

Bethel University

Spark

All Electronic Theses and Dissertations

2022

The Importance of Teaching Middle School Social Studies in the United States

Ian Phillip Higgins
Bethel University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://spark.bethel.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Higgins, I. P. (2022). *The Importance of Teaching Middle School Social Studies in the United States* [Master's thesis, Bethel University]. Spark Repository. <https://spark.bethel.edu/etd/905>

This Master's thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Spark. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Spark. For more information, please contact kent-gerber@bethel.edu.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE
UNITED STATES**

A MASTER'S THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

IAN HIGGINS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DECEMBER 2022

**THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE
UNITED STATES**

A MASTER'S THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

IAN HIGGINS

APPROVED

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: MOLLY WICKAM, PH.D.

THESIS ADVISOR: KARIN FARRINGTON, M.A.

DECEMBER 2022

Acknowledgments

“Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light” - Hellen Keller.

Before continuing, I must take a moment to thank those who have supported, invested and encouraged me in the pursuit of this thesis. Without question the first and most important person I am indebted to is my wonderful wife, Erin Grace Higgins. Her patience and support has been a blessing throughout this journey of education. From the support she provided and financial burden she shouldered as I returned back to school to the encouragement and celebrations we have had at each milestone of our journey together. The light appears to be at the end of the tunnel and I am truly proud to have her at my side as we finish this together. An extremely big thank you is owed to Karin Farrington who has always made her assistance and guidance available to me as I pursued the next step in my academic journey. Her patience, understanding and availability in the several months taken to complete this thesis were exceptionally encouraging and helped make this dream of achieving a master’s degree possible. And finally, I would like to thank my students who have reaffirmed my love of education. Their enthusiasm and excitement is the reason I chose to stay committed to this field and pursue my master’s degree. Passing on the history of our shared nation to the next generation has truly become one of the proudest achievements of my life and I can’t wait to see what bold, brave and amazing things my students will go on to do. This thesis is a tribute to all mentioned above who have encouraged me and helped me on this long journey. I am grateful to finish this with their support.

Abstract

In the state of Minnesota, the standardized testing, known as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) test, does not have a requirement for social studies. Math, reading and sciences are all tested, but social studies is left to the wayside. All across the United States more and more school districts are placing less value on social studies, choosing to focus more time on the subjects that will either be state tested or they deem “most” useful to students in their future careers. With recent current events rocking the United States, both politically and socially, it seems that the country is becoming more polarized and divided. This thesis will delve into the history of social studies and the various roles it has played in the United States at different times. How the subject has adapted and changed to fit the needs and times of its students is discussed as well as the relevancy and modernization efforts being set in place to educate future generations.

Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Signature Page	2
Acknowledgments	3
Abstract	4
Table of Contents	5
Chapter I: Introduction	7
Researcher's Story	7
Brief History of Social Studies	7
Thesis Question	9
Chapter II: Literature Review	10
Research Gathering Process	10
Why is Social Studies Important?	10
What is Taught and When	10
Social Studies Educational State Standards in Minnesota	14
Critical Race Theory and American Exceptionalism	20

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	24
Culture and Geography Education	26
Media Literacy	28
The Implementation of Technology in Social Studies Curriculum	29
Chapter III: Discussion and Conclusion	34
Summary of Literature	34
Limitations in Research	36
Implications of Future Research	37
Professional Application of Research	37
Personal Perspective	39
Conclusion	40
References	41

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Researcher's Story

Minnesota revises its academic standards once every ten years. As of this thesis, the new standards for social studies are nearing their final round of reviews before being agreed upon and implemented into the classroom. Many new ideas were proposed and some previous content was omitted. While revising academic standards is nothing new, much more attention has been placed on the newly proposed Minnesota social studies standards for this iteration. The COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning, death of George Floyd and civil unrest all took place in the last two years of the last academic standards resulting in many newly proposed standards added at the last minute. Arguments for and against these new standards were widely publicized and quickly politicized. As a social studies educator in his second year of teaching, witnessing all this coverage of the new standards, this researcher thought to ask the question: “What is the importance of teaching social studies in the United States?”

Brief History of Social Studies

While modern social studies in the United States education system has been around since 1916, elements of social studies education date back to ancient times. Greek historians, like Herodotus and Thucydides, studied the wars of the Greeks. Other elements such as philosophy, economics and civics were encouraged as well in ancient Greece.

The aim of social studies is to create good citizens which has historically been done through the use of creating a shared history amongst a people that encourages a national identity. According to the National Council for Social Studies, “The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public

good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. In essence, social studies promotes knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs” (2022, para. 1). In colonial America, this was used as a means to foster loyalty amongst colonists to the parent country England. However, post revolution, the study of history shifted to a more American-centered focus of history. The study of social studies in schools varied greatly depending on location, the instructor and student interests. Prior to the establishment of the Department of Education in 1867, teachers and instructors taught on an individual basis what they thought students would find most interesting and useful in life (Atwood, 1982, p. 8). Subjects such as theology, philosophy and debate were once commonplace in the classrooms.

“Pre-Civil War Civics primarily focused on the appreciation of nationalistic principles...” (Atwood, 1982, p. 8). Following the Civil War and turn of the century, a push from intellectuals to create a standardized study of social studies resulted in the formation of a curriculum. Spearheaded by Earle Rugg, the Committee on Social Studies was born. The goal of this committee, “sought to define the goal of social studies in the broader definition of education, as well as making curriculum recommendations” (Atwood, 1982, p. 8). While implementation took off at varying speeds and with different success rates, the aim of the Committee on Social Studies was ultimately successful in standardizing the field.

An argument had been brewing since the 1940’s that social studies should include more democratic values in its curriculum. During the second World War and following years after, this meant teaching loyalty to one's country. However, by the 1970’s amidst the political climate a push to develop better citizens was started. This presented the question, what is a good citizen? (Atwood, 1982, p. 9-10). Was a good citizen one that could name dates, locations and events? Or

was it someone who took part in civil discourse and an active role in society? This debate would go back and forth through the next several decades.

New technologies have also shifted standards in the past, just as events and national mood have. When the Soviets first launched Sputnik, the first unmanned satellite to orbit earth, the space race began. Sciences re-evaluated their curriculum and so too did Social Studies educators. An emphasis was placed on teaching laws of Newton, Euclid and Copernicus in social studies before these scientists and scholars were re-designated to math and science classes. The space race offered a period in time when science and history crossed paths in the classroom as rocket and satellite launches covered the headlines and eventually the historic moon landings.

Perhaps the greatest leap forward in terms of social studies was the arrival of the digital age. While fields like science and biology seemed to readily accept advances in technology, social studies seemed to drag its feet. This thesis will give several examples of how social studies has and can further improve this shortcoming.

This thesis will cover the foundations of American social studies and how the field has adapted to fit the times of the educators and students – from traditional social studies fields such as history and geography to newer studies like global studies and digital citizenship. By the end of this thesis, the author hopes to have proven the value of social studies as a field well worth the time and investment of educators and students.

Thesis Question

1. What are the foundations of Social Studies Education?
 - a. How has the field of Social Studies adapted to fit the times of education and students?
 - b. What is the value of teaching Social Studies subjects in school today?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Gathering Process

This researcher used the Bethel University Library, JSTOR digital library of academic journals and the Minnesota Department of Education. Other relevant news articles regarding current events pertaining to this thesis were used as well. Due to some of the topics covered in this thesis being relatively recent or ongoing, scholarly articles pertaining to the proposed upcoming Minnesota social studies standards and digital distance learning were limited. The use of articles, news stories and educator blogs were thus used to supplement this gap in data and information.

Why is Social Studies Important?

Social studies is a constantly growing and contracting field. How we look back on an event moving forward is constantly changing. As our world shapes around us and new standards, technologies and events present themselves, social studies must remain constantly vigilant to the changing culture. Social studies is considered one of the main branches of education next to math, science, and English. However, more and more time in the classroom is being devoted to the other three branches leaving some educators and school boards to ask, why is social studies important? Social studies provides students with the tools to problem solve. By studying the problems and solutions of the past, classrooms are prepared for future issues. By incorporating new strategies, curriculum and technology into classrooms, educators ensure that students have the right tools to move forward post-graduation.

What is Taught and When

One argument that has persisted since the founding of social studies as an academic subject was what to teach and when. Is it logical to start at the beginning of recorded history, or

is it perhaps better to start by educating new students on their surrounding environment? Other questions are: What parts of the history curriculum need to be trimmed? And, how much time should be spent learning social studies compared to other subjects? Depending on where and when you grew up, the answer to these questions would indeed be different.

From the middle ages into much of the 18th century, philosophy was seen as a foundation of the study of history. Aristotle, Plato, Socrates all taught what were the cornerstones of what the western world was built upon. By understanding logic, rationality and the simple principles of “cause and effect,” students of history would be able to interpret events as a scientific study. While this study of philosophy remained popular in Europe well into the 19th century, it quickly fell out of favor with American schools. In Europe, the Greek, Roman and Catholic churches were seen as cornerstones of history to study.

In post-independence America, the main fundamentals taught were the arrival of Europeans on the North and South American continent. Columbus, the Conquistadors and the Pilgrims arrivals to the new world marked what many colonial Americans believed was the beginning of “their history.” As settlements grew into cities and colonists turned into Americans, a growing wave of nationalism pushed back against the Eurocentric studies of old. Whole lectures were focused on the lives of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Often, the curriculum was started when many of the founding fathers were still alive. It could be argued that this was America's first contemporary history lectures. The founding of the nation became the first chapter of American history. This created a unique perspective of optimism – that “real” history had just begun and an open frontier was the perfect blank page for the next chapters to come.

Using Minnesota as an example, social studies is first introduced in two digestible portions to elementary schoolers, geography and history. History is taught in the early elementary years usually only around holiday events like Columbus day, Thanksgiving and Martin Luther King Junior day. For geography, the lessons are little more than basic vocabulary, such as defining terms like: river, forest, and mountains. Once fifth grade is reached, students begin to study American history from the founding of Jamestown to the American Revolution. The War for Independence being the main focus throughout the year as social studies is often limited to thirty to forty-five minutes twice a week. This covers mainly a surface level knowledge of the lead up and eventual war – focusing mainly on the founding fathers, important locations like Valley Forge and Yorktown, and key events like the Boston Tea Party and Lexington and Concord.

Depending on the state, local history is usually taught in late elementary school or early middle school. For Minnesota, sixth grade is when Minnesota history is taught. Students are taught state history before national history so that they are able to recognize how events in the past shaped the state they grew up in as their history lessons progress.

As middle school progresses, seventh grade is taught about post revolution America. Covering westward expansion, slavery, the Civil War on to America's involvement in the two World Wars followed by the Cold War. The 20th century would be revisited in high school and cover events in more depth. More contemporary history is designed to be taught as students mature and incorporate newly acquired knowledge to the practice of history. For example, students would appreciate an education on the Great Depression with more understanding if they are first taught about the basics of economics.

During their high school years, students in Minnesota dig deeper into America's role as a superpower and involvement in a growing global economy. Lectures on the United Nations, NATO and the European Union are taught with the intention of presenting the sum of all the history they have learned.

Geography curriculum during the latter years of middle and high school also matures with the students. Students are often taught geography paired with another study – such as economic geography, globalization studies or cultural geography. Each field is taught with the intention of readying the student to enter a global market with the right knowledge post-graduation.

Social studies academics stagnate in grade school as students steadily catch up to current events or as current curriculum mandates.

“Unfortunately, the lack of quality social studies education does not improve much as a student progresses in grade level. According to the most recent Schools and Staffing Survey, conducted in 2011, third graders in American schools spent less than 10 percent of their academic week learning social studies. By the eighth grade, students spent only 4.2 hours per week in a history or social studies class—as compared to 6.5 hours in English or Language Arts, 5 hours in math, and 4.3 hours in science. What changed, then? Social studies, and therefore history as a discipline, became the bottom rung of the educational ladder for many schools and therefore the first of the core academic subjects to be modified or reduced to increase minutes in other subject areas, or to be scrapped completely” (Stearns, 2019).

Teachers are focusing more on teaching students the ability of critical thinking and problem solving. Memorizing dates, battles and events is set to the wayside as more global issues are

discussed. This is possibly due to America's role in a more connected globalized world. However, where current and global events used to be covered primarily in the latter years of high school, now these subjects are being brought up as early as middle school. While it is natural for history curriculum to be “trimmed” – meaning a certain curriculum is shortened or omitted entirely – as time goes on, the difficulty comes in deciding what to trim.

Social Studies Educational State Standards in Minnesota

In the United States, each state creates and adheres to its own set standards of educational criteria. In Minnesota, the current standards have several criteria for social studies education that are spread across the kindergarten through senior grade levels. These criteria, or “strands,” are Citizenship and Government, Economics, Geography and History. “The social studies content... is organized into strands, sub strands, standards and benchmarks. The broadest level of organization at each grade level is represented by the four disciplinary strands: 1) Citizenship and Government; 2) Economics; 3) Geography; and, 4) History. The content for each strand is organized into several categories or sub strands” (Minnesota Dept. of Education, 2012).



Figure 1: 2011 Minnesota Social Studies Standards "At a Glance"

Graphic retrieved from Minnesota Dept. of Education 2012.

Citizenship and Government has the goal of educating the students on what rights are given to citizens of the United States as well as how our government operates and functions. The judicial, executive and legislative branches are all covered as well as important documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Students study these documents in order to understand the groundwork that our government is based upon. It is in Citizenship and Government that students also examine supreme court cases such as Roe V. Wade, Brown v. The Board of Education and the Dred Scott decision. The aim of studying these

cases is to highlight important landmark cases for our country that students can still see the effect of these cases.

Economics is a curriculum that is set in place to educate students on finances, markets and supply. With the growth of a global economy, economics has been getting much more attention in recently reevaluated standards all around the country. Economics is taught primarily only in high school. Students are taught the basics of supply and demand as well as predicting recessions, depressions, booms and growth. By studying economics young people understand how their financial decisions affect planning for their future as well as the future of our society. The effect of economic decisions has played a major role in our American history as well.

Geography is the first social studies criteria to be taught as it is integrated during the early grades of elementary school. From basic recognition of land features like a river, gorge, peninsula and mountains the students expand to a broader understanding like labeling the continents, recognizing borders and the names of rivers and oceans. Just like economics, geography has seen much more attention in the past decade as new branches of geography have been added like political science, world geography and cultural geography. In classes such as these, students are taught how an environment and landscape can shape a culture both in historical and contemporary means. More emphasis has also been placed on environmental issues such as climate change and threats to the Amazon Rainforest. Such lessons create a shared perspective and often are taught closely to economics and the global economy.

And finally there is history. History in the United States is primarily taught from an American lens with world history, both ancient and recent, being taught only in the later years of middle and high school. The primary goal is to learn about the past and how to apply problem solving solutions to the present day. In the state of Minnesota, colonial and revolutionary

America is taught in late elementary school. One year is set aside for state history. As of this thesis, 6th grade is when state history is taught in Minnesota. In middle school, students learn about westward expansion, the American Civil War and national growth. High school is when world history is taught as students have already completed geography classes and a ground work has already been established.

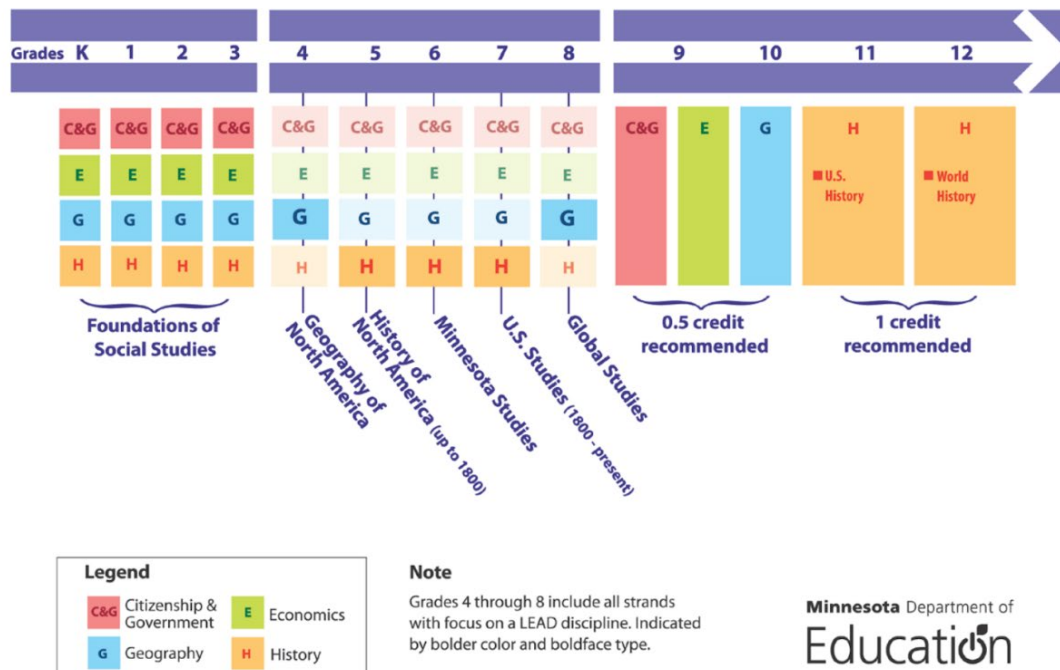


Figure 2: K-12 Sequence of Study

Graphic retrieved from Minnesota Dept. of Education 2012.

The strands of the Minnesota Social Studies Standards are designed so that students can blend their knowledge with previous lessons to form a better understanding of the world and the events that influence it today. The fundamental skills of Minnesota education are critical thinking, problem solving, communication and inquiry. By applying these four skills to the social studies standards, the students would be college ready, career ready and civically ready.

In every strand of the Minnesota standards there are several benchmarks placed at each grade level. “A benchmark is written as a learning outcome— “the specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band.” (Minn. Stat. § 120B.018, Subd. 3). Benchmarks are unique to each grade level and represent the learning that is to be mastered by the end of a particular grade (in grades K-8) or grade band (in grades 9-12). The benchmarks for each anchor standard represent a progression of learning that spans several grades. The K-12 strands, substrands and anchor standards” (Minnesota Dept. of Education, 2012).

The anchor standards are designed to lay a foundation that students can expand upon later in life, via independent study or that of higher education. These standards are not always rigid memorization of trivia such as names, dates, and locations, but rather the student being able to recognize the general aspect of an event in history.

“The standards (i.e., “anchor standards”) are broad statements of skills and understandings that are anchored in college- and career-readiness. The benchmarks are written as learning outcomes—the specific knowledge or skill that students must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band. Each standard should be prefaced with the statement, “The student will understand that...” Many of the benchmarks include examples that clarify the meaning of the benchmark or indicate the level of student understanding. The examples may suggest learning activities or instructional topics. In all cases, however, the examples are optional and are NOT intended to be directives for curriculum or a comprehensive fulfillment of the benchmarks” (Minnesota Dept. of Education, 2012). An example of a standard would be, “History Substrands and Standards, Substrand 2: Peoples,

Cultures and Change Over Time: Standard 3, Historical events have multiple causes and can lead to varied and unintended outcomes” (Minnesota Dept. of Education, 2012).

5	4. History	2. Peoples, Cultures, and Change Over Time	3. Historical events have multiple causes and can lead to varied and unintended outcomes.	5.4.2.3.1	Analyze multiple causes and outcomes of a historical event. <i>For example:</i> Historical event— the Columbian Exchange, the Seven Years' War.
---	------------	--	---	-----------	--

Graphic retrieved from Minnesota Dept. of Education 2012.

An educator could meet this standard in a number of ways. For example, they could create a lesson plan on how the CIA covertly assisted in the overthrow of the Iranian government in the late 1970's in favor of a more pro-western government, only to have the new regime be more anti-west than the previous government. A political problem that still troubles Iranian and American foreign relations to this day. The method to teach this lesson, the tools used and the amount of student interaction would be at the teacher's discretion. This gives teachers agency in their classroom, allowing them to present the information in a way they see that best fits their students learning styles and needs.

Currently, the standards are set to be reviewed every ten years. This is not only for educators to revise and revisit certain standards, but also to avoid the rush to meet standard requirements such as when the Common Core Standards English Learning Arts, or CCS, were adopted in 2013. According to a journal article by Randall and Marangell, while most disciplines were already aligned with standards developed by professional organizations, teachers were faced with a dual task. First, teachers had to create new curriculum that lined up with the new standards. Secondly, the teachers had to create the curriculum so it naturally lined up with their content and subject field (2016). Learning from the rushed responses to meet the CCS requirements, the current standards offer a certain amount of flexibility for educators. As long as

they are meeting standards and benchmarks they are able to teach at their own pace and in a way that best suits their teaching style, class interest and content available.

Critical Race Theory and American Exceptionalism

An argument that has seemed to be growing since the 1960's is from what perspective should history be taught. Traditionally, history was taught from a "top down" perspective. Meaning if one was studying the American Civil War, students would learn about the leaders, generals and why they made the decisions they made. While it is effective in grasping the basic and broad picture of events, some have raised questions about historical inclusion of people of color in American history classes. A push for more inclusiveness in historical education has steadily begun to grow in popularity amongst several states which provides a more "grass roots" or "ground up" perspective. With this grassroots perspective, more emphasis was to be placed on the experiences of those often at the lower end of the class or racial spectrum of the times being taught – such as that of women, Native peoples, Latino Americans, African Americans, and other under-represented peoples.

While more emphasis on these under-represented experiences is indeed important, several problems did arise. An example of this is the lack of credible sources for many Native American peoples as a result that much of their history was passed down orally and archeological findings are still undergoing to piece together Pre-Columbian American history. Another example is the push for more Black inclusion in American history. Recently, more emphasis has been focused on individuals such as Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman as well as the institution of slavery as a whole. However, some would argue that more emphasis should be placed on incorporating Black history into pre and post-Civil War American history. There have been strong arguments for and against this push. On the side of

inclusion, the argument is that it would foster a more inclusive history and create an inherited legacy for current students of color. On the more traditional side, one argument is that while it is fine to touch on such topics and individuals, more emphasis should remain on the key players and driving forces that dictated history. Current events around the country have certainly held sway on each side of the argument. With the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2019, race related issues in America reached a watershed moment. These events also happened to coincide with the Minnesota state standard ten-year reevaluation. During this politically charged time, more focus was placed on the reevaluation of the social studies standards with arguments made for both sides of the political aisle. In 2020 a new addition to the Minnesota state standards was proposed: Ethnic studies. This new branch of social studies would join the current standards of history, economics, geography, citizenship and government. Proponents argue that students should see themselves in history and hear stories that represent themselves. Opponents of the newly proposed branch argue that social studies is already stretched thin and the standard of ethnic studies is too broad, or is already addressed in other areas covered by social studies. Proponents argue that while historic issues such as slavery, the Civil Rights movement and the injustices done to Indigenous people are taught, contemporary issues are not currently covered. This has been met with some pushback in other academic fields. For example, the first issue of the proposed standards for math would include 5 of 20 new standards that would apply new standards asking students, “to apply math concepts to examples found in historical and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe communities and in other communities” (Verges, 2022). After the majority of feedback pertaining to the newly proposed math standards was negative, the Dakota and Anishinaabe studies were relocated back to social studies and the possibility of the new ethnic studies branch was proposed. The current proposed addition of the ethnic studies

branch is still undergoing evaluation as of this thesis as is the rest of the social studies proposed standards.

Choosing what to omit and what to keep or expand upon can be a difficult task for standard makers. In the first draft of the new social studies standards in 2020, it failed to include the Holocaust, genocide studies and religion. After heavy criticism, the second draft rectified the exclusion with, according to an article by Eischens, the Minnesota Department of Education calling it an “unintentional omission in an incomplete first draft” (2021, para. 18). The current revised standards include all three originally omitted subjects.

Another approach to the issue of inclusion that has been tested in other states is the implementation of the 1989 theory called Critical Race Theory. Encyclopedia Britannica defines Critical race theory (CRT) as:

“intellectual and social movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour. Critical race theorists hold that racism is inherent in the law and legal institutions of the United States insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between whites and nonwhites, especially African Americans. Critical race theorists are generally dedicated to applying their understanding of the institutional or structural nature of racism to the concrete (if distant) goal of eliminating all race-based and other unjust hierarchies” (2022, para. 1).

Not everyone approved of CRT entering American schools. Critics of CRT believe that the method of education labels students as “victim” or “privileged” based on the color of their skin.

One counter-movement is the American Exceptionalism movement. This movement, sometimes called American Birthright, started out of Florida encouraged by 2022 Republican Governor Ron DeSantis. “No one should be instructed to feel as if they are not equal or shamed because of their race,” DeSantis said when he signed the bill. “In Florida, we will not let the far-left woke agenda take over our schools and workplaces. There is no place for indoctrination or discrimination in Florida” (Blankley, 2022, para. 10). “American Birthright: The Civics Alliance's Model K-12 Social Studies Standards was created to better educate students about their heritage and to inspire America’s state education departments to provide social studies standards that teach American students their birthright of liberty” (Blankley, 2022). “The curriculum, "teaches students to identify the ideals, institutions, and individual examples of human liberty, individualism, religious freedom, and republican self-government," among other things” (Blankley, 2022). “Principles include the concept that no person is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive solely by virtue of his or her race or sex and that a hard work ethic is fundamental to the right to pursue success. It also expands instruction of African American history, calling for a new “Stories of Inspiration” curriculum to be taught about key African Americans who made invaluable contributions to American society” (Blankley, 2022). Highlighting exceptional individual stories is in sharp contrast to the broader “shared history” and grassroots approach states like Minnesota are seeking to implement.

Critics of the potential new standards argue it is a step backwards in the wrong direction – arguing it glosses over current issues facing America, such as white privilege and racial discrimination. Others argue it is indoctrination that highlights only good deeds of American history while glossing over the darker parts, such as slavery or the treatment of the Native Americans. Another critique is that it teaches from a western perspective while not mentioning

the contributions of eastern civilizations. One critic argued that, “By presenting a sanitized and palatable American history, we instill in our children a type of far-reaching and dangerous propaganda – that our country’s horrifying, structural, deep rooted racism is instead a minor, forgettable blemish. We do them a great disservice on their journey towards becoming responsible, empathetic, and educated citizens of this country” (Ramesh, 2020, para. 11).

Despite the criticism, the American Exceptionalism movement has been used as a groundwork for their social studies standards revision. Allen M. Stern, past president of the Minnesota Council for Social Studies, lauds the standards, saying, “American students need solid groundings in all the social sciences.” Stern is also an economics curriculum expert for the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Department of Education. “This standard will leave them well prepared to understand how the real world operates, and give them essential information and skills to solve real problems. Coupled with the right values, it will certainly help make our world a better place,” he said” (Blankley, 2022, para. 16).

With issues regarding race resurfacing as of this thesis, and an ever polarizing political America, the two conflicting ideologies of Critical Race Theory and American Exceptionalism will be discussed, implemented and argued over for some time.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies:

A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Earle Rugg, pioneering the Committee on Social Studies in 1916, laid the foundation for the eventual expansion into the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS). The NCSS engages and supports educators in strengthening and advocating social studies. As stated on the National Council for the Social Studies’ website, the aim of their organization is, “Social studies educators teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling

the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy. The mission of the National Council for Social Studies is to provide leadership, service, and support for all social studies educators” (2022, para. 3). Founded in 1921, National Council for Social Studies is the largest professional association in the country devoted solely to social studies education. With members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 69 foreign countries, the NCSS serves as an umbrella organization for elementary, secondary and college teachers of history, civics, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology and law-related education. The NCSS membership represents K-12 classroom teachers, college and university faculty members, curriculum designers and specialists, social studies supervisors and leaders in the various disciplines that constitute the social studies (National Council for the Social Studies, 2022). While some social studies councils tend to view social studies as only the means to educate on the past, the NCSS takes a more progressive, forward thinking approach. Other than history, the National Council for the Social Studies, encourages new curriculums that, as listed on their website under their framework for teaching, learning and assessment, “include experiences that provide for the study of:

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Individual Development and Identity
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Science, Technology, and Society

- Global Connections
- Civic Ideals and Practices” (2022, para. 4).

Many of these new goals can fit tidily into the already pre-existing standards of geography, civics, history and economics.

The argument is how best to implement such new ideas, or when to. Some argue that these new standards can be applied to the current curriculum. Such as using new technology to create an interactive learning experience for histories through different mediums such as video, or online library and digital archaeological dig. Others pose the argument that social studies should use these new proposed ideas to “advance” social studies – creating a curriculum that primarily uses the past as a foundation that new curriculum can advance off of. In other words, solving the problems of tomorrow with the solutions of the past. Some critics argue that this method would simply teach the basics and not encourage an understanding of events or how they shaped the world. Another critic is that this method may blur the lines of social studies with other class curriculums like science.

Culture and Geography Education

Another growing trend in curriculum is the blending of culture and geography education. Often these two subcategories of social studies are touched upon in global studies. However, recently more emphasis has been placed on culture and geography separately from global studies. The library of Dartmouth College defines cultural geography as examining “the cultural values, practices, discursive and material expressions and artifacts of people, the cultural diversity and plurality of society, and how cultures are distributed over space, how places and identities are produced, how people make sense of places and build senses of place, and how people produce and communicate knowledge and meaning” (2022, para. 1).

In the past, cultural geography was often taught through a western lens. For example, if Africa was being taught on, the majority of the curriculum would focus on Africa through a European lens placing more emphasis on colonization, imperialism and how western ideas and influences guided conquered lands. Western ideas such as communism, capitalism and colonization. Critics argue that while these influences have certainly played a role in shaping the Africa we know today, they do little to place any agency on the African people themselves – making them subject to the whims of the West, be it empirically or politically. With the growing trend of “grass roots history,” cultural geography places more attention on the people who have often been overlooked by the earlier social studies curriculum. Cultural geography places more emphasis on what native peoples lives and histories were before they fell under the umbrella of empires or globalization. With the primary goal to highlight how different environments created different cultures. The ideas of problem solving can be discussed in the classroom and encourage discussion and comparison. When tackling the idea of globalization and imperialism, the new cultural geography perspective tends to focus more on how native peoples maintained their culture and tradition when faced with a conqueror, new ideology or how they blended the two and adapted.

Proponents of this new approach to global studies argue that this teaches students problem solving, compromise and the value of perseverance all while checking off several standards in a manner that can reflect current events and make students feel part of a shared history. Culture studies could also help connect the dots between the relevance of historical connection to current events that educators sometimes have issues conveying to students.

Media Literacy

Media literacy is an expanded conceptualization of literacy that includes the ability to access and analyze media messages as well as create, reflect and take action, using the power of information and communication to make a difference in the world (Hobbs, 2011). Media literacy in the classroom in America only started to gain traction in the 1990's, and has grown since. The aim of media literacy is to decode, analyze and produce communication in a variety of forms (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993). During the 1940's media was considered either a form of information such as the news or as a form of art. It wasn't until the 1960's when reflective studies of WWI and WWII propaganda was brought into scrutiny during the counterculture movements. Words such as "bias, propaganda and motive" began to be used more often in classrooms as students were taught how to analyze sources. While there was certainly a great amount of pushback from certain groups of parents in different parts of the country, media literacy persevered. Media literacy was once used to educate students on media messages related to alcohol, drugs, smoking, violence, racism and sexism (Stein & Prewett, 2009). As of this thesis, the previously listed issues have been moved to other classes such as health and science. Current media literacy focuses on the use of primary sources as well as analyzing information from news articles and broadcasts as a part of classroom studies.

An example of practical media literacy, as described in a journal article by Gilles, Wang, Smith & Johnson, is middle school educator Jenny King, purposely choosing articles for her students to analyze that could be interpreted a number of different ways. This way her students would be able to create their own dialogue and foster a debate in a controlled environment. The lesson showed how two people could read the same article and both take away something different. Mrs. King also had students read articles with the titles removed, to help students pick

out the articles bias, agendas and political leanings without the aid of a headline (2013, p. 37–39).

Originally the goal of implementing media literacy was to help students recognize bias and resist unwanted influence on the nation's youth. This ability for students to take a step back from historical events and analyze the cause, effect, outcome and motive gave students experience in problem solving and analytical thinking.

The Implementation of Technology in Social Studies Curriculum

As technological advancement increases, the world is becoming more reliant on the internet for business, day to day activities and personal use. With our world becoming more connected and the growing influence of technology in our daily lives, a greater emphasis has been placed on technology in schools. An education article from Waterford.org explains, “Teaching digital literacy and other citizenship skills can also help bridge digital equity gaps (or the “digital divide”) between students. Not all students have the same level of access to technology at home. Students from under-resourced or marginalized communities often have fewer digital experiences in comparison to their peers. When digital literacy is a core part of their education, the technological resources and lessons in school can help these students catch up with their classmates” (2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, digital and online instruction was commonly implemented throughout the United States. During this period of education via online, more attention was brought to the need to teach students digital citizenship. “Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the internet, and digital devices to engage with society on any level” (Zook, 2019). Just as civics is already taught to students in class – how they should perform in our society as responsible well informed citizens – digital citizenship aims to educate how students should

conduct themselves online. Good digital citizenship engages young students and shows them how to connect with one another, empathize with each other and create lasting relationships through digital tools. Bad digital citizenship, on the other hand, entails cyberbullying, irresponsible social media usage, and a general lack of knowledge about how to safely use the Internet. “Fortunately, almost all of the requirements to be a good digital citizen can be taught in the classroom” (Zook, 2019). According to an education article from Waterford.org,

“Because technology is so prevalent in schools, teachers often have to worry about how to prevent cyberbullying, cell phones disrupting class, and plagiarism...As students become good digital citizens, students can use the Internet with a greater sense of self-awareness and better understand how to best use technology” (2019, para. 19).

This, like many other topics already covered in this thesis, is part of the ever changing and evaluated curriculum that is being crafted for students all across the United States.

Some of the key concepts of digital citizenship are:

1. “Empathy
2. How the Internet works
3. Understanding user data
4. Practicing digital literacy
5. Acknowledging the digital divide
6. Practicing digital wellness
7. Securing digital devices” (Climans, 2019, para. 9).

An article from Waterford.org explains the benefits of teaching digital citizenship work well outside of the student’s education and can be applied to their personal lives as well. When educators can guide students to develop healthy practices online, they’re creating a better space

for everyone they interact and connect with (2019). The article from Waterford.org went on to say, “If students use technology in class, digital citizenship curriculum is one of the best ways to help everyone make the most of their time online” (2019, para. 19).

Digital citizenship in the classroom is considered by some to be the next logical step for teaching current events, nationalism and misinformation. Historically, propaganda, nationalism and motives were taught by analyzing sources such as propaganda posters, manifestos and primary documents such as newspapers or radio broadcasts. Students were taught how to recognize what the surface level message of such media was and if there was any hidden agenda or goal to the media. With the invention of the internet, media took on a new form and thus gave a personal printing press, or soapbox, to anyone with a keyboard and internet connection. Digital citizenship seeks to educate on how to recognize misinformation and clickbait. Clickbait refers to any text, headline, video title, etc. that’s deliberately written to pique someone’s interest and get them to click. “Generally speaking, clickbait is written by organizations that want to get people to their website so they can show ads and earn revenue. It’s also used by malicious website owners who want to infect individuals’ computers with malware” (Zook, 2019, para. 59).

While fake news or misleading news may not be an entirely 20th century phenomenon, the abundance of it certainly has grown with the introduction of social media – more access to information, both true and untrue, is at the viewer’s fingertips. Fake news refers to any media outlet publishing severely biased or intentionally false information. “Fake news is most often used with clickbait titles to get readers and alter people’s opinions with ineffective claims or outright lies. It’s also a key part of any information literacy curriculum” (Zook, 2019, para. 74). Fake news is an insidious and widespread issue in the news industry as a whole and has become a global problem. In the United States, the term and concept grew in popularity during the 2016

election, but has since manifested itself in areas outside the realm of politics. “A recent example of this is the COVID-19 pandemic – almost 80 percent of consumers in the United States reported having seen fake news on the coronavirus outbreak, highlighting the extent of the issue and the reach fake news can achieve” (Watson, 2022, para. 1).

Ways educators teach students to recognize fake news are if something sounds incredibly skewed to one ideology over another, it’s likely fake news or heavily biased. The same goes for any piece that’s written by admittedly biased entertainment sources, tabloids, gossip websites, rumor mills or social media posts. A simple way to educate students on the telltale signs of fake news is, if the first sight in an article is an ugly image of someone with bold text, they can safely assume it’s fake news and best left ignored (Zook, 2019). By teaching students digital citizenship, teachers are able to show students that they are part of something larger and that they have a responsibility to themselves, their peers and their country to spread truth and conduct civil discourse.

Another reason school districts are pushing for more and more technology integration into all classes is due to globalization. When it comes to social studies history, oftentimes the technology resources are fairly limited, other than digital libraries. Recently a big push has been placed on creating more technological and interactive media sources for teaching social studies. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns followed by distance learning showed how limited digital resources for social studies were. Culture Grams and online geographic encyclopedia subscriptions were one of the few resources available for middle grade distance educators. Recently, the U.S Historic battlefield trust has created digital 360-degree mapping that allows students to see actual battlefields like Gettysburg and Fredericksburg. While currently

only Civil War battlefields have been digitally captured, soon other historic locations and places will begin filming production.

Even the introduction of SMART boards have made social studies introductions more interactive with touch screens. The ability for students to interact with the lecture when called upon by touching the board creates a small amount of interaction that wouldn't be achievable with an overhead projector or whiteboard. The SMART board paired with auxiliary educational sites such as Booklet or Kahoot further this interaction. Both Blooket and Kahoot allow educators to create their own study guide games for homework or test review. Students are able to compete for points and watch their names rise or fall on the SMART board scoreboard.

Some textbooks released in the past few years have online or digital components that are unlockable via an extra fee. These digital components offer extra resources via photos, interactive games, links to subject related videos and translated documents and curriculum to other languages for ELA students. While this is indeed helpful to educators, they must be cautious before purchasing such content. First is that standards can change, thus making the material and content no longer viable or meeting state standards. Secondly, such packages can be costly, especially in lower income schools. Before purchasing such content, ample review is needed to decide if such an investment is worth the price.

Just how technology has benefited science, math and English curriculums, technological implementation into social studies is the next logical step. By educating students how to use and be responsible with technology, social studies is fulfilling its commitment to readying students for a future outside the classroom.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

In summary, teaching middle schoolers social studies helps prepare them for a constantly changing and connecting world by equipping them with the tools and understanding to solve future problems. Social studies, much like the other fields of education, is constantly changing and adapting to the world around it – be it by new research, shifts in culture and an increasingly digital and globalized world. In this thesis I have shown how social studies has been used in our own history as a means to create ideal citizens. The value and importance of social studies cannot be overlooked. There are several issues facing social studies currently. These issues are, curriculum, relevance, and digital readiness. Political ideology has undeniably influenced suggested standards and curriculum currently being evaluated. In an ever politically polarizing America, this could undermine the essential merit of the new standards. Civics is especially vulnerable to a politically charged mindset creating and implementing new standards. What makes a citizen “good” to one person may be questioned by another. With the world at our fingertips it's easy to get outrage out onto social media quickly. What may be important now in our current events, may not be relevant come next election season. However, the outrage and uproar social media caused could still play into new standards even after issues “cool off.” Great care must be placed on what content is being taught, and teachers need to teach the curriculum without implementing any of their own personal bias or political affiliation.

As history rolls on, certain events may be more important to invest time in educating about than they were a decade ago. Deciding what is important enough to keep and what can perhaps be trimmed is essential to equipping and preparing students with a basic understanding of national and world events. As America and the world become more connected digitally,

politically and economically, greater interest is placed on either speeding up history to get to more contemporary events, or omitting events entirely. Perhaps a positive side is a growing field of global studies of cultural geography, but this may be at the expense of teaching time that is currently spent on national history. A healthy balance of teaching both “old” and “modern” or current history is essential. Finding the perfect combination will doubtlessly require much trial and error. Building a foundation of basic knowledge of people, places and events will always be important to creating solutions to modern problems. Discovering the best methods and tools for accomplishing this is also a problem that has yet to be answered.

As I stated above, the digital resources for social studies are, at the time of writing this thesis, rather limited. Digital encyclopedias, maps and archives are available but are not necessarily the most accessible or easy to understand resources for middle and high school students. The tried and true method of relying on a textbook provides a good foundation for teaching the essential, “who, what, where, when, why and how,” but students fail in the long run to retain that information. Often forgetting what was taught in a chapter after a test or exam is taken. Finding a way to make social studies more engaging and “mentally retaining” for students is important to the field's relevancy. Better access to resources that either personalize or humanize events and make students feel that they are the result of history is important to creating a shared narrative of history. Projects like the American battlefield trust digitizing historical places and events are a step in the right direction. More institutions like the Smithsonian are also stepping up their educational digital resources as well.

In a world of globalization, many argue that education in mathematics and sciences should take precedence in schools. I would argue that social studies is equally as important and

deserves to be given the same attention. American students need to be taught to recognize their nation's unique history and political importance in our ever more connected world.

Limitations in Research

During the course of crafting this thesis, the standards for the Minnesota Social Studies were being reviewed and revised. The third draft of the ten-year proposal was in the process of public review and inquiry. The COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest that the state of Minnesota endured in 2021 played into the delay of adopting the new standards. The standards in practice and used in schools at the time of this thesis research was the 2011 Minnesota Social Studies Standards. Due to the politically charged environment of Minnesota during the pandemic, death of George Floyd and polarizing political environment, finding unbiased or non-politically charged articles, journals and sources proved elusive. Especially in the case of the subjects of Critical Race Theory and American Exceptionalism. While there were many sources, not all were completely credible and great care was needed in selecting neutral sources. Another final issue was the lack of a study on digital education for middle school social studies. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when distance learning was forcing science, math and English to adapt and form new ways to teach their curriculum, it seems a majority of social studies educators were more than content to just send students home with their textbook and assign chapters for study. Quality studies on digital social studies education have proved elusive. This is likely due to the textbook method of teaching I stated above, but also due to the recency of the events that caused distance learning in the first place and no formal study being published yet.

Implications of Future Research

The data collected in the writing of this thesis suggest that social studies has become almost like the Swiss army knife of academics – being flexible and applicable to whatever need arises. Social studies has over time been molded and reshaped to the culture and morals it found itself in. From independence, westward expansion and ideals of patriotism, social studies has changed to suit its citizens' morals. The question that remains now is, what is the next step for social studies? What is the next grand purpose for this branch of academic application? As stated above in this thesis, many would agree that the next step is not simply teaching American civics or citizenship but one of a global citizen. A stronger emphasis on technology application and understanding will prove to be essential in any upcoming standards implemented to social studies. The effects of responsible digital citizenship should also be emphasized more to younger students. In an age when old posts, pictures and tweets can be found easily even after years, students need to learn how to use digital technology and social media responsibly. Perhaps it won't be long before responsible social media classes will be added to the already growing idea of digital citizenship in the classroom. COVID-19 and distance learning highlighted the need for stronger digital academic resources for social studies. It is this author's belief that this will be expanded on in the near future – not just in case of another distance learning lockdown, but for homeschooled students and other distance learning families as well.

Professional Application of Research

During the construction of this thesis, three points stood out to the author that he will apply to his classroom. Those points are,

- Teach students how to recognize bias and misinformation
- The values of empathy and reconciliation

- How to properly use digital resources to find reliable sources

In regards to the first point, in a time of political bias, partisanship and misinformation, this author believes teaching students responsible digital citizenship is key to fostering level headed future voters. The current social studies standards already place a heavy emphasis on educating students on recognizing propaganda. The application of recognizing not just old posters from the first and second world wars, but fake news and misinformation is a key to fostering well informed citizens.

Moving on to the second point, the values of empathy and reconciliation. With so much focus in the sphere of education going to the debate of Critical Race Theory or American Exceptionalism, perhaps a compromise is in order. In regards to Critical Race Theory, perhaps less focus on educating who is a victim of history and who has benefited, and more on those who sacrificed and struggled for those who could not fight for themselves. Or, judge people of the past not through a modern lens, but one of their time and ask the question, “What foundation did they leave behind? Did it allow freedom and equality to expand? Was it good or bad?” In regards to American Exceptionalism, perhaps what is needed is recognition that America has not always lived up to the morals and values that it is supposed to embody. A stance of empathy, reconciliation and responsibility is sometimes needed when studying history if we wish to heal our nation. By teaching students to be more empathetic and recognize cause and effect, educators will foster a more unified identity amongst students and future citizens.

And finally to the third point: teaching how to properly use digital resources to find reliable sources. While technology is limited in regards to social studies education, this does not mean it is non-existent. Digital libraries, journals and academic blogs are an excellent source of readily available information for students to utilize. While physical libraries certainly still play a

role in education, they are not able to compare to the wealth of information on the web. Helping students learn the tools of proper digital research is vital to setting them on the right path for future education and careers.

These three key points stuck out to the author and will be implemented in his classroom by using the time and digital resources at his disposal to give students ample time and direction to familiarize themselves with the points made above.

Personal Perspective

Lastly, I would like to bring up the old adage, “Those who study history, are doomed to watch others repeat it.” It is a lesson I had to experience many years ago when as a student in history class. Looking at the famous photograph of the helicopter evacuation of Saigon from the U.S embassy in 1975, the teacher warned us of the dangers of failed foreign policy and the pitfalls of getting bogged down in conflicts overseas. Fast forward to the summer of 2021 when another image of an American helicopter was broadcasted evacuating U.S officials from the Kabul embassy in Afghanistan. Having fought in the Afghan War, I was greatly distressed by the events and the seemingly predictably obvious repeat of history. It was a watershed moment for me to pursue a career in education to help educate and prevent another costly and futile war. Social studies education provides an opportunity not only to help heal the wound of our past but prevent future ones.

Social studies education has grown and is still adapting to continue its relevance to the times and people studying it. It is a field that deserves more attention and should not be overlooked. The value of social studies is that it teaches how far we have come as a nation and as global citizens, as well as how much more we have to give. As time moves on, the idea of an ideal citizen has adapted and changed and so too has the role of social studies. No longer is it

about creating simply good American citizens but good digital and global citizens as well. Social studies is well worth the time and investment of educational school boards as the solutions to our future problems can often be found in our past.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the foundations of social studies education are to build model, well informed citizens that can make logical and reasonable decisions. Social studies has changed and adapted to fit the needs of the American people with different morals, world events and opinions shaping what the definition of “ideal citizen” means. The value of teaching social studies today is educating students on the events of the past to help find future solutions. By fostering a shared history, educators pass on the mantle of responsibility to the next generation to write the next chapter in our nation's future. By applying new technologies and updated ideals of citizenship – ideals not just applicable to our own country but to a connected world – social studies prepares students for the connected world of tomorrow.

References

- About*. National Council for the Social Studies. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.socialstudies.org/about/about#:~:text=The%20primary%20purpose%20of%20social,and%20involvement%20in%20civic%20affairs>
- Atwood, V. A. (1982). A Historical Perspective of Social Studies. *Journal of Thought*, 17(3), 7–11. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42588980>
- Aufderheide, P., & Firestone, C. M. (1993). In *Media Literacy: A report of the national leadership conference on media literacy, the Aspen Institute Wye Center, Queenstown Maryland, December 7-9, 1992*. Washington, D.C.; Communications and Society Program, the Aspen Institute.
- Blankley, B. (2022, July 3). *New model for school curriculum launched celebrating American exceptionalism*. The Center Square. Retrieved from https://www.thecentersquare.com/national/new-model-for-school-curriculum-launched-celebrating-american-exceptionalism/article_ebe2839c-f8c0-11ec-84a4-3f30bb0d320f.html
- Climans, D. (2021, November 11). *What is Digital Citizenship?* Rise Vision: Easy-to-use Digital Signage Software. Retrieved from <https://www.risevision.com/blog/what-is-digital-citizenship>

Dartmouth Library, Dartmouth College. (2022, January 24). *Human geography: Cultural geography*. Research Guides. Retrieved from https://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/human_geography/cultural

Eischens, R. (2021, November 19). *Latest social studies standards draft urges ethnic studies focus*. Minnesota Reformer. Retrieved from <https://minnesotareformer.com/2021/11/19/latest-social-studies-standards-draft-urges-ethnic-studies-focus/>

Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (2022). *Critical race theory*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory>

Gilles, C., Wang, Y., Smith, J., & Johnson, D. (2013). "I'm no longer just teaching history." Professional development for teaching Common Core State Standards for literacy in social studies: By identifying the reading strategies they regularly use within their disciplines, content area teachers are better able to teach students how to derive meaning from texts. *Middle School Journal*, 44(3), 34–43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41763127>

Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and Media Literacy: Connecting Culture and Classroom*. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications.

How to teach your students the 9 elements of Digital Citizenship. Waterford.org. (2021, October 7). Retrieved from <https://www.waterford.org/education/digital-citizenship-activities-and-tips/>

Minnesota Dept. of Education, Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies,

2011 (2012). Retrieved

from https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=042018&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.

Ramesh, V. A. (2020, November 12). *The dangers of teaching American exceptionalism*.

Berkeley Public Policy Journal. Retrieved from <https://bppj.berkeley.edu/2020/11/12/the-dangers-of-teaching-american-exceptionalism/>

Randall, R., & Marangell, J. (2016). Improving on Past Practice: Embracing a New Direction in Secondary Social Studies Teaching and Learning. *The History Teacher*, 49(3), 383–396. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24810551>

Stearns, S. (2019, July 30). “What Changed” In Social Studies Education. *Perspectives on History: The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association*.

Stein, L., & Prewett, A. (2009). Media Literacy Education in the Social Studies:

Teacher Perceptions and Curricular Challenges. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 36(1), 131–148. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23479205>

Verges, J. (2022, March 30). Minnesota Teachers, Parents Criticize ‘Awkward’ Tribal References in Proposed Math Standards. *Pioneer Press*.

Watson, A. (2022, June 21). *Fake news in the U.S. - statistics & facts*. Statista. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/3251/fake-news/#topicOverview>

Zook, C. (2022, March 8). What Is Digital Citizenship & How Do You Teach It? [web

log]. Retrieved from [https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-is-digital-](https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-is-digital-citizenship#:~:text=Digital%20citizenship%20refers%20to%20the,with%20society%20o)

[citizenship#:~:text=Digital%20citizenship%20refers%20to%20the,with%20society%20o](https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-is-digital-citizenship#:~:text=Digital%20citizenship%20refers%20to%20the,with%20society%20o)

[n%20any%20level.](https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-is-digital-citizenship#:~:text=Digital%20citizenship%20refers%20to%20the,with%20society%20o)