President’s Message

Never rest on your laurels.

Over the last couple of years, the Social Studies Community in the state of Connecticut has been reinvigorated, largely due to the approval of our Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks. Not only have these Frameworks been extremely well-received by social studies educators throughout our state, but they have caught the attention of other social studies councils, school districts, and educational organizations in other parts of the country. In the form of various professional development activities and the like, the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies has taken purposeful steps to make the transition from the conceptual to the practical as we support each other in our efforts to implement curricular revisions and inquiry-based approaches in our classrooms.

The momentum and energy generated by our advocacy successes were exemplified in our highly successful Annual Fall Conference this past October, during which over 400 participants learned, shared, and networked together with non-profit organizations, museums, publishers, curriculum coordinators, and classroom teachers. The excitement was palpable, and it was a great testament to the tremendous efforts carried out by so many people to ensure that social studies education remains at the center of our work as educators. Gene Stec and Tony Roy, conference co-chairs, along with members of the conference committee, deserve an abundance of credit for all of their time and commitment designing such a powerful and memorable conference.

Has there ever been a better case for the relevance of history and social studies than the events of this past semester? Climate, terrorism, religious freedom, refugees, 2nd Amendment issues, international turmoil and the non-stop American presidential election campaign – to name only a few. If we can’t make an argument for the importance of our field these days, then shame on us. And given some of the amazing (dare we say “outrageous”) things that people are proposing in the name of responsible governance, it’s also clear that social studies teachers have a lot to do in encouraging civility and thoughtful analysis of the issues that confront us. As the High School Graduation Task Force reviews graduation requirements, we must continue to make the case that social studies offers a unique and critical part of promoting competent and effective citizenship.

This issue of Yankee Post offers some thoughts and challenges for all of us. The movement to require civic competence – whatever that means- has erupted in several states. See pages 5-7. September’s issue opened up questions about how and whether to address controversial issues; in this issue one teacher offers a challenge to address the refugee crisis head-on (page 10) And we have a short contribution from one of our own on page 11; we should all be looking for challenging workshop opportunities. And to that end, see pages 12 through 17 for opportunities galore. See as well a piece on building questioning skills (pages 8-9). Whatever one’s views on the Common Core, the need to encourage effective learning starts with effective questions.

President David Bosso has saluted the efforts of all those who organized and took part in the CCSS Fall Conference. You will find pictures of the event on page 4. In addition to the quality of the program at

(continued on page 2)
**President's Message - continued**

Despite these many positive strides, however, the Social Studies community in Connecticut faces a new challenge. The High School Graduation Task Force is considering changes to current graduation requirements, and there is a possibility that the number of required social studies credits may be impacted. Through a series of coordinated efforts, the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies is working diligently to ensure that all students receive the high quality social studies education that they deserve. From experience, we know that a carefully considered and systematic approach to advocacy pays dividends. The State Board of Education’s *Position Statement on Comprehensive Social Studies Education for All Students K-12 and Beyond*, our new consultant at the State Department of Education, and the Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks are each the outcome of well-thought-out, steadfast advocacy endeavors on the part of many in the Social Studies Community. These efforts were spearheaded by the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, and we have proven to be an effective and well-respected change agent.

The Connecticut Council for the Social Studies is prepared and positioned to lead the charge once again as we face new issues that have the potential to marginalize the social studies. As in the past, we seek the help of the many dedicated members of the Connecticut Social Studies Community. As always, if you would like to be involved in our advocacy activities, please contact us. We welcome your insight, expertise, and passion in our efforts to present a united front in support of a robust and comprehensive social studies education for all students in Connecticut.

David Bosso

---

**CCSS Officers and Board 2015-2016**

- **Dave Bosso**, President       Berlin HS
- **Gene Stec**, Vice President               Trumbull MS
- **Jennefer Gembala**, Admin Officer Canton HS
- **Max Amoh**, Treasurer                     Yale (ret.)
- **Louise Uchaczyk**, Membership      Joseph Foran HS
- **John Tully**, Legislative Liaison       CCSU
- **Dan Coughlin**, Past President      Mansfield MS (ret.)

**Honorary Members**

- Stephen Armstrong
- Sandra Clark
- Victoria Crompton
- Keith Dauer
- Ed Dorgan
- Kenneth Dunaj
- Emily Dunnack
- Kelly Falvey
- Carolyn Ivanoff
- Joel Patrick Leger
- Valerie McVey
- Jennifer Dicola-Matos

**Nora Mocarski**

**Jennifer Murrihy**

**Elyse Poller**

**Anthony Roy**

**Sandy Senior-Dauer**

**Mary Skelly**

**Justin Taylor**

**Melissa Thom**

**Daniel Gregg**

**Tedd Levy**

**Tim Weinland**

---

**Editor’s Note - continued**

the conference, the excellent attendance not only rewarded those who put in the organizational effort but also confirmed that social studies matters. Further confirmation of that fact appears on page 3 with John Tully’s legislative report.

One administrative note: Each year CCSS presents awards in several categories to outstanding teachers and supporters at our annual Spring Awards Dinner. We urge you to see page 11 and visit the CCSS website CTSocialStudies.org to nominate one or more individuals whom you believe worthy of an award.

We close with our wishes for a safe and restful holiday season and the hope that 2016 will bring a refreshed commitment to the important work that we do. And if you are looking for a new year’s resolution that will be easy to keep, go to page 18 and join CCSS and NCSS!

Tim and Dan

**thomas.weinland@uconn.edu**

**danielt coughlin@charter.net**
Legislative Update on Social Studies Funding - Good News!!

Last week we sent along an “Action Alert” to all of you about social studies funding then pending in the House. Thank you to all of you who contacted your representative. The social studies funding in the bill remained through final passage in House.

Today we received this update from the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) on the bill, including information on the proposed “American History Academies.”

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, which will replace No Child Left Behind. The Senate is expected to vote on and pass the same bill this coming Tuesday. From there, it will be sent to the President, who is expected to sign it.

The legislation re-writes federally funded K-12 education programs.

And there is good news for the social studies! The bill contains multiple funding sources for history, civics, economics and geography.

Specifically, ESSA creates:
- a competitive grant program for non-profit organizations to run intensive, 2 to 6 week long academies in American history, civics and government for high school students and for teachers.
- a competitive grant program for non-profit organizations to develop and disseminate innovative approaches to offering high quality instruction in American history, civics, government and geography for underserved students.
- local education agencies (ie, school districts) are required to use a certain percentage of their federal money on coursework that supports a well-rounded education. LEAs can choose from a list of subjects that includes history, civics, economics and geography as well as foreign languages, the arts, and other subjects.
- a new research and innovation fund is created that allows LEAs, in conjunction with non profit organizations, to apply for funding to create, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students. Innovations in teaching social studies are eligible for grants.

So what happens next?
- First, the legislation has to be passed in the Senate and signed into law by the President.
- Next, the programs authorized in the legislation have to be funded by the appropriations committee. NCSS will be sending alerts in February, when the appropriations process begins, asking everyone who cares about the social studies to contact their Senators and Representatives to urge full funding for the social studies education programs that were created in ESSA. If the grant programs are on the books, but they aren’t funded, then (obviously) there won’t be any grants.
- Funding decisions will be made by October 2016. That means that the first grants are likely to be awarded in calendar year 2017.
- Over the course of 2016, the Department of Education will prepare program guidelines and competitive criteria for the grant programs outlined in ESSA. That way, once the funding is made available, the Department will be ready to issue calls for proposals.
- The competitive funding awards will likely be made, and moneys distributed, for the first time in the second half of calendar year 2017. The change in administrations may change that timetable a little bit.
CCSS Fall Conference

Thank you to Tony Roy for these pictures

Above: Matt Warschauer with (l) Sally Whipple, Executive Director of the Old State House and (r) Dr. Diana Wentzell, State Commissioner of Education

Left: Jennifer Murrihy (with Steve Armstrong) receives The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History teacher of the year award for elementary educators

Thank you to Tony Roy for these pictures
Why Civics Is About More Than Citizenship
Alia Wong, The Atlantic Sept 17, 2015

Amid stagnant performance on civics exams and abysmal youth voter turnout, one group has endeavored to make the U.S. citizenship exam a high-school graduation requirement in every state.

Only one in five Americans aged 18 through 29 cast a ballot in last year’s elections, marking 2014 as having the lowest youth voter-turnout in 40 years. Some reason that young Americans are apathetic about public affairs. Others argue that cynicism about the electoral process is what’s keeping young adults from the polls: They’re so disillusioned with politics they’ve simply given up on it.

Given Millennials’ lifestyle habits and the general public’s ever-growing skepticism of people in power, perennially low voter turnout may seem inevitable. But perhaps schools are largely to blame for the rather pathetic participation numbers; perhaps young adults’ ignorance of civic affairs helps explain why so few of them cast their votes. Perhaps that means change is possible.

“The more educated you are, the more likely you are to be civically engaged,” the Fordham Foundation’s Robert Pondiscio said in a recent seminar with education reporters. It seems that the country’s public schools are failing to fulfill one of their core founding missions: to foster and maintain a thriving democracy.

This is the stated mission of the Joe Foss Institute, a nonprofit that has been making headlines for its particular civic-ed strategy. The non-partisan institute is on a mission to make passing the U.S. citizenship exam—the one that immigrants have to take to become naturalized citizens—a high-school graduation requirement in all 50 states by 2017. Officially, the exam is designed to comprehensively assess one’s familiarity with American fundamentals, drawing 10 questions or prompts at random from a total pool of 100: “What is the supreme law of the land?” for example, or “Name a state that borders Canada.”

Even though all 50 states and the District of Columbia technically require some civic education, advocates say many districts don’t take those policies very seriously, and few states actually hold schools accountable for students’ civics’ outcomes. Just about a fourth of high-school seniors in 2014 scored “proficient” on the federal-government’s civics exam. Proficiency levels were equally lousy for eighth-graders. “U.S. performance has stayed the same. Or should I say: Scores have stayed every bit as bad as the last time the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) took the pulse of history, civics, and geography in public and private schools,” wrote the Washington Post Writers Group columnist Esther Cepeda, who hosted the aforementioned seminar with reporters, earlier this year. As with standardized tests in general, the NAEP exam certainly isn’t the ideal way to gauge proficiency but it’s the only source of nationwide data. And ultimately, surveys of American youth suggest that these test scores paint a pretty accurate picture of their civic literacy: A 2010 Pew Research study found that the vast majority of young adults struggle with basic questions about politics—who the next House speaker would be, for example. On a day like today—national Constitution and Citizenship Day—that makes for an especially discouraging reality…

Given those circumstances, the institute’s initiative may seem like a large undertaking—especially in a country whose politicians are nearly a decade overdue in rewriting the omnibus federal education law. Yet the citizenship-exam law has already passed in eight states, among them Arizona—where the nonprofit and much of its leaders are based—Louisiana, and Wisconsin. Moreover, another 11 state legislatures considered the proposal this year, and the group intends to get 20 additional states on board in 2016. Advocates are confident all will go according to plan.

The question is whether that goal will actually achieve the institute’s pledged mission of civic know-how among America’s future adults. The initiative has also raised concerns about what it represents. “It’s an empty symbolic effort,” said Joseph Kahne, a professor of education at Mills College who oversees the Civic Engagement Research Group and is a vocal critic of the Foss Institute’s plan, in the seminar. “There’s not any evidence base to show that this will be effective … It’s something state legislators can pass and feel good about.” In a recent piece of commentary for Education Week, he argued that testing approach to civic ed is the equivalent of “teaching democracy like a game show.” Aside from Kahne, critics have been scrutinizing the initiative for a range of reasons, both educational and political. For one, it comes with even more standardized testing for kids who are already overwhelmed by the stuff. For another, it sends the message that a multiple-choice exam is the key to being a successful citizen. In other words, it uses an arguably one-dimensional tool as a proxy for an idea of nationhood that, to many critics, is precisely the opposite—what should be a “continuum,” as Louise Dubé, the executive director of iCivics, explained, that emphasizes “quality and not just facts.”

Indeed, civics is an abstract concept that means different things to different people, as does civic education. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines civic education as “all the processes that affect people’s beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities.” The Center for Civic Education’s Margaret Stimmann Branson offers something a little more concise: “education in self-government,” which, she specified, requires that citizens are proactive. “They do not just passively accept the dictums of others or acquiesce to the demands of others,” she continued. And then there’s the Joe Foss Institute’s interpretation: the teaching of “how our government works and who we are as a nation, preparing them to exercise their vote, solve problems in their communities, and engage in active citizenship.”

continued on page 6
Continued from page 5

What makes the subject challenging to apply in schools, though, is that things can get complicated once the basic facts and figures are peeled away. Teaching how a bill becomes law? Fine. Using a current piece of pending legislation to illustrate that lesson? Tricky. Asking students to think critically about that legislation and opine on its merits as if they’re the lawmakers determining its fate? Risky. Indeed, civics inherently intersects with polemical topics that some teachers are uncomfortable discussing in the classroom—often because they’re worried, perhaps for good reason, about losing their jobs. As Cepeda noted in the seminar, efforts to ramp up civic education in schools may have floundered because the subject is “a very politically touchy issue,” something with which politicians are wary of dealing….

Acknowledging the exam’s limitations, Lucian Spataro, a former president of the Joe Foss Institute who continues to serve on its board, reasoned that it simply serves as a first step toward getting kids’ civic literacy to an acceptable level. It’s part of what will inevitably be a long-drawn-out and challenging process. Spataro used similar logic in justifying the testing approach: It incentivizes teachers, he suggested, to give the subject more attention. “If it’s tested, it’s taught,” he said. (Ironically, this teaching-to-the-test reasoning is one of the main reasons No Child Left Behind is so unpopular.)…

Few would doubt Sparato’s characterization of the civic-ed problem as a “quiet crisis”—a term coined by the former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor (who, coincidentally, founded iCivics) and regularly included in the Foss Institute’s promotional materials. But the citizenship-test strategy “is the exact opposite of what we want,” says iCivics’ Dubé, who got involved with the organization after her own son participated in its educational activities as a fourth-grader. In contrast with the Foss Institute, iCivics—which O’Connor founded in 2009—sees itself as a technology-focused endeavor, giving teachers free access to interactive, role-playing games and activities to use in the classrooms. The program, according to Dubé, reaches an estimated 3 million children annually and is used by roughly half of the nation’s public middle-school teachers. iCivics, Dubé stressed, based on a four-pronged definition of civic ed: “skills,” like teaching kids how to write effective argumentative essays using primary sources; “knowledge,” which has to do with facts and understanding how the system works; “dispositions,” such as being able to engage in dialogue about difficult issues while managing their socioemotional behaviors; and “actions,”—putting these tools into effect by going to the polls, for example. In other words, the Joe Foss emphasis—what iCivics would probably define as “knowledge”—seems to highlight a small, though important, fraction of that endeavor. “Some of the things happening politically are a result of people not knowing,” how to make a difference, Dubé said. “It’s important that we show [students] that that big machine that seems like it has nothing to do with you matters more than you think.”

“Any movement for civic education,” she continued, “is a good thing.” The two biggest challenges to civic literacy among today’s young adults, according to Dubé, are quality and equity. To improve the outcomes, educators need to show students that the information is relevant and easy to digest, she said. They need to know it will make a difference in their lives. And, she argued, iCivics’ effectiveness has to do with its focus on gaming; it’s about employing the element of mystery and playfulness, encouraging kids to compete and discover. That, she said, is “what might overcome that disaffection.”…

Today, it seems that the increasingly popular conception of good citizenship is proving you’re “American.” Proving not just that you’re knowledgeable about civic life and how to play a part in it, but also assimilated and patriotic and good at memorizing facts. Maybe it in part explains the controversy that exploded in Oklahoma over the AP U.S. History exam, which provoked criticism from right-leaning policymakers for its supposedly inadequate emphasis on “American exceptionalism.” (The College Board later made a sentence-by-sentence revision to the curriculum to appease critics’ concerns.)

There’s also the question of how deep such lessons ultimately go. Educators often cite limited social-studies instructional time as a key reason why so many students underperform on assessments in the subject. Yet, as Cepeda noted in her column, researchers tend to question that rationale, suggesting that there’s little correlation between the amount of time dedicated to a subject and students’ performance. “To me, this points directly to the quality, rather than the quantity, of instruction,” Cepeda wrote in her column. Is preparing students for the citizenship exam—which would likely entail rote memorization and out-of-class practice tests—really the highest-quality option?
Push on for more civics, finances lessons in schools

By Katie Lannan STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

BOSTON — Knowledge of financial practices and the workings of government were described as cornerstones of modern-day literacy on Thursday by supporters of legislation that would bring finance and civics instruction to Massachusetts schools.

Students and teachers told members of the Joint Committee on Education during a hearing that they see demand in schools for financial literacy and civics courses, which several bills before the committee seek to add to public school curriculum.

Whitman-Hanson Regional High School business education teacher Lydia Nelson told the committee that her school offers a financial literacy elective, which accommodates about one-third of the student body.

“We’ve actually begun to bring in another teacher because we have so much of a need,” Nelson said. “I’ve had parents request, and this is the truth, on parents night they’ve actually spoken to the guidance counselor about transferring out of a class and transferring into that class.”

Eight bills before the committee dealt with creating financial literacy programs in schools, including a Sen. Jamie Eldridge bill that drew the bulk of the testimony.

Eldridge’s bill (S 279) would task the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with developing standards and objectives around personal financial literacy, intended to provide students with an understanding of concepts like borrowing money, saving, paying taxes and using credit cards.

Under Eldridge’s proposal, the 2016 school year would see financial literacy integrated into the curriculum in math, business, technology, social sciences or courses in other areas where “teachers have the capacity to teach financial literacy.” The Acton Democrat said during the hearing that he’s seen interest grow in establishing financial literacy programs, including from financial advisors and chambers of commerce.

Benadette Manning, a teacher at Boston’s Fenway High School, said that an argument against adding financial literacy programs is the perception that teachers are already too busy to be hampered with more requirements.

“But teachers were never asked,” Manning said. “And every time I ask a teacher, they agree with it.”

Ten bills seek to increase civics knowledge among Massachusetts students, by either making it a high school graduation requirement or otherwise establishing civics courses and programs.

Gillian Pressman, Greater Boston site director for the civics education group Generation Citizen, said that such courses can help motivate students by associating their schoolwork with issues they encounter in daily life, as well as teaching them how to speak and write compellingly and critically analyze claims.

“These are actually 21st century literacy skills,” Pressman said.

In addition to establishing a civics curriculum, Senate Majority Leader Harriette Chandler’s bill (S 249) would call on all public school districts to offer a unit of civics education, including a course, weekend program or model United Nations program, that ends with a voter registration drive. It also would set up a youth advisory committee that would work the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop the curriculum.

Chandler said during the hearing that she was distressed by continuing low levels of voter turnout, and a situation where “very few people seem to know how they’re governed.”

“I took civics in high school and it made a difference in my life,” said Chandler, a Worcester Democrat. “It sparked my interest.”

A panel of 10 students from The Winchendon School stood behind Chandler as she testified, as a show of support for her legislation.

D’mone Walker, a 17-year-old member of Worcester’s Healthy Options for Prevention and Education Coalition, said that involvement in his group’s peer leadership program showed him that teenagers often don’t understand the principles of civics.

“We realized that our peers weren’t really engaged in the community, and we feel it would be different if we all learned what civics really is,” he said. “Since we’re all going to school to get an education, why not have it offered in schools as well, so that we can all learn it together?
The Common Core Raises Questions About Teachers’ Questioning Skills

New PD initiatives aim to help teachers elicit deeper responses and interpretations from students

By Sarah D. Sparks

There are no stupid questions. But when it comes to the common core, teachers are finding that their questions could be asking a lot more of students.

Educators have called the focus on “close reading” one of the most critical shifts in the Common Core State Standards’ approach to literacy, and one that many teachers need practice to perfect.

Using questioning techniques, teachers can guide students to think critically about complex literary and informational texts and to construct evidence-based arguments based on them. But getting students to dig into deeper meaning requires going beyond simply asking them to cite an example or find an answer in the text. It means encouraging them to build interpretations and analyses from what they’ve read.

To that end, a number of new district and researcher-led programs are being developed to help teachers learn to ask better questions in connection with reading assignments or activities.

“What’s hard for teachers is forming these questions,” said Lindsay C. Matsumura, an associate education dean at the University of Pittsburgh who studies inquiry. Questioning “really requires a lot of planning to do it effectively.”

For example, in discussing E.B. White’s classic children’s novel Charlotte’s Web, typically a teacher might ask a student what Templeton the rat does to help Wilbur the pig. But a deeper question, Matsumura said, might be: “Is Templeton the rat a good friend?” He really helps Wilbur, in the text, but you could argue his help always comes at a cost. What’s critical [in close reading] is you need to reasonably be able to take different perspectives on the text. That is getting to the heart of common-core standards.”

No ‘Right’ Answers

In a 2009 meta-analysis of class discussions led by Pennsylvania State University psychologist P. Karen Murphy, a team of researchers found that most teacher questions ask students to identify surface features of the text, like grammar, plot, characters, and climax.

“I initiate a question, the student responds, I evaluate,” Murphy said in describing a typical exchange. Students answering those questions became adept in basic story structure, but the skills did not translate to deeper understanding of the material or the ability to apply what they learned in one text to another.

By contrast, the questions that improved students’ critical thinking and deeper understanding did not have a “right” answer. Rather, they asked students to speculate on how actions might unfold or to draw on other texts to inform their understanding of the passage being discussed.

Murphy and Matsumura each have been awarded $1.5 million in federal grants to develop some of the first professional-development programs to help teachers improve discussions during close reading as prescribed under the common core.

Murphy’s training initiative, dubbed Quality Talk, grew out of early research on question types. She and Jeffrey Greene of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are crafting a set of videotaped model lessons and an assessment tool for teachers to analyze their own inquiry techniques.

Matsumura and her colleagues at Pittsburgh’s Learning Research and Development Center, meanwhile, have developed a PD program that uses an eight-week online course and individual coaching. The training includes how to select meaty texts and conceive questions that help students understand multiple perspectives.

Close reading is intended not only to push students to think more deeply and critically about what they read, but also to put students with less background knowledge on more equal footing with classmates during class discussions, according to Matsumura.

“There are real problems in society we want kids to be reading about—water quality, investing in space exploration—these are complex problems. But those texts are by and large not available to kids,” she said. “You have to do a lot of background building, mini-lectures on the subject, and teachers sometimes feel insecure about their own knowledge.”

continued on page 9
Claire Borge and Audrey Jakes, teachers in the Fairfield-Suisun district in Northern California, see that discomfort a lot.

Both are on special assignment in the district’s Teacher Support Center, working to help some 1,000 teachers in preschool through adult education classes improve their classroom discourse. Using workshops and ongoing lesson modeling and coaching, the pair helps teachers learn to ask questions that spur discussions about not only text, but also photos, charts, and even political cartoons.

“We are coming out of a time period in public education where the questions have all been prewritten for us, the curriculum has all been written for us, and now we are being given the opportunity to write our own questions within the curriculum,” said Borge, a 30-year veteran teacher. “At first, everyone is really afraid to really look at these question stems and think.”

Hitting the Stopping Points

In one school, the coaches came to help a teacher with one lesson and ended up working for eight weeks with all the teachers in that grade. Teachers learned from and built on each others’ questions to devise lessons integrating science and social studies with reading.

“It’s been a gradual release,” Borge said. “The first year was very general—what is the common core, how does a standard progress from kindergarten through 12th grade—but that’s not going to translate to classroom practice. [In workshops] teachers see the strategies and go, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah,’ but when they see them layered in their classrooms, it’s really transformative.”

As teachers use more open-ended questions, Jakes said, they also begin to step back and encourage students to ask most of the questions of one another.

The first time Borge and Jakes modeled close reading for an 11th grade history teacher’s students, “you could hear crickets,” Jakes said. “It’s not that [the students] thought nothing, but they were scared. ... You could see they were thinking, ‘You’re not supposed to ask me, you’re supposed to tell me the answer is C.’ “

Well-timed questions can be critical to getting students to open up, Matsumura said. She found teachers often read through a chapter or text selection completely before starting a discussion.

As part of the training course, they are learning to plan stopping points where the text is ambiguous and launch questions that get students thinking about what is going on. “We want to teach kids to not just start at the beginning and read all the way through,” Matsumura said. “A good reader is thinking about what they are reading as they are going through.”

In a pilot study of the Pittsburgh Learning Research and Development Center training, Matsumura found these more open and in-depth class conversations were particularly helpful to English-language learners. She is still studying exactly why such students showed bigger comprehension improvements than other students, but she speculated that more-integrated discussions of academic vocabulary and connection among different texts and visuals might have made the difference.

It’s easy for teachers to get overwhelmed trying to implement all the changes in the common core at once.

“Start small,” Jakes advised. “Common core is about shifts, not leaps. If you change one small thing in your practice, and then another thing, over the course of the year, you have changed.”

That approach has proved popular; Borge’s and Jakes’ latest workshop had 50 teachers signed up, with a waiting list for 18 more.

PLEASE NOTE:
Yankee Post is Available Only Online at www.ctsocialstudies.org
To receive Yankee Post via email, and notification of a new issue . . . please join CCSS and send your email address to:
ctsocialstudies@yahoo.com
Jacob Stewart
Student, Teacher, and Social Justice Advocate

A Call to All Teachers: Start the Dialogue on Refugees Now

Posted: 12/01/2015 5:19 pm EST

In the middle of my first year as a teacher, I received a new student from Mexico. Her English wasn’t perfect, but her work ethic, intelligence, and enthusiasm for learning more than made up for it. She quickly became a wonderful addition to my classroom.

But within a few months, I noticed a change. Her concentration diminished. The optimism disappeared. She consistently landed in detention for breaking class rules. Then one day, a razor blade fell out of her coat pocket during class. I immediately contacted the counselor, and later that day the decision was made to move her to a different school. Afterwards, I discovered that her peers bullied her for being from Mexico. They would call her names and told her that she didn’t deserve to be in the United States. Naturally, this sort of cruel treatment eroded her self-esteem.

Teachers know better than anyone that controversial political messages can and will make their way into the classroom. This is because students are like sponges; they absorb the messages pouring from their parents and the media. Of course, all sponges eventually release what they absorb, and school is usually the place for just that. Unfortunately, many of these messages tend to be unkind and hateful, which was the case for my student from Mexico. The national conversation on undocumented immigrants often uses negative terms that describe them as illegal, a burden, or criminal. But when kids use these terms, they don’t understand how harmful they actually are. As a result, some children must suffer through this hatred.

Now I could just blame this suffering on parents or the media, but it would be more productive to highlight the remarkable role that teachers can play on issues of discrimination. You see, good teachers teach more than just their content; they teach civility as well. They teach the next generation how to interact with one another, even if they disagree politically. And as globalization continues, civility will become more crucial to teach since students will be confronted with a world outside of their own.

Recently, yet another dangerous message has entered the national discourse: that Syrian refugees are a threat to society. The political messages on refugees border on many ‘isms’: racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, you name it. But another concern of mine is for the Syrian refugees who are already here. Since 2012, the United States has accepted thousands. Now, our country has become quite a scary place for Syrian refugees. It is likely that our schools are even scarier. I can only imagine the negativity on refugees that has been absorbed by children already. This negativity will soon facilitate a climate suited for bullying—precisely what so many educators have worked so hard to combat. Teachers: it falls on you to redirect this unfounded fear.

I call on all teachers to start the dialogue on Syrian refugees in their classrooms. Ensure that this dialogue includes important themes of stigma, identity, and the effects of bullying. Allow this dialogue to occur in all grades, kindergarten through 12, and in every subject, from social studies to math. You can find lesson ideas all over the web. Here is a place for you to start. Some teachers have probably had this conversation already, and that’s fantastic. Just remember that students often need multiple classes for a lesson to truly sink in.

If you’re a new teacher, this conversation will most likely feel awkward. But please don’t let that stop you from starting this dialogue. Remember that you will make a difference if just one student leaves with a better sense of civility. And if that doesn’t happen, just go back to the drawing board and try again.

And parents, I invite you to have this conversation as well. Teachers can always use the extra help at home. Finally, don’t make the mistake that I made. I regret that I never even attempted to facilitate a conversation like this during my first year. A thirty minute lesson could have been enough to alter the education experience for my student from Mexico.

So please, start the dialogue now before it’s too late. Remember that a refugee could arrive in your classroom tomorrow without prior notice. If this happens, let’s make sure that s/he gets the safe and welcoming learning environment that every child deserves.

Follow Jacob Stewart on Twitter: www.twitter.com/jakestewy
Jason McGarry, a Social Studies teacher at H.H. Ellis Technical High School in Danielson, CT, participated this summer in a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) weeklong workshop, “The American Revolution on the Northern Frontier: Fort Ticonderoga and the Road to Saratoga,” along with 29 other teachers from around the country.

The educators were among those who applied to the NEH for the program which was offered free of charge to successful applicants and included a stipend to defray expenses associated with attendance.

The workshop used Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York as a base and included trips to Saratoga National Park and the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

Lecture-discussions led by visiting scholars from across the country focused on aspects of the American Revolution between 1775 and 1777.

This six-day seminar included participants from as far away as California and professors from Cornell, the State University of New York, Northeastern University, Duquesne and other universities, as well as Todd Braisted, of the Bergen County Historical Society and a Mohawk chief.

Mr. McGarry has been to Fort Ticonderoga two previous times, both were for teacher scholarships that focused on the French and Indian War as well as the American Revolution. He currently teaches American Civics and Geography and uses the resources and knowledge he learns from the workshop for these classes, and when he teaches American and World History.

“I have always had a sense of pride being from Connecticut due to my hometown of Salisbury, and its contribution to the American Revolution. Although visitors believe that Salisbury is a quiet town, similar to Fort Ticonderoga, its Revolutionary War Era landscape was an impressive spectacle of colossal engineering. Iron ore and ragging fires, which were tempered by the Raggies, can still be found in the wit and character of the locals whose families are deeply rooted in the town today.

---

Recognize a social studies teacher or pre-service teacher or professional or supporter or advocate today!

*Deadline for nominations is February 15, 2016.*

**CCSS AWARDS 2016-** Descriptions and nominating forms for the following awards are located on the CCSS Awards Pages - see CCSS website: CTSocialStudies.org

- Excellence in Social Studies Education (Two Awards: Grades K-8 & Grades 9-12)
- Bruce Fraser Friend of Social Studies Award
- CCSS Service Award
- Pre-Service Teacher Award (Two Awards: Grades 4-8 & Grades 9-12)
- Louis Addazio Award
- John Stedman “Passion for Social Studies” Award

Awardees will be honored at the CCSS Spring Social Dinner in May (Date/Location TBD).
Standards Search Tool

TeachingAmericanHistory.org’s Documents Library now offers a state standards and Common Core-based search tool to help you find documents required to meet your curriculum requirements. Searches can be performed either from document to standard, or from standard to document. Additionally, a growing list of documents are accompanied by summaries, guiding questions, and related documents.

To search for documents that meet your state or Common Core ELA for History standards, go to our Documents Library and select an era or topic. Once that page loads you’ll see a search box on the right side of the screen. From this box you can use the drop-down menus to select the subject, state, and grade level(s) for which you need documents. Under Subjects you can choose either Language Arts or Social Studies. The former is the Common Core ELA standards for History and Social Studies courses. The latter is the generic term for all individual states’ Social Studies and History standards. If you teach in a state that has adopted the Common Core, you can select your own state. If not, you can select “NGA Center/CCSSO” under the second drop-down menu to see the Common Core standards and related documents.

Once you make your three selections and click the Search button, you’ll be given a list of standards and documents that we believe are appropriate and useful for teaching them. You can click on the links to see the lists of documents, and then the documents themselves.

To search for standards from a specific document, simply navigate to that document – the Declaration of Independence, for example – and click the ‘Academic Standards’ tab immediately above the text of the document, and enter the subject, your state, and grade level. You’ll get a set of results relevant to your choices.

Note that in some cases you will not get any search results, whether you go from standard to document or document to standard. The most likely reason is that your state does not have a standard at that specific grade level, if you chose one, that meets a given document. The easiest way to resolve this is to select a different grade level, or ‘All Grade Levels.'

Join NewseumED.org

Explore the Newseum’s new educational resources website, NewseumED, which gives teachers and students free access to curated, standards-aligned content from the museum’s vast collection of more than 35,000 historic newspapers, videos and other artifacts. Check out in-depth EDCollections on the civil rights movement and woman suffrage, and preview “Freedom in the Balance” on individual rights vs. national security in the wake of 9/11.

The website offers lesson plans that use primary sources and artifacts to make history relevant today and to help educators shed new light on current debates about the First Amendment and media ethics. All resources support national standards of learning, including Common Core, and are designed to meet the needs of elementary, middle and high school classrooms, as well as college students and lifelong learners.

Designed with you in mind, the website features improved site navigation and search functionality to help you easily find the content you need for your classroom by grade level, topic, century, state, etc. Plus, all resources are viewable on mobile devices, tablets and desktops!

Register now to get the most out of NewseumED. Being a registered user gives you complete access to this library of primary sources, images and videos, including copyrighted materials. Registration is free, secure and only takes a minute. Plus, the first 2,000 users to register by Dec. 7 will receive a free EDCollection poster of four historic front pages and lesson plans. We hope you enjoy our new site and welcome your feedback. Email us at newseumED@newseum.org and let us know what you think.

Sincerely, The Newseum Education Team
Validate your scholars’ achievements in a new way…

Start a Rho Kappa Chapter Today!

RHO KAPPA National Social Studies Honor Society is the only national organization for high school juniors and seniors that recognizes excellence in the field of social studies. Membership in RHO KAPPA is an honor bestowed upon students by a local chapter for accomplishments in social studies and overall academic achievement. Any accredited high school can apply to start a chapter, through which students will be inducted into the RHO KAPPA Social Studies Honor Society.

For more information visit rhokappa.socialstudies.org or call 301-588-1800 x 107 or e-mail at rhokappa@ncss.org.

Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life

The Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History

The Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History is happy to announce our new Self-Paced Course series.

Each self-paced course includes:
• Video seminars with an eminent historian
• Digital labs and pedagogy sessions
• MP3 audio files of each seminar for on-the-go listening
• Featured primary sources and readings
• An online quiz and certificate of completion
• The opportunity for teachers to earn contact hours credits

Would you be interested in sharing this news with your members through the Connecticut Council for Social Studies Yankee Post newsletter or on the CCSS website? I would be happy to provide more information on the Self-Paced Course series if needed.

We are currently offering four courses:

- The Global Cold War with Professor Jeremi Suri, University of Texas at Austin
- The American Civil War with Professor Allen C. Guelzo, Gettysburg College
- The South in American History with Professor Edward L. Ayers, University of Richmond
- Amazing Grace: How Writers Helped End Slavery with Professor James G. Basker, Barnard College

Anna Khomina
The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History 49 West 45th Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10036
kholmia@gilderlehrman.org

Rand McNally Intro to Geography

Rand McNally has teamed up with Montessorium to present Intro to Geography - World Edition, a Montessori inspired educational app for iPad® and iPhone®.

Intro to Geography - World Edition combines 150 years of map-making expertise with the 100-year-old educational method of Montessori.

The result? A geography app that puts the world at your child’s fingertips. This new app brings the engaging Montessori puzzle map work to the iPhone and iPad. Journey through every continent, watch your progression along a road map, and discover what makes our planet unique:

• Drag and drop each country
• Draw lines and match each country to its name.
• Discover each country’s identity by coloring in their flag.
• Collect stamps along the way to add to your passport

National Council for History Education

I’m the Director of Conference & Events with the National Council for History Education and I’m in charge of our 2016 NCHE Conference in Niagara Falls, NY.

Our 2016 Conference will be held in Niagara Falls on April 21-23, 2016. The theme of the conference is “Crossing Borders” and more information can be found at: www.nche.net/conference We would love to see your teachers take advantage of the professional development opportunity that is so close to home.

John Csepegi, Director of Conferences & Events National Council for History Education 13940 Cedar Road, #393 University Heights, OH 44118 (240) 696-6612 john@nche.net

Professional Opportunities

Rand McNally Intro to Geography

Rand McNally has teamed up with Montessorium to present Intro to Geography - World Edition, a Montessori inspired educational app for iPad® and iPhone®.

Intro to Geography - World Edition combines 150 years of map-making expertise with the 100-year-old educational method of Montessori.

The result? A geography app that puts the world at your child’s fingertips. This new app brings the engaging Montessori puzzle map work to the iPhone and iPad. Journey through every continent, watch your progression along a road map, and discover what makes our planet unique:

• Drag and drop each country
• Draw lines and match each country to its name.
• Discover each country’s identity by coloring in their flag.
• Collect stamps along the way to add to your passport

Rand McNally Intro to Geography
Entries due January 15, 2016

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Student Prize for Excellence in Writing to Advance Social Justice

Are you changing the world? Do you know somebody who is?

The Student Stowe Prize recognizes outstanding writing by United States high school and college students that motivates positive action for social justice. The Prize recognizes writing that is making a tangible impact on a social justice issue critical to contemporary society. Issues may include, but are not limited to: race, class and gender. Entries must have been published or publicly presented.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, appalled by the injustice of slavery, wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) as a call to action. Using print media and the familiar literary form of telling a story, she shone a harsh light on the American institution of slavery. The book became an international best seller and galvanized the abolition movement before the Civil War.

Student Stowe Prize for High School Students

The winning student will be featured at a program and award ceremony in Hartford, Connecticut, receive $1,000.00, and have their work published on the Stowe Center website.

Student Stowe Prize for College Students

The winning student will be featured at a program and award ceremony in Hartford, Connecticut, receive $2,500.00, and have their work published on the Stowe Center website.

Student Stowe Prize: DATES TO REMEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 2016</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Notification to winners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Student Stowe Prize Award Event and Public Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Stowe Prize guidelines are published on HarrietBeecherStowe.org

2012 Student Stowe Prize winner Hannah Morgan with Annette Gordon Reed and Katherine Kane
Now Available Online:
*Bill of Rights in Action*

**Fall 2015 (Vol. 31, No.1)**
This edition of *Bill of Rights in Action* explores issues related to groundbreaking moments in history. The first article looks at how James Madison, the “father” of the U.S. Constitution, who initially opposed adding a bill of rights to the Constitution, also became the “father” of the Bill of Rights. The second article examines how Hatshepsut assumed the throne and became Egypt’s first woman pharaoh.

- **U.S. History:** James Madison and the Bill of Rights
- **World History:** Hatshepsut: How a Woman Took the Throne

Our longtime contributor Carlton Martz wrote about Madison and the Bill of Rights. Guest writer Lucy Eisenberg, Esq., wrote the article on Hatshepsut.

**Download your copy now!**

---

**Bill of Rights Institute - Voices of History**

The presidential faces on our $10 and $20 bills may soon change, but what and who have pushed these changes? **We have an elesson** that explores the controversy surrounding these proposed changes, and who could replace Hamilton and Jackson.

Imagine this: All of the best lesson plans and curricula the Bill of Rights Institute offers right at your fingertips. Well, you don’t have to imagine it because it’s here! We call it **Voices of History** - our digital storehouse featuring the best of our primary source-based lesson plans.

And here’s the best part: **Voices of History is totally free!** The materials in *Voices of History* are written by teachers for teachers. We have lessons on everything from being a responsible American to religious liberty and even the ongoing balance between freedom and security.

**But that’s not it.** *Voices of History* isn’t just another online resources. It’s a fully integrated digital hub for lesson plans that are easy to use with a simple interface. *Voices of History* even allows you to collaborate with other teachers via email - making it easier for you to teach American history and civics to your students.

**Sign up and get started today.**

Michelle Hess
Vice President of Education
Bill of Rights Institute <michelle@billofrightsinstitute.org>

---

**General Information: 2016 Seminars Abroad Program**

Did you know that the U.S. Department of Education provides grants to K-12 and postsecondary educators and administrators to study and travel abroad?

The Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program provides short-term seminars abroad for U.S. educators in the social sciences and humanities to improve their understanding and knowledge of the peoples and cultures of other countries. The program offers educational lectures and activities specifically designed for the group, including visits to local schools and organizations, meetings with educators and students, visits to cultural sites. Participants draw on their experiences during the program to create new, cross-cultural curricula for their classrooms and school systems back in the U.S.

In 2016, summer programs will be offered to Peru, India, and Senegal. The program covers airfare, lodging, and program costs. Participants should be prepared to pay a cost-share of up to $600.

**Questions about the Seminars Abroad Program?** Contact Maria Chang at maria.chang@ed.gov.
CREC Institute of Teaching and Learning
The Choices Approach:
Engaging Students in Inquiry and Discussion about International Issues

This professional learning opportunity coaches teachers on how to use the The Choices Program to promote inquiry and student discourse in the classroom. Choices materials incorporate the latest scholarship from Brown University and beyond to draw connections between historical events and contemporary international issues. In each unit, a central activity challenges students to consider multiple viewpoints on a contested issue. Students examine the historical, cultural, and political background of the issue to prepare a coherent presentation. Follow-up discussion demands analysis and evaluation of conflicting values, interests, and priorities. Ultimately, students are expected to formulate persuasive arguments and express their own views.


Target Audience:
Middle and high school social studies, English, and/or humanities teachers and district leaders.
Working with the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks: Inquiry Instruction at the Elementary Level

When:
January 7, 2016
8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where:
CREC Central
111 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Cost:
$115 per participant

Registration:
Click on the date above to register or visit
www.crec.org/itl

This workshop will help teachers make the shift to inquiry instruction in elementary school social studies. During this workshop, participants will:

- Review the new Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks at the elementary and middle school levels;
- Examine the Dimensions of Inquiry as described by the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks and the C3 Framework;
- Understand and practice what inquiry instruction looks like in an elementary school classroom;
- Design instructional activities that address Dimensions 3 and 4 of the Inquiry Arc; and
- Explore ways to incorporate local and state history into elementary school inquiry instruction.

For additional information, contact Sara Slogesky at sslogesky@crec.org
Membership in CCSS entitles you to:

- Reduced Registration for the CCSS Fall Conference
- Reduced Registration for the Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies (NERC)
- Convenient access to the Yankee Post, the CCSS online newsletter
- Opportunity to apply for ‘mini-grants’ of up to $500 for innovative curriculum in social studies and other special projects
- Opportunity to meet colleagues and develop a network of professional friends and associates
- Ability to keep up-to-date with developments in the social studies.

If you have always wanted to become a member of NCSS, now is the time to act. New membership subscriptions to NCSS will also give you membership benefits from Connecticut Council for the Social Studies for one year—a $20 savings. This offer applies to only new NCSS Regular or new Comprehensive members only who send in their form to CCSS. Joint member benefits include:

- All CCSS benefits
- Regular and Comprehensive membership in NCSS includes a subscription to Social Education or Social Studies and the Young Learner
- NCSS Comprehensive membership also includes all bulletins published during the membership year.

Please complete membership form. Make checks payable to CCSS and mail this form to CCSS, P.O. Box 5031, Milford, CT 06460.

Name______________________________________email_________________________________
Home Address___________________________City_________________State_______Zip______
School Name_______________________________________________________________________
School Address__________________________City__________________State_______Zip______
Home Phone_____________________Cell Phone_______________Work Phone_____________
Position____________________________Level of Instruction_____________________________
Areas of Special Interest_____________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCSS Membership (July 1- June 30)</th>
<th>NEW NCSS Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____Regular $20</td>
<td>_____Regular* $69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____Student $10</td>
<td>_____Comprehensive* $83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____Retiree $10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Choose one:
____Social Education
____Social Studies and the Young Learner