what being an active citizen means. In this study, researchers observe even on a limited scale how background and education can affect how a student views being a citizen and the skills that are needed to interact in the modern world. Wood used two different methods to collect data: "the first was through the use of café style focus groups. This approach was developed to allow naturalistic conversations between peers seated round a table, working collectively on a poster activity, with

an audio device recording their conversations" (p. 110). Also, Wood noted "the second form of data collection was the use of a visual methodology known as 'Photovoice'. In Photovoice, participants represent their world with their own photographs, which they then analyse to surface their meaning" (p.111). These two forms of data were then combined to gather a more complete picture of the students' view of their town and their role within their community. In defense of this non-data driven method, Wood states that "by focusing on the everyday and ordinary experiences of young people's and their identities at the intersection of their interaction with people and environments, this approach facilitated an approach to participatory citizenship which reflects the nuanced and diverse experiences of youth" (p.112). Wood surveyed four different schools, but within this report Wood only displays the results of two of those schools that she deems have the biggest differences between them. These two schools have different "socioeconomic, geographic, and ethnic variables," with school A being more diverse than school B.

Wood's results of the survey were shown in a narrative form with an emphasis on individual responses: "these narratives are partial and situated narratives that reflect a 'montage' of images and understandings, that are shaped within the traditions of the researcher as bricolear" (p.112). Because of this, her data is situational and overly dependent on the thoughts of a small group of students at two separate high schools. For example, for one of her findings, Wood states that "the high levels of church involvement of the College (High School) A participants also reflected the examples these participants gave of how they participated in their communities. Similarly, the values of the community in College (High School) B toward their identity as a small rural town, and their priority for environmental protection appeared to influence the issues

noticed and actions taken by participants from this town" (p.120). These findings, while interesting, do not prove or confirm any theories or ideas about the general consensus of active citizenship.

This survey is limited in its scope and purpose, yet it is one of the few surveys done on the students' view of active citizenship. Furthermore, Wood does point out that "social and political issues therefore took on real meaning for these young people in a local context where they had a lived experience of their impact" (p.120). Students' views on what is important for citizenship is shaped by the problems they encounter on an everyday basis. This survey also allows researchers to start to examine how students are being taught in the schools to think and interact in the society that is educating them. The first step in doing this is inspiring a sense of a "habit of participation" as an active citizen who can examine problems using higher orders of thought to develop solutions. Whereas other articles focused on top-down perspectives on Active Citizenship, this article presented a bottom-up approach with focusing on students. This differs from the next article, which focuses on Active Citizenship within the United States in the realm of incorporating newcomer students.

In 2016 a case study about newcomer students whose first language is not English analyzed how two teachers from different areas of the country attempt to instruct active citizenship in a way that will help students with little cultural background in American culture. This study provides context as to how teachers in the United States specifically teach active citizenship using critical thinking, while also presenting it in a way that allows newcomer students an avenue to understand their new country. According to the authors of the case study, "the purpose of this article is to shed light on how they enacted critical citizenship practices and

culturally responsive teaching to support their newcomer students' understanding of citizenship in their local communities" (p. 46). Using a qualitative, multi-site collective case study of two teachers by observing, interviewing, and gathering artifacts in social studies, the researchers were able to gather a more complete picture of the two classrooms. The study also focused on how each teacher gave culturally-responsive strategies along with their critical citizenship curriculum. The two teachers were compared to one another by using "data analysis of this multi-site collective case study design includ[ing] a cross-case analysis of two cases in New York and Arizona, examining the major principles and intersections of CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) and citizenship education" (p. 50).

The results of the study show that even though both teachers were instructing in different school environments, they both "fostered an open classroom community, wherein students were able to critically inquire about what it meant to be part of a community and the decisions that you have to make while living in that society" (p. 62). Both teachers were also able to create an environment that allowed for "a space to have critical conversations about social studies concepts" (p. 63). Furthermore, giving students the opportunity to have critical conversations about the community allowed for newcomer students to learn more about their new community. The study also found that one teacher was able to use "scaffolding and supporting collaborative group work, cooperative learning, inquiry, and discussion involving multiple perspectives and experiences prepared his newcomer students for their civic life beyond school" (p. 63). This teacher was able to create an environment for students to discuss multiple perspectives and experiences in a way that would allow them to have civic discussions and participate in society as active citizens.

This study is limited in its sample size, as it only takes the experiences of two teachers and how they implement active citizenship and culturally responsive teaching in their pedagogy. However, it enables its readers to look into how teaching about citizenship changes when students in your classroom are brand new to the country and its customs. It outlines approaches that worked for these two teachers who were in completely different parts of the country and had different resources, yet they both created environments that encouraged critical discussion in a civil manner. They also were able to construct a curriculum to involve newcomer students in the process of what being an active citizen in the United States is. The researchers emphasize how curriculum that involves newcomer students will become more vital as the country changes, "in our growing culturally and linguistically diverse public schools in the United States, teachers must consider how to engage newcomer students' social, cultural, political, and economic backgrounds and experiences" (p. 64). The ability to combine critical thinking approaches that go across cultural and linguistic lines could become the next hurdle for teaching active citizenship in government education within the United States. This last article uses the focused study on the impact and experience of teaching Active Citizenship in two classrooms. One of the driving forces of Active Citizenship is teaching students how to critically think. In this same vein, the next section emphasizes the importance of teaching critical thinking and how critical thinking can be taught in different ways.

The focus should be on creating active citizens who are able to think and understand political/social issues through a critical thinking lense. This is usually done through introducing students to either current or past local issues and giving the students an opportunity within the context of school to come up with their own ideas about an issue and defend them using sources.

This position is held by most advocates of active citizenship. According to Nelson and Kerr (2006) in their global study on active citizenship, the focus is widely accepted by all the countries within the study, yet the actual implementation and meaning of active citizenship changed in each country. Within the United States, we are behind most western democracies who have a more thought out definition that emphasizes critical thinking as the bedrock on which they build the curriculum. Within the United States, the term is simply connected back to normal citizenship with no real distinction illustrated from the Department of Education. Active citizenship offers an avenue to creating a more well-rounded civics education that would instruct our future citizens how to use their own critical skills to interrupt their daily civic duties that are required in order to have a functioning republic. Within the study conducted by Ramierz and Jaffe (2016), they follow social studie teachers who are able to implement critical citizenship into the curriculum of students who are in the EL program in their schools. Both of these teachers were able to construct opportunities for students to have critical conversations in the classroom and think critically about life in America. Both teachers sought to prepare their students for civic life beyond school into adulthood.

Impact of Critical Thinking Skills

In 2017 a quantitative study was done by Cheng and Wan in order to determine the effect of the classroom learning environment on critical thinking skills. The study allows researchers to observe how the environments that are created by teachers could affect their students' ability to develop critical thinking skills. The researchers of this study took “28 schools” and a total of “3869 Grade 12 students responded to the questionnaire” within the 28 schools that participated

(p.155). The study also designated each school into "three bands with the first Band indicating the highest average academic achievement of their students in the enrollment examination, whereas the third Band indicates the lowest average achievement" (p. 155). With results from all three types of schools, it allows the study to have a more complete view of the education system in Hong Kong. Within the survey that the students took, there were three scales: "the first scale measured the students' perception of the classroom learning environment of their Liberal Studies lessons, the second probed their critical thinking disposition, while the third assessed their critical thinking skills" (p. 155). The first scale was measured using "constructivist Learning Environment Survey" which has five dimensions: "Personal Relevance, Uncertainty, Skeptical Voice, Shared Control, and Student Negotiation" (p. 155). All of these dimensions were determined using a six point frequency scale with students answering from 1 (almost never) to 6 (almost always). The second scale was "assessed by adapting the critical thinking subscale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire," which also had the students using the six point frequency scale similar to the first scale. The third scale was assessed by the "Chinese Critical Thinking Scale," which takes into account local culture and lifestyle in order to determine skill levels.

The results of the study determined that within the three broader categories (pedagogy, relation, and content) classroom environment had the "strongest correlation with critical thinking disposition, followed by the pedagogy-oriented aspect ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$) and the relationship-oriented aspect ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$)" (p. 158). Also, the researchers wrote that according to the data they collected, "classroom learning environment was considered as the cause, whereas critical thinking disposition and skills were regarded as the effects" (p. 158).

Basically, the environment of the classroom was the main contributor to a student developing critical thinking disposition and skills. Also, the researchers point out the need for further development of these skills within the educational system when stating that "priority should be given to improving the pedagogy and content-oriented dimensions so as to realize a more balanced development of both disposition and skills" (p. 162).

This study has some limitations with the focus being on liberal studies and not on government/citizenship class or social studies as a whole. It is also limited by the differing definitions of critical thinking between Hong Kong and the United States. However, the study offers a wide ranging look into the skills being developed specifically in critical thinking regarding the classroom environment of high schools from different achievement levels. Also, it allows researchers an opportunity to see what strategies a teacher could incorporate to further develop a broad scope of critical thinking abilities within a student. If teachers understand which pedagogy best imparts critical thinking, they can focus their classroom environment, curriculum, and materials to achieve that goal. Lastly, the researchers stress why learning critical thinking and developing critical thinking in students is vital: "critical thinking is the essential foundation for education because it is the essential foundation for adaptation to the everyday personal, social and professional demands of the 21st century and thereafter" (p. 152). Given how the classroom learning environment is one of the most important factors in affecting critical thinking development, the next article dives into how purposely teaching critical thinking could also affect the development of those skills.

In 2007 a case study was done in order to determine if purposely teaching critical thinking strategies will enhance students' critical thinking skills. The study took 177 students

with 57 being taught critical thinking skills directly, and the other 120 were taught with more of a traditional approach as a control. This study was done over the course of three years within one high school. The researchers used a mixed-method to evaluate data using a pre-post and post-post experimental design. Of the students who started in year one, only "40%" were available to take the post examination. Four instruments were used to collect data: the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI), the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), semi-structured interviews of the teachers instructing the topic, and class observations were conducted in order to examine the actual teaching strategies of the teachers.

The results of the data collected with the tests show the baseline of the students who were not taught using specific critical thinking methods: "these results suggest that the major development of both the students' disposition toward CT and CT skills occurred during the first year of the study, when the students were in the 10th grade" (p. 360). According to the study, without specific instruction, the control group still naturally developed critical thinking skills. However, the degree of skills, use of skills, and student mastery of particular thinking strategies marked a difference between the groups. When compared to the group being taught critical thinking outright, it was found that "teaching for enhancing higher-order thinking skills promoted students' ability to assess information (Evaluation) as well as, the ability to identify and secure information needed to draw conclusions (Inference)" (p. 361). Furthermore, the study found significant differences in test scores from the control groups and the critical thinking group that illustrate the contrast in critical thinking skills developed. Within the interviews, both teachers talked about the ability of critical thinking to make their curriculum come alive with the students, as one teacher is quoted in saying, "in my class I encourage students to ask questions,

investigate a phenomenon, and make assumptions... I teach new concepts in daily-life context. You can not stay in the knowledge level, you must teach them to think" (p. 362). Both of the teachers stressed the importance of critical thinking within their daily teaching. Within the final instrument of class observations, both teachers were found to use critical thinking within their daily classroom as the study reports, "class observations conducted in both the first and the third year of the study confirmed that both M and L (teacher initials to hide identities) do integrate teaching strategies that promote higher-order thinking skills" (p. 363). The researchers then gave examples of each teacher using critical thinking within their curriculum while being observed. At the same time, these two teachers were found to be the exception to the rule, as they were the only ones of the ten who "proclaimed to apply teaching strategies that promote higher order thinking skills among their students" (p. 364). The researchers conclude that most teachers' "conceptualisation of teaching and learning is mostly that of the transmission-of-knowledge model rather than a constructivist-based approach" (p. 364). Moreover, this study finds that most teachers do not recognize critical thinking as a part of teaching. The study found the intentionality of teaching critical thinking skills did impact student growth and use of those skills later.

Since this study takes place within a science classroom and in Israel, it does have some limitations; however, it offers a chance for researchers to see the impact of teaching critical thinking intentionally over the course of three years and the overall skills that are developed by the students. This study also shows that a student will naturally develop critical thinking within the traditional classroom. Moreover, it concludes with some aspects that they found the most helpful in promoting critical thinking, "three teaching strategies were identified as promoting

higher-order thinking skills: dealing in class with real-world cases; encouraging open-ended class discussions, and fostering inquiry-oriented experiments" (p. 366). Particular strategies were shown to positively affect critical thinking in general, which can be adapted within social studies curriculum and are already in use in one way or another within most classrooms. The study ends with hope for implementing critical thinking strategies within all different types of curriculum, "the compelling empirical evidence shows that if one knowingly, persistently and purposely teaches for promoting higher order thinking among her/his students, there are good chances for success" (p. 367). According to Miri, David, and Uri, if a teacher makes developing critical thinking strategies a goal within their instruction, they have a good chance at success in accomplishing that goal. This leaves the question of how these skills persist after graduation and into adult life. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore whether students use the skills immediately after coaching only, or if they use them voluntarily over time. With a broader understanding of how teachers can affect critical thinking development, the next three articles start with more specific examples within social studies of how an educator can instruct students in these skills.

In 2010 Johnson and Morris continued the dialogue on how critical thinking is implemented differently in citizenship education across the world. The authors start this article with an emphasis on how citizenship has changed in just the last twenty years across the world, "beyond a concern for membership of a nation-state include: the emergence of global and cross-national bodies such as the UN and the EU, creating pressures for schools to promote forms of supranational citizenship" (p. 77). According to the researchers, the focus of nation-state citizenship is becoming a thing of the past, as curriculum shifts to concentrate on

being a global citizen. Johnson and Morris also accentuate the dilemma that critical thinking instruction is to a nation-state, "one of the perennial dilemmas of schooling, namely the desire, on the one hand, to ensure an obedient populace and, on the other hand, to ensure that citizens are creative and critical" (p. 78). This delicate balance is shown by Nelson and Kerr's study on how governments on different sides of the political spectrum teach and define active citizenship.

Johnson and Morris then analyze which elements should be present in a critical pedagogy, "politics/ideology, social/collective, self/ subjectivity and praxis/engagement" (p.87). These elements of critical pedagogy are then compared by the authors to a definition of what citizenship education should consist of--"knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of citizens" (p. 87). Using citizenship education as a vertical table and the critical pedagogy as a horizontal table helps to form an overall framework of critical citizenship education. Using this framework, Johnson and Morris propose that "the framework itself can be used as a pictorial representation to contrast the existence of, opportunities for and absence of elements of critical citizenship within the various levels of a curriculum and its material" (p. 91). They argue that by using this framework, critical thinking will be more easily implemented into the daily lessons of social studies teachers. They also realize that this model will have its limitations and is open to criticism, specifically in how the table has a "tendency to essentialise and dichotomise a complex range of viewpoints" (p.91).

Table 1	POLITICS/ ideology	SOCIAL/ collective	SELF/ subjectivity	PRAXIS/ engagement
Knowledge	Knowledge and understanding of histories, societies, systems, oppressions and injustices, power structures and	Knowledge of interconnections between culture, power and transformation; non-mainstream writings and ideas	Knowledge of own position, cultures and context; sense of identity	Knowledge of how collectively to effect systematic change; how knowledge itself is power; how behaviour influences society

	macrostructural relationships	in addition to dominant discourses		and injustice
Skills	Skills of critical and structural social analysis; capacity to politicise notions of culture, knowledge and power; capacity to investigate deeper causalities	Skills in dialogue, cooperation and interaction; skills in critical interpretation of others' viewpoints; capacity to think holistically	Capacity to reflect critically on one's 'status' within communities and society; independent critical thinking; speaking with one's own voice	Skills of critical thinking and active participation; skills in acting collectively to challenge the status quo; ability to imagine a better world
Values	Commitment to values against injustice and oppression	Inclusive dialogical relationship with others' identities and values	Concern for social justice and consideration of self-worth	Informed, responsible and ethical action and reflection
Dispositions	Actively questioning; critical interest in society and public affairs; seeks out and acts against injustice and oppression	Socially aware; cooperative; responsible towards self and others; willing to learn with others	Critical perspective; autonomous; responsible in thought, emotion and action; forward thinking; in touch with reality	Commitment and motivation to change society; civic courage; responsibility for decisions and actions

This article offers a pathway to changing curriculum in a way that will include more critical thinking within citizenship education. By using the table (above), which includes multiple elements of critical pedagogy and citizenship, it gives teachers an avenue towards changing their curriculum for the better. However, the article is limited by the lack of statistics or data to drive their findings in the table. They also do not offer evidence of how to change national policy to better include critical thinking. Johnson and Morris conclude this article noting the difficulty in changing national policy, "official citizenship curriculum may be defined by the prevailing national political agenda and its sociocultural context, it may still contain spaces that might be used by critical pedagogues to promote a strong ideological agenda" (p. 92). These spaces are where teachers or administrators can implement critical thinking into their curriculum.

While this article offers many options towards creating critical citizenship education, the next articles take specific examples within this framework to model how to teach these skills.

In 2017 Lennon wrote an article about methods of producing questioning that create critical thinking and group dialogue. This article examines how teachers can use different forms of higher level questions to drive dialogue that encourages critical thinking, an important aspect of the implementation of critical thinking into the social studies curriculum. To illustrate the importance of critical thinking for a student, Lennon points out that "higher levels of thinking can help lead to understanding and empathy for others; the lives, events, ideals and/or beliefs of people in a pluralistic society" (p. 5). In order to develop these life long skills, Lennon paints a picture of how schools can create critical thinking, "To engage in dialogue of opposing views needs to involve a multimodal perspective utilizing both active and passive learning styles. If the process is respectful and engaged, students can develop new and different information as compared to their own perspective or lens" (p. 4). As Lennon asserts, his process encourages, "the participant to reconcile the differing concepts to bring back or correct their internal order or understanding" (p. 5). Lennon claims that if students can reach this level of thinking, that they have achieved Bloom's vision for critical thinking. Lennon groups his article into three sections: "Issues Concerning Critical Questioning and Group Dialogues," "Implementing Group Dialogue and Culture necessary for Success," and "Questioning Formats."

Within his first section, Lennon outlines the difficulties facing teachers attempting to wade into controversial topics, "For many educators,the (successful) teaching or discussion of controversial subjects can be a difficult and sometimes problematic task" (p.6). Later on within the section, he lays out the consequences of teachers avoiding these difficult topics, "Students

have become captive to vitriolic diatribes from opposing views lambasting others with labels and terms unfit for conversation. These outcomes are not designed to foster critical thinking but to engage in destructive tirades, demonizing the other's view as inferior to one's own" (p. 7). According to the author, students do not have the ability to converse about their ideas and resort to using insults and demonizing the other side of an argument. Lennon finishes this section by emphasizing the importance of teachers taking the steps to give students the opportunity to learn these skills, "The discourse of difference and of diversity and controversy allows students to engage in scenarios they would ordinarily not experience. By allowing for some student control and in guiding their discussion we offer invaluable learning that may not be conducive to any other time in the children's' education" (p. 8).

The second section continues with more of a practical approach, including strategies to implement these controversial issues and to involve all students within the discussion. To start this discussion, "Teacher directed guidance is integral to developing and maintaining the dialogue into higher levels of thinking and in keeping students involved, whether they are actively talking or no" (p. 8). Without guidance and rules, any discussion or "activity will have failed before it begins." Developing the environment for this level of discussion requires the teacher to have complete control of the classroom and for students to feel safe to talk. The teacher also needs to maintain neutrality without being disengaged from the discussion. According to Lennon, instructors must be able to set ground rules and enforce them in order to preserve the openness of the discussion. Power must also rest with the students during the dialogue, yet, as Lennon points out, "The teacher will need to give (some) control to the students through their discourse but be ready to 'retrieve' it or bring it back if necessary" (p. 10). This

balance is hard to find, but the payoff of students developing critical thinking skills through discourse is worth it.

The last section illustrates the need for different prompts for the questions, "Prompting is integral, and should follow prepared plans of inquiry and questioning" (p.11). As Lennon asserts, the teacher must also be prepared that the dialogue may shift to a direction that the students take it, "student's themselves developing prompts which, though different than that of the teacher, is still extremely beneficial to critical thinking" (p. 12). Lennon advocates that developing a well-mannered discourse of students could be a goal within itself to achieve. "As Social Studies teachers, polite diverse conversations among students about controversial topics are also important skill sets to pursue" (p.12). Even if a teacher cannot reach the level of metacognition of the discourse that may have been planned on by the lesson, it could still be beneficial for students to experience a controlled discussion on a controversial topic.

This article gives a theoretical map of the impact of introducing controversial topics into the classroom in order to further help students develop critical thinking skills. Lennon also gives a broader meaning to the importance of this discourse to the country as whole, "As an added benefit, the learning of civil and engaged discourse is an invaluable trait that many of our students no longer see in their mentors or in society at large and which is paramount for a thriving democracy" (p. 14). This article illustrates one aspect of creating critical thinking and for students to be able to examine opposing ideas and to deal with them in a fact driven manner, instead of with insults and hate, as they are often apt to observe and experience in their world. Lennon provides a framework for teachers to develop opportunities to encourage critical

discussion. Similarly, Peiser continues this trend in a more specific scenario, using more historical problems instead of modern ones.

In 2013, Peiser wrote about a specific example of how teachers can use an event to teach critical thinking. Within this article, they use the political movement of populism around the turn of the 20th century to help students deal with conflicting political ideas. The ability for critical thinking and balancing multiple ideas on a topic are achieved through populism as Peiser states, "the revisionism and multiple interpretations featured in the historiography of Populism provide valuable opportunities for teachers to develop such skills among their students" (p. 228). This article gives teachers a particular example of how to pick a topic that will allow students to develop critical thinking techniques.

Peiser instructs his lesson using four different historians who hold different perspectives on populism. Peiser goes on to to explain how each perspective was chosen and how the students would be expected to examine these historians, "these primary documents would represent what each of the historians viewed as the essential character of Populism, and students (perhaps in learning groups) would be required to examine, assess, and debate such varying historical perspectives" (p. 228). Peiser advocates for allowing students to have a three step process relating to critical thinking which requires the student to first examine the information, then assess the information, and finally to debate with others on that information. When implementing this strategy, a teacher must be able to guide the students towards thinking critically with the sources. The article offers some examples of what questions could be used to direct students to think critically while reading each perspective.

1. What does each of these historians see as the essential character of Populism?

2. How does the holder of each of these viewpoints see the relationship between Populism and the new corporate industrial order of the late nineteenth century?

3. What conclusions can you draw about historical inquiry based upon these varying interpretations of the nature of Populism?

To begin with, these questions first ask the students to state the main point of each historian. Then, the second question allows the student to compare the viewpoints to the relationship between two different ideas of the time. Lastly, the third question asks the students' final thoughts on the differing ideas surrounding populism. Peiser sums up what the goal of these questions is, "In sum, the study of multiple interpretations of Populism contributes to the capacity of students to use evidence, assess interpretations, and analyze change and continuities. By applying historical habits of mind, they will emerge with relevant skills and an enhanced capacity for critical thinking, problem solving, independent inquiry, and informed citizenship" (p. 229). Giving students the opportunity to critically think will, according to Peiser, create a future citizen that will be able to stay informed with important political matters.

This article is restricted by the limited examples of how Peiser himself successfully taught the lesson. While readers were given a complete outline of the lessons, these lessons may have provided deeper understanding if they included some of his commentary on why he made certain choices within his lesson and what his objectives were throughout the various sections. Nevertheless, the author outlines a successful lesson of how a social studies teacher can take a lesson that students may not feel as strongly about and create critical thinking opportunities that connect to issues that are more applicable to their lives. Offering students the chance to have

informed debates around political topics in school will pay dividends, as Peiser points out with a more "informed citizenship" by the students when they become political actors in their post school lives. Peiser emphasizes the importance for social studies to emphasize critical thinking skills, because it offers students a chance to grow beyond the classroom as an overall learner with crucial skills they will use for the rest of their lives. Peiser offers a real life lesson of how to incorporate all aspects of critical thinking, using both teacher scaffolding and student investment. Giving students opportunities to develop critical thinking skills is paramount to developing Active Citizens who are able to think and act independently about current issues.

Understanding how critical thinking strategies have impacted overall student growth is difficult to prove. Some studies have sought to understand how learning environments could affect the overall growth of critical thinking by using exams that are built to measure these skills, as Cheng and Wan did in their study in Hong Kong (2017). Similarly, in another instance with Miri et al (2007), researchers conducted a three year long study and actively taught students differently to evaluate the variances in students' growth in critical thinking between the status quo education and an active critical thinking education. Both of these studies showed that changing the environment and curriculum to promote critical thinking results in measurable growth from the students with these skills. This section ended with three articles presenting different ways of how social studies teachers can promote and build critical thinking strategies within lessons. First, Johnson and Morris (2010) advocated for a broad approach to creating a citizenship education that allows for students to critically think. Lennon's (2017) approach encouraged students to have difficult conversations in the classroom and expected teachers to create an environment in which constructive arguments can occur. Finally, Peiser (2013) offers a

specific lesson model to produce critical thinking, using the Populism movement with differing experts to challenge students to create their own arguments and to examine bias in sources. These examples are beneficial both in how they provide practical applications and in how they show evidence of positive results, which strengthens the argument for purposefully integrating critical thinking activities into social studies curriculum.

Chapter 4

Summary

Chapter one provides an overview of critical thinking as growing in emphasis within civic education, which is seen throughout the Minnesota standards that focus on higher level thinking skills and critical thinking. While critical thinking is often emphasized, it is not consistently defined the same way, whether that is locally, nationally, or globally. Agreeing upon a consistent definition is vital before expecting implementation at the classroom level. However, in addition to a vague understanding of critical thinking, it is also not perceived the same way culturally. Once those issues of understanding and perception are addressed, educators can better intentionally incorporate critical thinking into their pedagogies so that students will be equipped to navigate an ever-changing world.

Chapter two provides definitions of critical thinking, citizenship, curriculum in Minnesota, and government/citizenship education. These terms were shown to have differing meanings based on the region of the world that they were being defined. In addition, differences arose between researchers who sought to define the term in a way that fit their study or personal viewpoint. Lastly, with Minnesota the lack of communality in education has resulted in definitions being left up to the school or teacher to decide which definition they will instruct to their students.

Chapter three examines positive rhetoric and emergence of Active citizenship within literature and research. In reviewing this literature, common threads are identified and compared, as well as synthesizing the compelling aspects of each study and gathering effective examples of practical applications.

Within social studies education in Minnesota, aspects of critical thinking can be seen throughout the standards and in the main goal of those standards. Yet, studies show that critical thinking is not taught in teacher preparatory schools in a way that adequately promotes the need for and the means to incorporate it into classrooms (i.e. Gedik, 2012; Awan, Perveen, and Abiodullah, 2018). Additionally, teachers are not fully devoted to teaching critical thinking as a part of their curriculum with citizenship education, since not every teacher sees it as a part of their curriculum (i.e. Leenders, Veugelers, and De Kat 2008; and Anderson et al, 1997). Within citizenship education, critical thinking has been found in the emphasis on Active Citizenship that seeks to implement critical thinking to develop *thinking* citizens, who have a perspective on issues affecting their community and the world (Wood 2013). Lastly, critical thinking strategies have shown in preliminary tests to grow when intentionally taught to students (Miri, David, and Uri 2007). Moreover, the classroom environment that a teacher creates will also boast the critical thinking skills developed within a student (Cheng and Wan 2017). Education is moving to increased emphasis on critical thinking over testing, as mandated by the Department of Education in 2009 who acknowledged the need for students to possess critical thinking skills, "the Obama Administration has invested $360 million in two consortia of states that have developed new assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards that move beyond traditional bubble tests, focusing more on critical thinking, problem solving, and writing." (Department of Education, 2009).

Professional Application

Given the importance of critical thinking education to the advancement of social studies education, there is still no unified consensus on what critical thinking education should look like. Within this paper a few of the authors have stood out with their approaches to creating a beginning framework for teachers to use to further critical thinking in their classrooms. Even though teachers may not agree on one set definition of what critical thinking looks like, these schema are broad enough to be widely applied.

One of the approaches is exhibited in the research conducted by Cheng and Wan (2017), which concluded that the classroom learning environments that teachers create are the most important aspect of a student's growth in critical thinking. In order to build a working pedagogy and curriculum, the teacher must first create an environment that gives students an opportunity to see differing views and even conflicting views in a classroom. This will give the student a safe space to find ways to have a discussion over issues that people in the outside world struggle to discuss civilly. Another aspect of the learning environment that teachers should promote is giving students an opportunity to have mentally demanding tasks that promote higher order thinking skill development. The last aspect of the learning environment that should be promoted is personal relevance. Allowing the students to find a personal connection to the topic will keep them motivated to pursue more critical thinking activities on the topic.

Another framework that would help promote critical thinking skills is outlined by Johnson and Morris (2010). These researchers illustrate how to promote critical thinking in four categories. Johnson and Morris (2010) then compare these categories with benchmarks for the student growth in critical thinking from Knowledge to Deposition. They offer steps for each

category regarding what a teacher should strive for in critical citizenship education. These outlines will help teachers reflect on their own curriculums to see if they are including aspects of a critical thinking pedagogy.

Lastly, Ramierz and Jaffe (2016) offer an example of incorporating active citizenship into the curriculum. These two teachers incorporate a learning environment with a critical thinking curriculum to instruct students within citizenship education. They also offer strategies of how to incorporate higher order thinking with newcomer students, who are new to or are learning English. These strategies are especially beneficial for teachers who have student populations that include newcomers, because the scaffolding gives them the same access to critical thinking skills as other students.

Of these three curriculums, all have certain aspects that can be incorporated into almost any curriculum without a major overhaul of state standards. Even if teachers may disagree about what these skills might look like, the necessity of creating critical thinkers is widely accepted. Teachers who share this objective could start by creating a classroom environment that promotes critical thinking. Then, teachers could reflect on their own curriculum, comparing it to the model presented by Johnson and Morris to see if they are effectively teaching higher order thinking. Lastly, a teacher could explore ways in which to promote critical thinking within the curriculum of students who may be English learners and face additional barriers to learning content and skills. If educators hope to improve their students' critical thinking skills, they must find at least one resource, even if it is not one of these, to evaluate and improve their lessons to promote critical thinking.

Limitations of the Research

When reviewing research on the topic of critical thinking within **civics** education, it is difficult to determine progression and effectiveness of critical thinking instruction to students. Research focused on specific examples of when authors personally implemented critical thinking into the classroom or witnessed it in a classroom they observed. Surprisingly, researchers have been able to obtain little data within the United States regarding critical thinking methods' validity. While the state standards emphasize critical thinking repeatedly, the methods to create that critical thinking have not been tested in any available published studies. Several limitations to this field of study explain this.

One limitation of the research was the lack of universal agreement on the effectiveness of critical thinking tests; making measurement of critical thinking inconsistent. Some of the studies used two tests from different sources, such as from Cornel and two from California. Both of these tests rely on multiple choice questions to more consistently evaluate the assessments. However, as seen with the Edman et al (2004) study conducted on Minnesota's critical thinking test, the evaluation is still lacking and does not have high enough reliability to be used credibly. Educators are left with research that suggests instead of concludes. With the reliability of these tests in question, it was hard to evaluate the effectiveness of the data that was collected on the critical thinking skills of the participants. This resulted in most studies relying on mixed-method or qualitative research. Until the education system is able to construct a test that is able to accurately evaluate critical thinking, research conducted on that subject will remain limited.

Furthermore, standardized tests are often a flawed source of data. In addition to the difficulty in assessing critical thinking reliably, standardized tests do not accurately assess many

students' proficiencies, especially for students who struggle with test-taking. As seen across education, some students are just better test takers than others, which inevitable skews the data. In the studies reviewed, data was usually an added point to assertions made from qualitative research, which was usually done through interviews and observations. Yet, this type of research has its own drawbacks and is limited by the amount of participants that can be observed and consistently evaluated in the same manner. These drawbacks are shown in Wood's study, where she relies heavily on interviews with the scope of the study on only four total schools. While studies conducted with a data driven focus were harder to find, their scope of the study was broader with more participants able to fill out surveys or tests.

Another limitation was that the overall goal of critical thinking was not agreed upon. This discrepancy could be most clearly seen when outlining the definitions of critical thinking and how contextually the political and cultural influences change how critical thinking is defined and exhibited. Studies revealed that some groups downplay critical thinking's importance to the overall growth of a student, with some restrictive governments going so far as to view it as dangerous or as western propaganda that would be not politically correct to teach to students of non-western backgrounds. These unexpected aspects of the critical thinking discussion limited the choices of research to researchers who sought to define critical thinking in a way that best matched proponents of critical thinking, such as Ruggerio and Gedik. While I was able to review some research that was more negative towards critical thinking like Atkinson, I chose to exclude most of this research, as it seemed to be refuted effectively by other researchers.

The last limitation I identified was the slow movement of teaching pedagogical practice regarding newer critical thinking strategies. Since the most recent study conducted in Minnesota

on critical thinking within citizenship education was done in 1997, only one of the four groups considered critical thinking a main part of their curriculum. This study is over 23 years old, and it lacks a follow up study showing the overall scope of teaching critical thinking in Minnesota and across the country without guidance. The resulting wide array of approach and implementation also limited the amount of research I was able to find that was conducted within the United States, because American pedagogy is heavily influenced by the teachers who instruct it. Even if a universal curriculum is developed, teachers will still interpret it differently--acting as "gatekeepers." Because of these variables, I had to widen my scope to be international so that I could better interpret the research I found in the United States and more locally in Minnesota. These limitations point to clear implications for future research and advancing this conversation with consistent goals, terms, measures, and scaled studies of curriculum use.

Implications for Future Research

Further research needs to be done about the effectiveness of critical thinking strategies within social studies. Teachers and teacher preparatory schools need to know what strategies are effective in order to promote these strategies. Furthermore, questions remain about how teachers within the United States and Minnesota view critical thinking within the curriculum they are teaching. This could be answered with a survey that was similar to the one conducted in Pakistan, which looked at four different spaces within their educational system and examined it for traits of critical thinking. Likewise, it would be beneficial to survey teachers and ask them how critical thinking is implemented in their classrooms. A study conducted like this would shed more light on the current practices and effectiveness in education regarding critical thinking.

Moreover, Awan et al's (2018) study was informative, not only in how it documents positive examples of how teachers implement critical thinking in their classroom, but also in how it reveals the prevalence of teachers who believe that critical thinking is not productive towards learning. Furthermore, this study surveys teachers about what helped form their philosophies, making it especially helpful when examining how to prepare teacher candidates. Understanding what helps shape teachers' beliefs and practices about implementing critical thinking into their pedagogies is critical, particularly in light of researchers like Atkinson, who claim that critical thinking is simply a western mindset and should not be pushed on other cultures. Expanding this research to include a study of teacher preparation programs and how they educate would be beneficial in creating a systemic change in education.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

With the overall future of critical thinking in education in flux, it is challenging for researchers to assess progress in implementing critical thinking. To evaluate that progress, three questions need to be answered: How do educators view critical thinking in their classrooms? How is critical thinking defined across the world? What is the best practices to implement critical thinking in the classroom? In the first finding, teachers have been shown to be split in their ideas about critical thinking, and education programs have been found lacking in preparing teachers to incorporate critical thinking in their curriculum. Secondly, in examining how critical thinking is viewed across the world, it is evident that educators and researchers have differing ideas on how to define the term. Critical thinking can also differ according to the culture or country that is defining it, with eastern areas such as Hong Kong and Singapore having different ideas on critical thinking than the Netherlands and United States. Lastly, the best practice for implementing critical thinking is still undecided. With a lack of clarity about how to evaluate critical thinking progress, creating a unified curriculum that is effective and accessible is difficult.

The literature review revealed a surprising lack of data and research about critical thinking within the United States education system. Although critical thinking is the focus of many national and state standards, the lack of follow up as to how these standards are applied is alarming. Likewise, I was not expecting such diversity in something as foundational as the definition of critical thinking, which varied widely, depending on cultural and governmental

influences. While some countries fully embrace critical thinking paired with citizenship as shown with Active Citizenship, other countries are hesitant to embrace a curriculum that encourages questioning of the government or culture.

In conclusion, the overall need for critical thinking is paramount in our culture. As seen in the United States, where the ability to have differing views on a topic or to entertain the idea of the "other side" is often not tolerated. Creating a culture that can entertain a thought without embracing it is vital, and the change must come from the education system that is tasked with creating new citizens. The key to this change is helping students develop critical thinking skills, and a natural place to start is within civics. It is important to give students a learning environment in which they can develop higher order thinking skills and have critical conversations that will prepare them to navigate local, national, and global issues as productive citizens. This will take a combined effort from every level of the education system--from teacher preparation programs, educational institutions, down to the classrooms. In order for critical thinking to be effectively implemented, it will also take acceptance of and training for the teachers who are tasked with instructing the curriculum. Once a consistent definition and training about critical thinking is established, it will allow for more progress in development of strategies in creating applications that develop higher order thinking in students. When students are taught critical thinking specifically, it will give students the necessary skills to become active citizens in society.

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