Introduction

This document is an effort to describe the roles of the teacher and student in an exemplary Social Studies instructional environment. The focus of the document is on the “instructional core” at the center of the educational process as described in detail in the Public Education Leadership Program (PELP) [www.hbs.edu/pelp](http://www.hbs.edu/pelp). Future documents will address the “outer ring” factors that are present in Social Studies classrooms in high achieving schools and districts – essential resources for Social Studies programs, stakeholder involvement, the learning culture, structures and system components, including sustained high quality professional learning opportunities for teachers who are at the core of the instructional process.

Note: The following documents are not cited in the table below as they are the original sources that serve as the basis for all of the characteristics listed.
Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools


In addition, the following state documents provide the framework and guidance for Social Studies education in Kentucky:


### 1. Learning Climate

#### Teacher Characteristics

**A. Teacher creates learning environments where**

students are active participants as individuals and as members of collaborative groups. The teacher:

1. Creates, questions, shares, discusses, reasons, and analyzes the processes involved in civic engagement, social studies inquiry and historical thinking.
2. Promotes respect for various viewpoints,

#### Connections to Standards, Research, and Expert Opinion


- In order for social studies instruction to be meaningful, teachers must understand and meet the needs of their students. Teachers should capitalize on the diversity and natural interests of their students in the world around them. By building on students’ skills and experiences, teachers can design learning events that challenge students to make meaningful connections and expand their knowledge and viewpoints. In social studies as in any knowledge domain, learners benefit from having a variety of ways to understand a given concept. Increasingly, elementary teachers have students of diverse backgrounds and differing abilities in their classes, and must differentiate instruction to meet individual needs. Successful elementary teachers possess both a command of the subject matter and the ability to engage students in the learning process through a variety of

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well-supported positions, and a sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities.

B. Teacher motivates students and nurtures their desire to learn in a safe, healthy and supportive environment, which develops compassion and mutual respect. The teacher:

1) Motivates students and nurtures their desire to learn in a safe, healthy and supportive environment which develops compassion, mutual respect, tolerance of ambiguity and courage.

2) Promotes the demonstration and advocacy of civic dispositions such as individual responsibility, self-discipline/self-governance, civility, respect for rights of others, honesty, respect for law, open-mindedness, critical mindedness, negotiation and compromise, persistence, civic mindedness, compassion and patriotism.

C. Teacher cultivates cross-cultural understandings and the value of diversity.

D. Teacher encourages students to accept responsibility for their own learning and accommodates the diverse learning needs of all students.

E. Teacher displays effective and efficient classroom management that includes routines that promote comfort, order and appropriate student behaviors. The teacher:

1) Facilitates cooperative groups, project-based tasks, authentic work, instructional methodologies (p. 253).

- Elementary learners do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. They need frequent opportunities to make daily decisions about democratic concepts and principles that are respectful of the dignity and rights of individuals and the common good. They need to participate in learning experiences that involve core values of democracy, including freedom of speech and thought, equality of opportunity, justice, and diversity. Thoughtful and deliberate classroom engagement related to controversial or ethical issues provides opportunities for elementary children to practice critical thinking skills while examining multiple perspectives. Elementary teachers should create opportunities for students to discuss values, engage in real-world problem solving and make reasoned decisions (p. 253).

- Challenging elementary school social studies can pave the way for life-long learning and active citizenship. Students should be provided with opportunities for in-depth investigation of a few concepts that challenge and engage them rather than superficial treatment of many topics that can create student apathy. Challenging social studies projects include debates, discussions, projects and simulations that require application of critical thinking skills. Instead of simply reading and answering questions, elementary students should be taught to question, evaluate, and challenge informational sources. Teachers should ask children the kinds of questions that stimulate decision making, problem solving, and issue analysis (p. 253).

- In effective social studies programs, elementary teachers use a variety of approaches, strategies, and materials to support children’s interests and abilities... Teachers guide learning rather than dictate (p. 253).

Teacher: A, A2, B2, C, D, E1, F, G, G1, G2, H, I, I1; Student: A, B, C1, C2, C3, D1, E1, F:


- The “essential characteristics of powerful social studies” as described by NCSS consist of five principles.

- The first principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful. Meaningfulness is stimulated when students learn connected networks of knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes they will find useful both in and outside school, and when the significance and meaningfulness of content is emphasized in how it is presented to students and how it is developed through activities (p. 12).

- The second principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are integrative. Integration is encouraged when the instruction interconnects knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes with effective social/political action; and when the teaching makes effective use of technology (p. 12).

- The third principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are values-based. Social studies content invariably involves the examination and understanding of values—one’s own and those of others—as values are expressed in points of view, beliefs, policies, actions, or inactions. Values-based instruction appropriate to education in a democratic society committed to safeguarding individual rights and the common good occurs when (1) Social studies teachers...
## Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dialogue/debate/discussion, service learning, and student presentations.</td>
<td>2) Encourages students to function as members of a learning community</td>
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<td>F. Teacher provides students equitable access to technology, space, tools, and time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Teacher effectively allocates time for students to engage in hands-on experiences, discuss and process content, and make meaningful connections.</td>
<td>The teacher: 1) Promotes social interaction, historical thinking, and civic engagement. 2) Fosters lifelong learning, inquiry, civic participation, democratic principles, and processes.</td>
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<td>H. Teacher designs lessons that allow students to participate in empowering activities in which they understand that learning is a process and mistakes are a natural part of learning.</td>
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<td>I. Teacher creates an environment where student work is valued, appreciated, and used as a learning tool.</td>
<td>The teacher: 1) Knows each student individually, responds to each one insightfully, and builds a constructive relationship with every student.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Characteristics:</strong></td>
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- The qualities of powerful and authentic social studies include: Skills necessary to help our students thrive in a world of continuous and accelerating change are emphasized. These include discipline-based literacy, multi-disciplinary awareness, information gathering and analysis, inquiry and critical thinking, communication, data analysis, and the prudent use of twenty-first century media and technology.
- Social studies teachers recognize that students do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. The values embodied in our democratic form of government, with its commitment to justice, equality, and freedom of thought and speech, are reflected in social studies classroom practice. Students are made aware of potential policy implications and taught to think critically and make decisions about a variety of issues, modeling the choices they will make as adult citizens. Students learn to assess the merits of competing arguments, and make reasoned decisions that include consideration of the values within alternative policy recommendations.
B. Student actively participates and is authentically engaged.

C. Student collaborates/teams with other students. The student:
   1) Demonstrates and advocates civic dispositions such as individual responsibility to the group, self-discipline/governance, civility, respect for rights of other individuals, honesty, and respect for law, open-mindedness, critical mindedness, persistence, compassion, civic mindedness, patriotism, negotiation and compromise.
   2) Exhibits mutual respect for differing perspectives and points of view.
   3) Makes informed and reasoned decisions for the common good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

D. Student exhibits a sense of accomplishment and confidence. The student:
   1) Expresses and defends personal points of view and positions within the school and/or community.
   2) Thinks critically and makes value-based decisions.

E. Student takes educational risks in class. The student:
   1) Refutes, defends, and supports his/her beliefs and opinions on controversial issues.

F. Student practices and engages in safe, responsible and ethical use of technology.

Through discussions, debates, the use of authentic documents, simulations, research, and other occasions for critical thinking and decision-making, students learn to apply value-based reasoning when addressing problems and issues. Students engage in experiences that develop fair-mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility.

- Powerful social studies teaching and learning are active. Students work individually and collaboratively, using rich and varied sources, to reach understandings, make decisions, discuss issues and solve problems.

Teacher: A, E1, F, G; Student: B


- Studies...[have] found that student attitudes toward, and interest in, social studies can be greatly influenced by two factors: (a) active involvement and teacher enthusiasm and (b) the perceived value of the subject matter. Results from both of these studies show that students respond well to knowledgeable, passionate teachers who include them as active participants in the learning process through lively discussions and thought provoking activities (p. 141).

- Providing students with authentic instructional work is an important factor in increasing student engagement. Authentic instructional work, as defined in a study by Marks (2000), consists of four component measures relating to the frequency with which the student is involved in meaningful academic experiences in the core mathematics or social studies class: (a) You are asked interesting questions and solve new problems; (b) you dig deeply into understanding a single topic; (c) you apply the subject to problems and situations in life outside of school, and (d) you discuss your ideas about the subject with the teacher or students. Other studies further illustrate the connection between student engagement and teachers who provide students with a well-balanced mixture of teacher- and student-centered activities. Teachers are also aided in their efforts to engage students in social studies when they create inquiry-based lessons that allow students to construct knowledge through the active involvement of exploring content and seeking appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. Teachers can further enhance this instruction by using the Internet to connect students to a wealth of resources that will make history come alive in their classrooms (p. 141).

Teacher: A, A1, G2, H; Student: B


- Based on the findings of this study, instructional strategies that piqued students’ own questions and interests appeared to be the key in facilitating their motivation to learn history and an increased level of student learning. These fifth graders demonstrated a motivation to learn history for the sake of learning rather than superficial rewards or achievement goals. Evidence supports the contention that when a story, in this case history, interests a child, his or her level of motivation is increased, often resulting in increased student achievement...Based on the findings of this study, inquiry-based instruction not only motivated students’ interest and motivation to
learn history but also, perhaps most importantly, prompted them to learn independently outside the classroom — learning for the sake of learning (p. 127).


- Social studies educators, as well as other teachers, must begin to develop practices that encourage students to wrestle with the gaps between civic ideals and realities and consider how these gaps are unevenly distributed throughout our society. Instructional practices that engage youth in considering problematic aspects of U.S. civic society can benefit all students. Frank discussion of civic rights, processes, and social disparities can encourage a more active civic identity, empowering youth who have experienced a gap between civic ideals and realities and challenging students who have not experienced this gap to look beyond their immediate concerns… The following “Principles of Problem-Posing Civic Education” are proposed: (1) Civic education should build upon students’ own experiences with civic life, including daily experiences with civic institutions and their agents; (2) Civic education should provide opportunities for students to consider and discuss key issues and controversies in civic life; (3) Civic education should build students’ discussion, analysis, critique, and research skills; and (4) Civic education should build students’ knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a way that connects directly to their own concerns (pp. 228-229).


- Two of three detracked social studies classrooms embodied a democratized approach to social studies learning that was conducive to the development of democratic skills and orientations. There were four common aspects to learning and knowledge in these classrooms. (1) There were many ways to learn social studies (e.g., discussion of issues, drawing maps, analyzing slides, viewing film clips, creating group skits and presentations, conducting research as well as listening to lectures and taking tests and quizzes)…the heterogeneity of the groups impelled these teachers to construct a more varied, active curriculum that enfranchised more students as learners and participants in the classroom (pp. 71-72). (2) Learning was a social activity; students interacted continually through discussion, group work, and peer teaching (p. 74). (3) Knowledge was constituted as meaningful and relevant to students’ lives; students’ experiences, interests and opinions were intrinsic to the process of learning, and engagement with the world was part of the learning process; students readily engaged in discussion of current topics, building discussion and critical thinking skills as well as cultivating the habit of interest in the world around them; some students made personal connections between regions of study and themselves (pp. 76-77). (4) All students can learn; in these schools, detracking provided opportunities for students who otherwise would have been relegated to a lower level class for social studies to engage with a high quality, college preparatory curriculum (pp 78-79).

- Drawing on the most forward-looking ideas and arguments in recent national reports the authors offer recommendations for best practice in teaching social studies, including:
- Students need opportunities to exercise choice and responsibility by choosing their own topics for inquiry. Particularly because social studies is meant to prepare students for democratic citizenship, active engagement is necessary. Good teachers lay out lists of significant topics to choose from and help students make intelligent choices. This not only increases student engagement but teaches them how to judiciously choose topics for reports and paper (p. 140).
- Social studies teaching should involve exploration of open questions that challenge students’ thinking. This means going beyond the learning of information to consider some hard but meaningful questions. To enact this principle, teachers need to learn how to generate questions that invite discussion. Another teaching skill needed for this exploratory, open approach is conducting constructive group discussion. Climate-setting activities are essential so that students learn to respect one another’s differing opinions and trust that their ideas will not be ridiculed (pp. 140-141).
- To make real concepts being taught, social studies must involve students in active participation in the classroom and the wider community (p. 141).
- Social studies should involve students in both independent inquiry and cooperative learning to build skills and habits needed for lifelong, responsible learning (p. 142).
- Social studies learning should be built on students’ prior knowledge of their lives and communities, rather than assuming they know nothing about the subject (p. 143).


- The students overwhelmingly indicated that the use of primary sources made history “come alive” for them; they especially enjoyed the hide and seek with digital photographs (p. 84).
- The students were more enthusiastic and lively with the artifact boxes. The areas of inquiry the students generated were the most beneficial outcomes of these lessons. Their questions helped guide further lesson development by the classroom teachers. The challenges of this lesson informed us that it is well worth taking the instructional time to help students use and understand artifacts as evidence (p. 84).
- The concept of multiple perspectives and historical bias also surfaced with these students. Their grappling with print sources being primary sources and biased was of great importance. All of the students eventually made distinctions between primary and secondary sources, yet questions remained (p. 84).
- Both classroom teachers indicated that their students were more “engaged” in social studies than they had been previously. One teacher noted that she had not previously believed that elementary students could use primary source materials and engage in authentic inquiry…both teachers
indicated that the use of digital resources allowed their students to connect with resources outside of the classroom and to engage in disciplined inquiry (p. 85).


- Social studies professionals have an obligation to provide instruction that instills commitment to democratic values and faith in the dignity and worth of the individual. Social studies professionals should respect the dignity and integrity of every student regardless of color, race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic background, handicap condition, or socioeconomic level, and should aspire to help each student to achieve effective citizenship.
- Social studies professionals have the obligation to recognize, and to foster respect for, the diversity of cultures represented by their students, and by the myriad of cultures in an increasingly interdependent world.
- Effective social studies instruction necessitates an environment in which social studies professionals and students are free to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss relevant facts and ideas. Those engaged in social studies instruction have a responsibility to accept and practice the democratic commitment to open inquiry and to approach controversial issues in a spirit of inquiry rather than advocacy.
- Social studies professionals have an obligation to establish classroom climates that support student rights to know, to doubt, to inquire freely, to think critically, and to express openly.


- History education can contribute to a democratic society and help students reason together, care for the common good, and listen to each other by (1) giving students the chance to take part in reasoned judgment by looking at evidence together and deciding on the best choice of action based on the reliability of information; (2) engaging students in consideration of the common good, an activity that depends on identification with larger communities—ethnic, national, global, or all of these at once—and on a sense of right and wrong; and (3) help students understand perspectives that are different than their own (pp. 10-11).


- Culturally responsive instruction is teaching that allows students to succeed academically by building on background knowledge and experiences gained in the home and community. Teachers can adjust classroom structures for participation to make instruction more culturally responsive in a number of ways: (1) Use whole class instruction (which requires students to learn at the same pace and conform to the same behavior expectations) judiciously; (2) Vary participation structures to enable all to participate (to accommodate students from cultural backgrounds that would make students reluctant to volunteer); (3) give students time to prepare and rehearse responses (for
students from cultural groups that are taught to rehearse, practice and otherwise prepare before sharing knowledge; (4) Guide student-led groups to set ground rules for group discussions (pp. 181-182).


- Nine characteristics were found in this study to be shared by the 10 outstanding graduates of the program, and were labeled the “Nine Cardinal Attributes of Star Social Studies Teachers.” The characteristics included (1) Positive attitude about students. Without exception, these teachers described their students and their relationships with students as the most important and enjoyable aspect of their teaching. “I love the kids,” explained one teacher, “even when they do goofy things. They’re also capable of some brilliant ideas, some that just leave you amazed.” Supervisors likewise cited the teachers’ obvious enthusiasm about their students and positive attitudes in working with students as a common and observable attribute (p. 361).


- It is essential for social studies teachers to begin by taking inventory of what their students know, do, believe, and understand before leaping into instruction. Pre-assessment involves getting acquainted with students academically and socially to establish a community of learners that is inviting, igniting, and exciting. All students should feel safe, welcome, and wanted; the learning community should ensure democratic principles and social justice, qualities that must be evident in all assessments and assessment practices, especially when collaborating with social studies students (p. 155).


- NCSS believes that the core mission of social studies education is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens. An effective citizen: (1) Embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them; (2) Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one’s family, and the community; (3) Has knowledge of the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world; (4) Has knowledge of our nation’s founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes; (5) Is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national, and global levels; (6) Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; (7) Asks meaningful questions and is able to analyze and evaluate information and ideas; (8) Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; (9) Has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group; and (10) Actively participates in civic and community life.

- An effective citizenship education program ensures that civic knowledge, skills, and values are
taught explicitly and systematically at every grade level. School and classroom management and culture exemplify and demonstrate core democratic values. Students are provided with opportunities to participate in simulations, service-learning projects, conflict resolution programs, and other activities that encourage the application of civic knowledge, skills, and values.

- Routine involvement in service activities, both in the school and in the wider community, can help students develop both long-lasting cooperative dispositions and a sense of contributing in progressively larger venues. (p. 10); Schools should provide an array of opportunities for service, including ongoing individual activities, periodic collaborations among students on school projects, and community service projects. (p. 11)

- To become responsible citizens, students must have access not only to content knowledge and core democratic values, but also to opportunities to learn citizenship skills and apply them to problems and needs in the community beyond the classroom. Service-learning provides essential opportunities for students not only to develop civic participation skills, values, and attitudes, but also to acquire first-hand knowledge of the topics they are studying in the curriculum. Service-learning provides an authentic means for using social studies content and skills to investigate social, political, and economic issues and to take direct action in an effort to create a more just and equitable society.

- The study demonstrated that the integration of local historical inquiry with community service-learning can lead to significant self-reported increases in civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intention to participate in community improvement in the future for 3rd-12th grade students…Consistent with service learning literature, the authors believe that learning, discussion, and reflection on social causes or civic issues in the CiviConnections program contributed to the positive outcomes students indicated. In addition, in most cases students were involved in choosing the issue they studied and for which they created service activities. The service-learning literature emphasizes the importance of student voice and ownership; these elements were present in most of the CiviConnections projects studied…The study provides confirmation that connecting learning and reflection on social and civic causes and including student voice and ownership in project design increase students’ civic efficacy and participation…An additional contribution of the study to the service-learning literature is that the CiviConnections program contributed to significant growth in students’ civic knowledge (pp. 380-382).

- The public discussion of students’ interpretations of the documents deepened their understanding of the author’s perspective and the implications for their interpretations. These findings support previous studies indicating that group discussions enhance students’ understanding of complex social issues and events… By sharing their interpretations with their classmates who often disagreed, the students had the opportunity to create a richer, more complex representation of an historical event than they could have created individually (p. 52).


- To be proficient at integrating technologies into classrooms requires a threefold approach. First, teachers must gain competence in comfortably using the technologies; second, they must identify means to skillfully and transparently integrate those technologies into their social studies instruction, and third, they must expand their instructional repertoire to include both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches (p. 167).


- Children and youth need instruction on the application of skills for critical analysis and ethical decision making as citizens in a digital world. Education for such “cybercitizenship” is a natural extension of the citizenship education role the social studies have always played in school curricula. Lessons in cybercitizenship, for example, might address the problematic aspects of the Internet and enhance critical skills for managing these challenges. These lessons might also mean, however, extending the same sorts of skills needed by effective citizens to the digital civic space.


- Wagner proposes Seven Skills for the 21st Century, based on conversations with business and industry leaders. The first of these is critical thinking and problem-solving: “The habit of asking good questions was most frequently mentioned as an essential component of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. It turns out that by asking good questions, critical thinking, and problem solving go hand in hand in the minds of most employers and business consultants, and taken together they represent the First Survival Skill of the new global ‘knowledge economy.’” Equally important, they are skills that our kids need in order to participate effectively in our democracy” (pp. 14-15).

- “All the people I spoke to stressed the importance of working in teams as a core competency.” This led to the development of the Second Survival Skill: collaboration across networks and
Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

- The skillfulness of individuals working with networks of people across boundaries and from different cultures has become an essential prerequisite for a growing number of multinational corporations...A core competency is the ability to think strategically: to figure out where the work can best be done from both a talent and cost perspective. But then comes an even greater challenge: How to forge effective collaborative teams and work with people who come from vastly different cultures (p. 24).
- Leaders today want to see individuals take more initiative and even be entrepreneurial in terms of the ways they seek out opportunities, ideas, and strategies for improvement...the importance of individuals and teams being able to take the initiative to solve a problem or come up with a better solution was frequently mentioned (in interviews) (p. 32).
- The Fifth Survival Skill is effective oral and written communication. Communication skills are a major factor highlighted in dozens of studies that focus on students’ lack of preparation for college and the workplace, and these skills are going to come increasingly important as teams are increasingly composed of individuals from diverse cultures. The ability to express one’s views clearly in a democracy and to communicate effectively across cultures is an important citizenship skill as well (p. 34).

- Students who are multiculturally literate are aware of how cultural beliefs, values, and sensibilities affect the way they and others think and behave; appreciate and accept similarities and differences in beliefs, appearances, and lifestyles; know the history of both mainstream and nonmainstream American cultures; can take the perspectives of other cultural groups (p. 28).

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<th>2. Classroom Assessment and Reflection</th>
<th>Connections to Standards, Research, and Expert Opinion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Characteristics:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> A, A1, D, D1, E, E1, F, I, J; <strong>Student:</strong> A, B, C: Gallavan, N. P. &amp; Kottler, E. (2009). Constructing rubrics and assessing progress collaboratively with social studies students. <em>The Social Studies, 100</em>(4), 154-158.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Teacher uses multiple methods to systematically gather data about student understanding and ability. The teacher: 1) Uses multiple methods to systematically gather data about student understanding and ability including service learning, authentic and performance assessments (scored</td>
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<td>- It is essential for social studies teachers to begin by taking inventory of what their students know, do, believe, and understand before leaping into instruction. Pre-assessment involves getting acquainted with students academically and socially to establish a community of learners that is inviting, igniting, and exciting. All students should feel safe, welcome, and wanted; the learning community should ensure democratic principles and social justice, qualities that must be evident in all assessments and assessment practices, especially when collaborating with social studies</td>
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<th>Characteristics</th>
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| B. Teacher uses student work/data, observations of instruction, assignments and interactions with colleagues to reflect on and improve teaching practice. The teacher: | 1) Uses student work/data, observations of instruction, assignments and interactions with colleagues to reflect on and improve social studies teaching practice.  
2) Monitors progress in knowledge, skills and civic dispositions (individual responsibility, self-discipline, self-governance, civility, respect for rights of others, honesty, respect for law, open-mindedness, critical mindedness, negotiation and compromise, persistence, civic mindedness, compassion and patriotism). |
| C. Teacher revises instructional strategies based upon analysis of student achievement data. |         |
| D. Teacher uncovers students’ prior understandings of the concepts to be addressed and addresses students’ misconceptions/incomplete conceptions. The teacher: | 1) Uncovers students’ prior understanding of the knowledge, skills, concepts and civic dispositions to be addressed in social studies and addresses students’ misconceptions/incomplete conceptions. |
| E. Teacher co-develops scoring guides/rubrics with students and provides adequate modeling to students (p. 155). |         |
| • Social studies teachers optimize learning when students participate in designing assignments and assessing themselves, and it is essential for students to have copies of the rubrics when assignments are introduced...If social studies teachers want to increase their students’ levels of participation, responsibility, and satisfaction, they should develop a culture of learning that includes assessment and involve their students in the entire assessment process (p. 155). |
| • The social studies assessment process should provide a variety of assignments and assessments relevant to the subject area and unit of learning. As social studies teachers collaborate with their classes, lists of assorted assignments and assessments from which students and teachers can choose should be posted in the classroom (p. 155). |
| • The social studies teacher and students should collaborate on each portion of the assignment and develop the rubrics together. The teacher guides the students in finalizing decisions related to what students must understand and demonstrate to complete the assignment and score well, what the assignment will look like, when the assignment is due, and how the students will be assessed (p. 156). |
| • Finally, just as important, students follow the rubrics to determine the extent of their own progress. Teachers will have to guide students through this process and explain both the assignment’s purpose and the way points are earned. It is recommended to include self-assessment on the rubric and award points on completion (p. 156). |
| • Teachers should note the successes and challenges experienced by both students and themselves and reflect on how to make changes to improve future interactions and outcomes (p. 156). |
| • Social studies teachers should demonstrate expected skills and create a variety of models or work samples to show their students (p. 157). |


- In today’s schools, it is important to provide students with options for demonstrating what they have learned and what they can do. Whatever is used to accomplish this must be clear, rigorous, and accompanied by rubrics that provide straightforward expectations for the grade level and curriculum being taught. The alternative assessments selected need to take into accounts the students’ abilities and talents.

- Students should have several opportunities to demonstrate learning and understanding in a variety of assessment formats throughout the instructional period. These multiple, varied opportunities will help to support success for all students in the classroom, giving them the chance to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the curriculum (pp. 95-96).


- Teachers’ most important responsibility is to provide students with the structure they need to...

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<td>make clear the expectations for quality performance. The teacher:</td>
<td>1) Co-develops scoring guides/rubrics with students and provides adequate modeling to make clear the expectations for performance such as the criteria in debates, discussions, writing assignments and responses, cooperative group work, inquiry based investigations, and presentations.</td>
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<td><strong>F.</strong> Teacher guides students to apply rubrics to assess their performance and identify improvement strategies.</td>
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<td><strong>G.</strong> Teacher provides regular and timely feedback to students and parents that moves learners forward.</td>
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<td><strong>H.</strong> Teacher allows students to use feedback to improve their work before a grade is assigned.</td>
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<td><strong>I.</strong> Teacher facilitates students in self- and peer-assessment.</td>
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<td><strong>J.</strong> Teacher reflects on instruction and makes adjustments as student learning occurs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Characteristics:</strong></td>
<td>A. Student recognizes what proficient work looks like and determines steps necessary for improving his/her work.</td>
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<td>B. Student monitors progress toward reaching learning targets.</td>
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</table>
|                                                                                  | C. Student develops and/or uses scoring guides learn—a process known as scaffolding. Scaffolding takes many forms. First, teachers have to encourage students’ interest in accomplishing tasks. Second, teachers must actively support and encourage students as they work through assignments, such as breaking down a task into manageable components. Another crucial element is the teacher’s modeling of procedures—teachers must demonstrate what it looks like to do history and accomplish a task successfully. Finally, teachers have to give students critical feedback on their performances that helps them understand how their work compares to ideal versions. The ultimate goal of all of these forms of scaffolding is to transfer control from teacher to student by enabling students to plan their learning and monitor their own progress (p. 21).  
  - The primary characteristic of evaluation is that it serves a constructive purpose—it has beneficial effects on teaching and learning. The evaluation tasks allow students to show what they know rather than what they don’t know. Constructive assessment gives students many ways to show what they know. When teachers and students work together to find the best means of demonstrating what has been learned, students’ self-esteem benefits because they have every chance to live up to their potential. The teacher’s instruction is also better because she gains insight into what students know and what they still need to learn. To gain this insight, teachers need more than one way to tap students’ achievement (p. 22).  
  - Using multiple assessments frequently involves giving students choices; in some cases, students may choose the form assessment takes (p. 23).  
  - Assessment activities should be authentic; they should be similar to the tasks people do in their communities, in businesses, or in scholarly disciplines (p. 23).  
  - Traditionally, teachers think of assessment as what comes after instruction…but in the kinds of assessment described in this book, there is no such split between instruction and assessment…Teachers take notes while students are talking, observe their presentations, review their projects, and read their written reports; all of these are parts of the ongoing assessment of learning (p. 23).  
  - Perhaps the most important principle to keep in mind in assessing students’ historical understanding is that constructive evaluation must be consistent with a constructivist perspective on teaching and learning. People learn new information by linking it to what they already know… A student’s understanding at any given time represents the interaction between external sources of information and her prior knowledge (p. 23).  
  - Because reflective, disciplined inquiry is rooted in what students already know and can do and gradually moves beyond the known, teachers must take into account the conceptions and misconceptions held by students and supported by popular culture…historical inquiry develops most easily when the creation or discovery of a problem challenges prior knowledge, providing opportunities for students to outgrow what they already know (p. 31).  
  - Constructive assessment in history can involve peer and teacher review, self-assessment, anecdotal records, formal scoring rubrics, checklists, and other formats for gaining insight into students’ thinking. A teacher’s “kid-watching” skills and a willingness to document her observations are the best tools she has for assessing this process (p. 33).  
  - Critical feedback, letting students know what they have done well and what they still need to improve, is an important form of scaffolding…For assessment to be effective, it must specify the...
Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

periodically to assess his/her own work or that of peers.

D. Student uses teacher and peer feedback to improve his/her work.

E. Student reflects on work and makes adjustments as learning occurs.

- relevant aspects of achievement (p. 57-58).
- Joint evaluation (between teacher and student) provides an opportunity to discuss specific aspects of the study with each student...It also provides important information to students, especially about the teacher’s goals and expectations. Over time, joint evaluations help students become more self-reflective about their own learning (p. 83).


- Social studies professionals should use a system of evaluation that enables students to assess more accurately both their strengths and weaknesses, thereby fostering the kind of self-knowledge requisite to effective citizenship. The evaluation process should be broadly based, encompass all of the recognized goals of the social studies, and provide useful, systematic, and comprehensive assessment of student performance while affirming the worth and dignity of each individual. The purposes and uses of the evaluation processes, the instruments, and the results obtained should be clarified and explained to students and to their parents or guardians.


- Five key strategies of formative assessment are (1) Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions provides a starting point because before one can begin to design effective activities for learners, one has to be clear about what one wants the students to be able to do; (2) Engineering effective classroom discussions brings in classroom discourse and interactive whole-class teaching; (3) Feedback that moves learning forward emphasizes that the major purpose of feedback is to provide the learner guidance on what to do next rather than telling him/her what was deficient in the last piece of work; (4) Activating students as learning resources brings in collaborative and cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, and peer assessment; and (5) Activating students as owners of their own learning includes aspects of metacognition, motivation, interest, the way that learners attribute their successes and failures, and self-assessment. The “big idea” that ties all of this together is that evidence of student learning is used to adapt teaching and learning activities in order to meet student needs (pp. 11-13).


- Novice teachers cannot possibly master all the knowledge and skills required for culturally responsive teaching, but they can develop a vision for what it entails and how it can be accomplished. This vision helps provide the impetus necessary for their continued growth...although this must be supported by long-term professional opportunities for ongoing critical reflection and collaboration...Perhaps the most vital feature of this type of ongoing professional development is the strong emphasis on peer collaboration. Working with colleagues can offer interdisciplinary insights, expose teachers to a wider array of social beliefs and
perspectives, and provide opportunities for constructive critique of their pedagogy. Perhaps most importantly, peer collaboration offers teachers the chance to connect with others, to develop a joint vision for civic education that provides the encouragement to persevere in spite of its ample challenges (p. 178-179).


- The qualities of powerful and authentic social studies include that teachers are reflective in planning, implementing, and assessing meaningful curriculum. Reflective teachers are well informed about the nature and purposes of social studies, have a continually growing understanding of the disciplines that they teach, and keep up with pedagogical developments in the field of social studies.


- Nine characteristics were found in this study to be shared by the 10 outstanding graduates of the program, and were labeled the “Nine Cardinal Attributes of Star Social Studies Teachers.” The characteristics included that teachers were reflective about their performance. These Star teachers view teaching and learning as a reciprocal process. They left no doubt about it; in every interview, the teachers were deeply concerned about how their teaching was related to student performance. One teacher described her disposition this way, “If [they] don’t learn, I haven’t really taught.” Other respondents echoed her sentiment. The outstanding teachers included in this study displayed a reflective disposition, that is, a persistent curiosity about their effectiveness or ineffectiveness as evidenced in their students’ performances. (p. 361).


- Teachers who are aware of their students’ inaccurate assumptions and naïve conceptions can minimize their frequency and persistence…Commonly observed naïve conceptions can be prevented or cleared up for most students by incorporating reference to them in the process of providing clear and accurate information when introducing the content. Where this has been insufficient, or where students have developed unanticipated misconceptions, these can be addressed during subsequent content development and application activities (pp. 267-268).


- The “essential characteristics of powerful social studies” as described by NCSS consist of five principles. The first principal is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful. Meaningfulness is stimulated when meaningful learning activities and assessment
### 3. Instructional Rigor and Student Engagement

**Teacher Characteristics:**

A. Teacher instructs the complex processes, concepts and principles contained in state and national standards using differentiated strategies that make them accessible to all students.

B. Teacher scaffolds instruction to help students reason and develop problem-solving strategies.
   - Develops historical inquiry.
   - Focuses topics on authentic real world issues and public policy regarding cultures, economics, geography, [something missing here?]?

C. Teacher orchestrates effective classroom

### Connections to Standards, Research, and Expert Opinion


- The qualities of powerful and authentic social studies include: Skills necessary to help our students thrive in a world of continuous and accelerating change are emphasized. These include discipline-based literacy, multi-disciplinary awareness, information gathering and analysis, inquiry and critical thinking, communication, data analysis and the prudent use of twenty-first century media and technology.

- Social studies teachers recognize that students do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. The values embodied in our democratic form of government, with its commitment to justice, equality, and freedom of thought and speech, are reflected in social studies classroom practice. Students are made aware of potential policy implications and taught to think critically and make decisions about a variety of issues, modeling the choices they will make as adult citizens. Students learn to assess the merits of competing arguments, and make reasoned decisions that include consideration of the values within alternative policy recommendations. Through discussions, debates, the use of authentic documents, simulations, research, and other occasions for critical thinking and decision-making, students learn to apply value-based reasoning when addressing problems and issues. Students engage in experiences that develop fair-
discussions, questioning, and learning tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills. The teacher:
1) Facilitates lively classroom debates and written learning tasks where students are expected to defend their responses with facts, opinions, ideas and points of view.

D. Teacher provides meaningful learning opportunities for students. The teacher:
1) Connects social studies concepts across time (past, present, future) and place, sub-domains, and content areas.

E. Teacher challenges students to think deeply about problems and encourages/models a variety of approaches to a solution. The teacher:
1) Challenges students to think innovatively, critically, creatively, socially, civically and ethically about problems faced by citizens and leaders and encourages/models a variety of approaches to conflicting perspectives on controversial issues and public policy.

F. Teacher integrates a variety of learning resources with instruction to increase learning options. The teacher:
1) Provides authentic, creative and problem solving opportunities for all students using a variety of resources (e.g., newspapers, multimedia presentations, speakers, monuments, artifacts, literature, music, and artwork) into classroom instruction to maximize learning options and authentic creative and problem solving opportunities.

mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility.

- Challenging social studies instruction makes use of regular writing and the analysis of various types of documents, such as primary and secondary sources, graphs, charts, and data banks. It includes sources from the arts, humanities, and sciences, substantive conversation, and disciplined inquiry. Disciplined inquiry, in turn, includes the teaching of sophisticated concepts and ideas, and in-depth investigation of fewer rather than more topics, with deep processing and detailed study of each topic. Challenging social studies includes the rigorous teaching of the core disciplines as influential and continually growing tools for inquiry.


- History education can contribute to a democratic society and help students reason together, care for the common good, and listen to each other by (1) giving students the chance to take part in reasoned judgment by looking at evidence together and deciding on the best choice of action based on the reliability of information; (2) engaging students in consideration of the common good, an activity that depends on identification with larger communities—ethnic, national, global, or all of these at once—and on a sense of right and wrong; and (3) help students understand perspectives that are different than their own (pp. 10-11).

- Teachers’ most important responsibility is to provide students with the structure they need to learn—a process known as scaffolding. Scaffolding takes many forms. First, teachers have to encourage students’ interest in accomplishing tasks. Second, teachers must actively support and encourage students as they work through assignments, such as breaking down a task into manageable components. Another crucial element is the teacher’s modeling of procedures—teachers must demonstrate what it looks like to do history and accomplish a task successfully. Finally, teachers have to give students critical feedback on their performances that helps them understand how their work compares to ideal versions. The ultimate goal of all of these forms of scaffolding is to transfer control from teacher to student by enabling students to plan their learning and monitor their own progress (p. 21).

- Critical feedback, letting students know what they have done well and what they still need to improve, is an important form of scaffolding…For assessment to be effective, it must specify the relevant aspects of achievement (p. 57-58).

- Joint evaluation (between teacher and student) provides an opportunity to discuss specific aspects of the study with each student…It also provides important information to students, especially about the teacher’s goals and expectations. Over time, joint evaluations help students become more self-reflective about their own learning (p. 83).

Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

G. Teacher structures and facilitates ongoing formal and informal discussions based on a shared understanding of rules and discourse.

H. Teacher integrates the application of inquiry skills into learning experiences. The teacher: 1) Integrates the application of historical inquiry, value based decision making on controversial issues, examination and evaluation of public policy, critical analysis of conflicting sources of information, cause effect, problem solution, interpretive analysis of historical artifacts, and primary and secondary source documents into learning experiences.

I. Teacher clarifies and shares with students learning intentions/targets and criteria for success.

Student Characteristics:
A. Student articulates and understands learning intentions/targets and criteria for success.

B. Student reads and understands a variety of texts. The student: 1) Synthesizes information from a variety of primary and secondary source documents and multiple viewpoints.

C. Student applies and refines inquiry skills. The student: 1) Analyzes the credibility of historical data,

http://www.socstrp.org/issues/PDF/4.2.7.pdf

- The students overwhelmingly indicated that the use of primary sources made history “come alive” for them; they especially enjoyed the hide and seek with digital photographs. Not surprisingly, much time was initially spent on helping the elementary students understand primary sources. Many of these students had never engaged formally, on their own or in a school setting, in historical inquiry or been asked to consider historical perspective (p. 84).

- The students were more enthusiastic and lively with the artifact boxes. The areas of inquiry the students generated were the most beneficial outcomes of these lessons. Their questions helped guide further lesson development by the classroom teachers. The challenges of this lesson informed us that it is well worth taking the instructional time to help students use and understand artifacts as evidence (p. 84).

- Over the course of our lessons, these elementary students clearly articulated that they, too, were makers of history. The notion of evidence and artifacts left behind greatly helped with this discovery. The concept of multiple perspectives and historical bias also surfaced with these students. Their grappling with print sources being primary sources and biased was of great importance. All of the students eventually made distinctions between primary and secondary sources, yet questions remained (p. 84).

- Both classroom teachers indicated that their students were more “engaged” in social studies than they had been previously. One teacher noted that she had not previously believed that elementary students could use primary source materials and engage in authentic inquiry…both teachers indicated that the use of digital resources allowed their students to connect with resources outside of the classroom and to engage in disciplined inquiry (p. 85).

- We learned that upper elementary students can, indeed, use and make sense of primary sources as well as create historical knowledge and when given appropriate time and scaffolding develop conclusions based upon evidence (p. 85).

http://www.socstrp.org/issues/PDF/3.2.7.pdf

- Based on the findings of this study, instructional strategies that piqued students’ own questions and interests appeared to be the key in facilitating their motivation to learn history and an increased level of student learning. These fifth graders demonstrated a motivation to learn history for the sake of learning rather than superficial rewards or achievement goals. Evidence supports the contention that when a story, in this case history, interests a child, his or her level of motivation is increased, often resulting in increased student achievement…Based on the findings of this study, inquiry-based instruction not only motivated students’ interest and motivation to learn history but also, perhaps most importantly, prompted them to learn independently outside the classroom — learning for the sake of learning (p. 127).

http://www.socstrp.org/issues/PDF/1.2.5.pdf


proposes and advocates for solutions to real-world issues, through dialogue, debate, discussion, speech writing, and other modes of communication.

2) Initiates leadership and mediation strategies in collaborative projects, class discussions, dialogue and debates.

Social studies educators, as well as other teachers, must begin to develop practices that encourage students to wrestle with the gaps between civic ideals and realities and consider how these gaps are unevenly distributed throughout our society. Instructional practices that engage youth in considering problematic aspects of U.S. civic society can benefit all students. Frank discussion of civic rights, processes, and social disparities can encourage a more active civic identity, empowering youth who have experienced a gap between civic ideals and realities and challenging students who have not experienced this gap to look beyond their immediate concerns...

The following “Principles of Problem-Posing Civic Education” are proposed: (1) Civic education should build upon students’ own experiences with civic life, including daily experiences with civic institutions and their agents; (2) Civic education should provide opportunities for students to consider and discuss key issues and controversies in civic life; (3) Civic education should build students’ discussion, analysis, critique, and research skills; and (4) Civic education should build students’ knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a way that connects directly to their own concerns (pp. 228-229).

Studies have found that student attitudes toward, and interest in, social studies can be greatly influenced by two factors: (a) active involvement and teacher enthusiasm and (b) the perceived value of the subject matter. Results from both of these studies show that students respond well to knowledgeable, passionate teachers who include them as active participants in the learning process through lively discussions and thought provoking activities (p. 141).

Providing students with authentic instructional work is an important factor in increasing student engagement. Authentic instructional work, as defined in a study by Marks (2000), consists of four component measures relating to the frequency with which the student is involved in meaningful academic experiences in the core mathematics or social studies class: (a) You are asked interesting questions and solve new problems; (b) you dig deeply into understanding a single topic; (c) you apply the subject to problems and situations in life outside of school, and (d) you discuss your ideas about the subject with the teacher or students. Other studies further illustrate the connection between student engagement and teachers who provide students with a well-balanced mixture of teacher- and student-centered activities. Teachers are also aided in their efforts to engage students in social studies when they create inquiry-based lessons that allow students to construct knowledge through the active involvement of exploring content and seeking appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. Teachers can further enhance this instruction by using the Internet to connect students to a wealth of resources that will make history come alive in their classrooms (p. 141).

The "essential characteristics of powerful social studies” as described by NCSS consist of five...
principles.

- The first principal is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful. Meaningfulness is stimulated when students learn connected networks of knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes they will find useful both in and outside school, and when the significance and meaningfulness of content is emphasized in how it is presented to students and how it is developed through activities (p. 12).
- The second principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are integrative. Integration is encouraged when the subject matter cuts across time and space, and when instruction interconnects knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes with effective social/political action; and when the teaching makes effective use of technology (p. 12).
- The fourth principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are challenging. Social studies becomes challenging when teachers show interest in and respect for students’ thinking and demand well-reasoned arguments rather than opinions voiced without adequate thought or commitment (p. 13).
- The fifth principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when the learning is active. Social studies involves productive active learning when (1) teachers and students engage in reflective thinking and decision-making as events unfold during instruction; (2) Students develop new understanding through a process of active construction of knowledge; (3) Interactive discourse facilitates the construction of meaning required to develop important social understanding; and, (4) Teachers gradually move from providing considerable guidance by modeling, explaining, or supplying information that builds student knowledge, to a less directive role that encourages students to become independent and self-regulated learners. Teachers emphasize authentic activities that call for real-life applications using the skills and content of the field.


- The public discussion of students’ interpretations of the documents deepened their understanding of the author’s perspective and the implications for their interpretations. These findings support previous studies indicating that group discussions enhance students’ understanding of complex social issues and events… By sharing their interpretations with their classmates who often disagreed, the students had the opportunity to create a richer, more complex representation of an historical event than they could have created individually (p. 52).


- Two of three detracked social studies classrooms embodied a democratized approach to social studies learning that was conducive to the development of democratic skills and orientations. There were four common aspects to learning and knowledge in these classrooms. (1) There were many ways to learn social studies (e.g., discussion of issues, drawing maps, analyzing slides,
viewing film clips, creating group skits and presentations, conducting research as well as listening to lectures and taking tests and quizzes)…the heterogeneity of the groups impelled these teachers to construct a more varied, active curriculum that enfranchised more students as learners and participants in the classroom (pp. 71-72).  (2) Learning was a social activity; students interacted continually through discussion, group work, and peer teaching (p. 74).  (3) Knowledge was constituted as meaningful and relevant to students’ lives; students’ experiences, interests and opinions were intrinsic to the process of learning, and engagement with the world was part of the learning process; students readily engaged in discussion of current topics, building discussion and critical thinking skills as well as cultivating the habit of interest in the world around them; some students made personal connections between regions of study and themselves (pp. 76-77).  (4) All students can learn; in these schools, detracking provided opportunities for students who otherwise would have been relegated to a lower level class for social studies to engage with a high quality, college preparatory curriculum (pp 78-79).


- In order for social studies instruction to be meaningful, teachers must understand and meet the needs of their students. Teachers should capitalize on the diversity and natural interests of their students in the world around them. By building on students’ skills and experiences, teachers can design learning events that challenge students to make meaningful connections and expand their knowledge and viewpoints. In social studies as in any knowledge domain, learners benefit from having a variety of ways to understand a given concept. Increasingly, elementary teachers have students of diverse backgrounds and differing abilities in their classes, and must differentiate instruction to meet individual needs. Successful elementary teachers possess both a command of the subject matter and the ability to engage students in the learning process through a variety of instructional methodologies (p. 253).

- Elementary learners do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. They need frequent opportunities to make daily decisions about democratic concepts and principles that are respectful of the dignity and rights of individuals and the common good. They need to participate in learning experiences that involve core values of democracy, including freedom of speech and thought, equality of opportunity, justice, and diversity…Thoughtful and deliberate classroom engagement related to controversial or ethical issues provides opportunities for elementary children to practice critical thinking skills while examining multiple perspectives. Elementary teachers should create opportunities for students to discuss values, engage in real-world problem solving and make reasoned decisions (p. 253).

- Challenging elementary school social studies can pave the way for life-long learning and active citizenship. Students should be provided with opportunities for in-depth investigation of a few concepts that challenge and engage them rather than superficial treatment of many topics that can create student apathy. Challenging social studies projects include debates, discussions, projects and simulations that require application of critical thinking skills. Instead of simply reading and answering questions, elementary students should be taught to question, evaluate, and challenge informational sources. Teachers should ask children the kinds of questions that stimulate decision
Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

making, problem solving, and issue analysis (p. 253).


- Effective social studies instruction necessitates an environment in which social studies professionals and students are free to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss relevant facts and ideas. Those engaged in social studies instruction have a responsibility to accept and practice the democratic commitment to open inquiry.


- Drawing on the most forward-looking ideas and arguments in recent national reports the authors offer recommendations for best practice in teaching social studies, including:
- Social studies teaching should involve exploration of open questions that challenge students’ thinking. This means going beyond the learning of information to consider some hard but meaningful questions. To enact this principle, teachers need to learn how to generate questions that invite discussion. Another teaching skill needed for this exploratory, open approach is conducting constructive group discussion. Climate-setting activities are essential so that students learn to respect one another’s differing opinions and trust that their ideas will not be ridiculed (pp. 140-141).
- Social studies should involve students in reading, writing, observing, discussing, and debating to ensure their active participation in learning (p. 143).
- Social studies learning should be built on students’ prior knowledge of their lives and communities, rather than assuming they know nothing about the subject (p. 143).


- Each (history) unit should include an issues-analysis dimension, in which students are engaged in critical thinking and decision making about issues related to the historical content they are studying. With the support of age-appropriate teaching of key understandings and elucidation of issues. Elementary students can appreciate and debate many of the ethical and civic policy issues raised by major historical events (p. 254).


- The study demonstrated that the integration of local historical inquiry with community service-learning can lead to significant self-reported increases in civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intention to participate in community improvement in the future for 3rd-12th grade students…Consistent with service learning literature, the authors believe that learning, discussion,
and reflection on social causes or civic issues in the CiviConnections program contributed to the positive outcomes students indicated. In addition, in most cases students were involved in choosing the issue they studied and for which they created service activities. The service-learning literature emphasizes the importance of student voice and ownership; these elements were present in most of the CiviConnections projects studied…The study provides confirmation that connecting learning and reflection on social and civic causes and including student voice and ownership in project design increase students’ civic efficacy and participation… An additional contribution of the study to the service-learning literature is that the CivicConnections program contributed to significant growth in students’ civic knowledge (pp. 380-382).


- To become a more effective agent of citizen education in a global age… the social studies teacher…needs to continue to expand efforts to globalize the curriculum and the classroom. To engage students in global education, educators should use an interdisciplinary approach within and beyond social studies and make links to multicultural education; take advantage of technology, including Internet and e-mail; utilize primary sources from other countries, from constitutions to literature to artifacts, include internationally experienced persons; students, teachers, parents, and others in the community; emphasize interactive methodology, such as a model United Nations and cross-cultural simulations and role plays; address global issues with an approach that promotes multiple perspectives and intellectual honesty and action.


- A learning advantage has been found when students have developed multimedia presentations on social studies topics (p. 10).

**Teacher:** I; **Student:** A: Gallavan, N. P. & Kottler, E. (2009). Constructing rubrics and assessing progress collaboratively with social studies students. *The Social Studies, 100* (4), 154-158.

- Social studies teachers optimize learning when students participate in designing assignments and assessing themselves, and it is essential for students to have copies of the rubrics when assignments are introduced…If social studies teachers want to increase their students’ levels of participation, responsibility, and satisfaction, they should develop a culture of learning that includes assessment and involve their students in the entire assessment process (p. 155).

- The social studies teacher and students should collaborate on each portion of the assignment and develop the rubrics together. The teacher guides the students in finalizing decisions related to what students must understand and demonstrate to complete the assignment and score well, what the assignment will look like, when the assignment is due, and how the students will be assessed (p. 156).

- Finally, just as important, students follow the rubrics to determine the extent of their own progress. Teachers will have to guide students through this process and explain both the
assignment’s purpose and the way points are earned. It is recommended to include self-assessment on the rubric and award points on completion (p. 156).

- Social studies teachers should demonstrate expected skills and create a variety of models or work samples to show their students (p. 157).


- NCSS believes that the core mission of social studies education is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens. An effective citizen: (1) Embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them; (2) Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one’s family, and the community; (3) Has knowledge of the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world; (4) Has knowledge of our nation’s founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes; (5) Is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national, and global levels; (6) Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; (7) Asks meaningful questions and is able to analyze and evaluate information and ideas; (8) Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; (9) Has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group; and (10) Actively participates in civic and community life.

**Student: C, C1, C2:** Wagner, T. (2008). *The global achievement gap: Why even our best schools don’t teach the new survival skills our children need—and what we can do about it.* New York, NY: Basic Books

- Wagner proposes Seven Skills for the 21st Century, based on conversations with business and industry leaders. The first of these is critical thinking and problem-solving: “The habit of asking good questions was most frequently mentioned as an essential component of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. It turns out that by asking good questions, critical thinking, and problem solving go hand in hand in the minds of most employers and business consultants, and taken together they represent the First Survival Skill of the new global ‘knowledge economy.’” Equally important, they are skills that our kids need in order to participate effectively in our democracy” (pp. 14-15).

- “All the people I spoke to stressed the importance of working in teams as a core competency.” This led to the development of the Second Survival Skill: collaboration across networks and leading by influence (p. 22).
### 4. Instructional Relevance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Characteristics:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Teacher designs learning opportunities that allow students to participate in empowering activities in which they understand that learning is a process and mistakes are a natural part of the learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Teacher links concepts and ideas to students’ prior experiences and understandings, using multiple representations, examples and explanations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> Teacher incorporates student experiences, interests and real-life situations in instruction. The teacher:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Implements lessons that include students and teachers local and personal histories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Stimulates students to investigate and respond to human condition in the contemporary world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Encourages students to consider multiple perspectives and share their point of view, values and beliefs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Offers student choice in the formulation of goals, selection of activities, materials, instructional strategies and assessment of Social Studies curricular outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Considers the age, maturity, and concerns of all students in connecting social studies content and pervasive social issues to their lives.</td>
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### Connections to Standards, Research, and Expert Opinion


- The “essential characteristics of powerful social studies” as described by NCSS consist of five principles.

- The first principal is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful. Meaningfulness is stimulated when students learn connected networks of knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes they will find useful both in and outside school, and when the significance and meaningfulness of content is emphasized in how it is presented to students and how it is developed through activities (p. 12).

- The second principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are integrative. Integration is encouraged when social studies subject matter is taught topically across disciplines, social studies teaching and learning are connected to other subjects, the instruction interconnects knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes with effective social/political action, and the teaching makes effective use of technology (p. 12).

- The third principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are values-based. Social studies content invariably involves the examination and understanding of values—one’s own and those of others—as values are expressed in points of view, beliefs, policies, actions, or inactions. Values-based instruction appropriate to education in a democratic society committed to safeguarding individual rights and the common good occurs when (1) Social studies teachers guide students to consider the ethical dimensions of topics and address controversial issues, providing an arena for reflective development of concern for the common good and application of social values; (2) Students are made aware of potential social policy implications and taught to think critically and make value-based decisions about related social issues; (3) Rather than promulgating personal, sectarian, or political views, teachers make sure that students: (a) become aware of the values, complexities, and dilemmas involved in an issue; (b) consider the costs and benefits to various individuals and groups that are embedded in potential courses of action; and (c) develop well-reasoned positions consistent with basic democratic social and political values; and (4) Teachers encourage recognition of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to social responsibility (p. 13).

- The fourth principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are challenging. Social studies becomes challenging when teachers show interest in and respect for students’ thinking and demand well-reasoned arguments rather than opinions voiced without adequate thought or commitment (p. 13).

- The fifth principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when the learning is active. Social studies involves productive active learning when (1) teachers and students engage in reflective thinking and decision-making as events unfold during instruction; (2) Students...
### Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

<table>
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<th>Field trips, multimedia presentations, historical fiction, technology, community resource people).</th>
<th>develop new understanding through a process of active construction of knowledge; (3) Interactive discourse facilitates the construction of meaning required to develop important social understanding; and, (4) Teachers gradually move from providing considerable guidance by modeling, explaining, or supplying information that builds student knowledge, to a less directive role that encourages students to become independent and self-regulated learners. Teachers emphasize authentic activities that call for real-life applications using the skills and content of the field.</th>
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<td>E. Teacher effectively incorporates 21st Century Learning Skills that prepare students to meet future challenges. The teacher: 1) Connects student learning to the world of work through the exploration of careers and the application of essential social studies skills into their lives. 2) Encourages students to consider multiple perspectives and share their point of view, values and beliefs.</td>
<td>• Based on the findings of this study, instructional strategies that piqued students’ own questions and interests appeared to be the key in facilitating their motivation to learn history and an increased level of student learning. These fifth graders demonstrated a motivation to learn history for the sake of learning rather than superficial rewards or achievement goals. Evidence supports the contention that when a story, in this case history, interests a child, his or her level of motivation is increased, often resulting in increased student achievement…Based on the findings of this study, inquiry-based instruction not only motivated students’ interest and motivation to learn history but also, perhaps most importantly, prompted them to learn independently outside the classroom — learning for the sake of learning (p. 127).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G.</strong> Teacher makes lesson connections to community, society, and current events. The teacher: 1) Encourages students to be involved in service learning projects. 2) Utilizes the experience and expertise of a variety of community resource people. 3) Connects learning to community, society, current events, multiple points of view and global perspectives. 4) Encourages students to develop a commitment to social responsibility, justice, action, citizenship, civic values and reflective concern for the common good.</td>
<td>• Social studies educators, as well as other teachers, must begin to develop practices that encourage students to wrestle with the gaps between civic ideals and realities and consider how these gaps are unevenly distributed throughout our society. Instructional practices that engage youth in considering problematic aspects of U.S. civic society can benefit all students. Frank discussion of civic rights, processes, and social disparities can encourage a more active civic identity, empowering youth who have experienced a gap between civic ideals and realities and challenging students who have not experienced this gap to look beyond their immediate concerns… The following “Principles of Problem-Posing Civic Education” are proposed: (1) Civic education should build upon students’ own experiences with civic life, including daily experiences with civic institutions and their agents; (2) Civic education should provide opportunities for students to consider and discuss key issues and controversies in civic life; (3) Civic education should build students’ discussion, analysis, critique, and research skills; and (4) Civic education should build students’ knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a way that connects directly to their own concerns (pp. 228-229).</td>
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Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

Student Characteristics:
A. Student poses and responds to meaningful questions. The student:
   1) Demonstrates and advocates for their values, beliefs, personal perspectives and points of view through debate, dialogue, and writing.
B. Student uses appropriate tools and techniques to gather, analyze, and interpret quantitative and qualitative data.
C. Student develops descriptions, explanations, predictions and models using evidence.
D. Student works collaboratively to address complex, authentic problems which require innovative approaches to solve. The student:
   1) Demonstrates and advocates for collaboration, compromise, and cooperation.
   2) Demonstrates respect and accountable talk when participating in interactive activities, group work, debates and classroom discussions.
E. Student communicates knowledge and understanding in a variety of real-world forms. The student:
   1) Understands that social studies is important to future success (e.g., citizenship, civic engagement, career, education).
   2) Utilizes their personal experience to make connections to the past, present and future.

- Drawing on the most forward-looking ideas and arguments in recent national reports the authors offer recommendations for best practice in teaching social studies, including:
  - Students need opportunities to exercise choice and responsibility by choosing their own topics for inquiry. Particularly because social studies is meant to prepare students for democratic citizenship, active engagement is necessary. Good teachers lay out lists of significant topics to choose from and help students make intelligent choices. This not only increases student engagement but teaches them how to judiciously choose topics for reports and paper (p. 140).
  - Social studies teaching should involve exploration of open questions that challenge students’ thinking. This means going beyond the learning of information to consider some hard but meaningful questions. To enact this principle, teachers need to learn how to generate questions that invite discussion. Another teaching skill needed for this exploratory, open approach is conducting constructive group discussion. Climate-setting activities are essential so that students learn to respect one another’s differing opinions and trust that their ideas will not be ridiculed (pp. 140-141).
  - To make real concepts being taught, social studies must involve students in active participation in the classroom and the wider community (p. 141).
  - Social studies learning should be built on students’ prior knowledge of their lives and communities, rather than assuming they know nothing about the subject (p. 143).
  - Social studies should explore a full variety of the cultures found in America, including students’ own backgrounds and understanding of other cultures’ approaches to various social studies concepts; it is particularly important to explore the cultures of children who are present in the classroom (p. 144).


- Effective social studies instruction necessitates an environment in which social studies professionals and students are free to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss relevant facts and ideas. Those engaged in social studies instruction have a responsibility to accept and practice the democratic commitment to open inquiry.
  - Social studies professionals have an obligation to establish classroom climates that support student rights to know, to doubt, to inquire freely, to think critically, and to express openly.


- The qualities of powerful and authentic social studies include: Skills necessary to help our students thrive in a world of continuous and accelerating change are emphasized. These include discipline-based literacy, multi-disciplinary awareness, information gathering and analysis, inquiry and critical thinking, communication, data analysis and the prudent use of twenty-first century media and technology.
3) Utilizes their personal experiences, historical data, and research to make connections and form value-based opinions on social, political, geographical, and economic issues.

F. Student communicates knowledge and understanding for a variety of purposes. The student:
1) Reflects the importance of citizenship and civic values in our global society through classroom discussions, written assignments, community involvement and/or service projects.

- The subjects that comprise social studies—i.e., history, economics, geography, political science, sociology, anthropology, archaeology and psychology—are rich, interrelated disciplines, each critical to the background of thoughtful citizens. The social studies curriculum is integrative, addressing the totality of human experience over time and space, connecting with the past, linked to the present, and looking ahead to the future. Focusing on the core social studies disciplines, it includes materials drawn from the arts, sciences, and humanities, from current events, from local examples and from students’ own lives.

- Social studies teachers recognize that students do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. The values embodied in our democratic form of government, with its commitment to justice, equality, and freedom of thought and speech, are reflected in social studies classroom practice. Students are made aware of potential policy implications and taught to think critically and make decisions about a variety of issues, modeling the choices they will make as adult citizens. Students learn to assess the merits of competing arguments, and make reasoned decisions that include consideration of the values within alternative policy recommendations. Through discussions, debates, the use of authentic documents, simulations, research, and other occasions for critical thinking and decision-making, students learn to apply value-based reasoning when addressing problems and issues. Students engage in experiences that develop fair-mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility.

- Challenging social studies instruction makes use of regular writing and the analysis of various types of documents, such as primary and secondary sources, graphs, charts, and data banks. It includes sources from the arts, humanities, and sciences, substantive conversation, and disciplined inquiry. Disciplined inquiry, in turn, includes the teaching of sophisticated concepts and ideas, and in-depth investigation of fewer rather than more topics, with deep processing and detailed study of each topic. Challenging social studies includes the rigorous teaching of the core disciplines as influential and continually growing tools for inquiry.


- History education can contribute to a democratic society and help students reason together, care for the common good, and listen to each other by (1) giving students the chance to take part in reasoned judgment by looking at evidence together and deciding on the best choice of action based on the reliability of information; (2) engaging students in consideration of the common good, an activity that depends on identification with larger communities—ethnic, national, global, or all of these at once—and on a sense of right and wrong; and (3) help students understand perspectives that are different than their own (pp. 10-11).

- Perhaps the most important principle to keep in mind in assessing students’ historical understanding is that constructive evaluation must be consistent with a constructivist perspective on teaching and learning. People learn new information by linking it to what they already know… A student’s understanding at any given time represents the interaction between external
• Using multiple assessments frequently involves giving students choices; in some cases, students may choose the form assessment takes (p. 23).


• Two of three detracked social studies classrooms embodied a democratized approach to social studies learning that was conducive to the development of democratic skills and orientations. There were four common aspects to learning and knowledge in these classrooms. (1) There were many ways to learn social studies (e.g., discussion of issues, drawing maps, analyzing slides, viewing film clips, creating group skits and presentations, conducting research as well as listening to lectures and taking tests and quizzes)…the heterogeneity of the groups impelled these teachers to construct a more varied, active curriculum that enfranchised more students as learners and participants in the classroom (pp. 71-72). (2) Learning was a social activity; students interacted continually through discussion, group work, and peer teaching (p. 74). (3) Knowledge was constituted as meaningful and relevant to students’ lives; students’ experiences, interests and opinions were intrinsic to the process of learning, and engagement with the world was part of the learning process; students readily engaged in discussion of current topics, building discussion and critical thinking skills as well as cultivating the habit of interest in the world around them; some students made personal connections between regions of study and themselves (pp. 76-77). (4) All students can learn; in these schools, detracking provided opportunities for students who otherwise would have been relegated to a lower level class for social studies to engage with a high quality, college preparatory curriculum (pp 78-79).


• In order for social studies instruction to be meaningful, teachers must understand and meet the needs of their students. Teachers should capitalize on the diversity and natural interests of their students in the world around them. By building on students’ skills and experiences, teachers can design learning events that challenge students to make meaningful connections and expand their knowledge and viewpoints. In social studies as in any knowledge domain, learners benefit from having a variety of ways to understand a given concept. Increasingly, elementary teachers have students of diverse backgrounds and differing abilities in their classes, and must differentiate instruction to meet individual needs. Successful elementary teachers possess both a command of the subject matter and the ability to engage students in the learning process through a variety of instructional methodologies (p. 253).

• Elementary learners do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. They need frequent opportunities to make daily decisions about democratic concepts and principles that are respectful of the dignity and rights of individuals and the common good. They need to participate in learning experiences that involve core values of democracy, including freedom of speech and thought, equality of opportunity, justice, and diversity…Thoughtful and deliberate classroom
engagement related to controversial or ethical issues provides opportunities for elementary children to practice critical thinking skills while examining multiple perspectives. Elementary teachers should create opportunities for students to discuss values, engage in real-world problem solving and make reasoned decisions (p. 253).


• Studies…[have] found that student attitudes toward, and interest in, social studies can be greatly influenced by two factors: (a) active involvement and teacher enthusiasm and (b) the perceived value of the subject matter. Results from both of these studies show that students respond well to knowledgeable, passionate teachers who include them as active participants in the learning process through lively discussions and thought provoking activities (p. 141).

• Providing students with authentic instructional work is an important factor in increasing student engagement. Authentic instructional work, as defined in a study by Marks (2000), consists of four component measures relating to the frequency with which the student is involved in meaningful academic experiences in the core mathematics or social studies class: (a) You are asked interesting questions and solve new problems; (b) you dig deeply into understanding a single topic; (c) you apply the subject to problems and situations in life outside of school, and (d) you discuss your ideas about the subject with the teacher or students. Other studies further illustrate the connection between student engagement and teachers who provide students with a well-balanced mixture of teacher- and student-centered activities. Teachers are also aided in their efforts to engage students in social studies when they create inquiry-based lessons that allow students to construct knowledge through the active involvement of exploring content and seeking appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. Teachers can further enhance this instruction by using the Internet to connect students to a wealth of resources that will make history come alive in their classrooms (p. 141).


• The study demonstrated that the integration of local historical inquiry with community service-learning can lead to significant self-reported increases in civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intention to participate in community improvement in the future for 3rd–12th grade students…Consistent with service learning literature, the authors believe that learning, discussion, and reflection on social causes or civic issues in the CiviConnections program contributed to the positive outcomes students indicated. In addition, in most cases students were involved in choosing the issue they studied and for which they created service activities. The service-learning literature emphasizes the importance of student voice and ownership; these elements were present in most of the CiviConnections projects studied…The study provides confirmation that connecting learning and reflection on social and civic causes and including student voice and ownership in project design increase students’ civic efficacy and participation… An additional
contribution of the study to the service-learning literature is that the CivicConnections program contributed to significant growth in students’ civic knowledge (pp. 380-382).


- Conducting local or community history projects fosters interest in social studies as it facilitates historical inquiry, creative thinking, and active student engagement through allowing students an opportunity to assume ownership over their own learning rather than being reliant upon directions from the teacher...Community history projects also meet many of the standards laid out by the National Center for History in the Schools (1996) in their National Standards for History, especially in regards to their guidelines for historical thinking (p. 86).


- Students who are multiculturally literate are aware of how cultural beliefs, values, and sensibilities affect the way they and others think and behave; appreciate and accept similarities and differences in beliefs, appearances, and lifestyles; know the history of both mainstream and nonmainstream American cultures; can take the perspectives of other cultural groups (p. 28).


- Social studies teachers optimize learning when students participate in designing assignments and assessing themselves, and it is essential for students to have copies of the rubrics when assignments are introduced...If social studies teachers want to increase their students’ levels of participation, responsibility, and satisfaction, they should develop a culture of learning that includes assessment and involve their students in the entire assessment process (p. 155).

- The social studies assessment process should provide a variety of assignments and assessments relevant to the subject area and unit of learning. As social studies teachers collaborate with their classes, lists of assorted assignments and assessments from which students and teachers can choose should be posted in the classroom (p. 155).

- The social studies teacher and students should collaborate on each portion of the assignment and develop the rubrics together. The teacher guides the students in finalizing decisions related to what students must understand and demonstrate to complete the assignment and score well, what the assignment will look like, when the assignment is due, and how the students will be assessed (p. 156).


- The students overwhelmingly indicated that the use of primary sources made history “come alive” for them; they especially enjoyed the hide and seek with digital photographs. Not surprisingly,
much time was initially spent on helping the elementary students understand primary sources. Many of these students had never engaged formally, on their own or in a school setting, in historical inquiry or been asked to consider historical perspective (p. 84).

- Over the course of our lessons, these elementary students clearly articulated that they, too, were makers of history. The notion of evidence and artifacts left behind greatly helped with this discovery. The concept of multiple perspectives and historical bias also surfaced with these students. Their grappling with print sources being primary sources and biased was of great importance. All of the students eventually made distinctions between primary and secondary sources, yet questions remained (p. 84).

- Both classroom teachers indicated that their students were more “engaged” in social studies than they had been previously. One teacher noted that she had not previously believed that elementary students could use primary source materials and engage in authentic inquiry…both teachers indicated that the use of digital resources allowed their students to connect with resources outside of the classroom and to engage in disciplined inquiry (p. 85).

- We learned that upper elementary students can, indeed, use and make sense of primary sources as well as create historical knowledge and when given appropriate time and scaffolding develop conclusions based upon evidence (p. 85).

**Teacher:** C6, G1, G2; **Student:** A, D, D1, D2; **F1:** National Council for the Social Studies (2001). *Creating effective citizens: A position statement of the National Council for the social studies.* Silver Spring, MD: Author. Retrieved 11/30/09 from [http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/effectivecitizens](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/effectivecitizens)

- NCSS believes that the core mission of social studies education is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens. An effective citizen: (1) Embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them; (2) Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one’s family, and the community; (3) Has knowledge of the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world; (4) Has knowledge of our nation’s founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes; (5) Is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national, and global levels; (6) Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; (7) Asks meaningful questions and is able to analyze and evaluate information and ideas; (8) Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; (9) Has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group; and (10) Actively participates in civic and community life.

- An effective citizenship education program ensures that students are provided with opportunities to participate in simulations, service-learning projects, conflict resolution programs, and other activities that encourage the application of civic knowledge, skills, and values.


- Social studies should emphasize the linkages between past actions, present social, political, and
ecological realities and alternative futures. Students should perceive the close relationships between past, present and future. The use of “historical flashbacks”, for example, can add to students’ understanding of the relation of past to present. Greater emphasis is needed on studies designed to improve students’ ability to see present choices as links to possible alternative futures.

- To become a more effective agent of citizen education in a global age… the social studies teacher…needs to continue to expand efforts to globalize the curriculum and the classroom. To engage students in global education, educators should use an interdisciplinary approach within and beyond social studies and make links to multicultural education; take advantage of technology, including Internet and e-mail; utilize primary sources from other countries, from constitutions to literature to artifacts, include internationally experienced persons; students, teachers, parents, and others in the community; emphasize interactive methodology, such as a model United Nations and cross-cultural simulations and role plays; address global issues with an approach that promotes multiple perspectives and intellectual honesty and action.


- To be proficient at integrating technologies into classrooms requires a threefold approach. First, teachers must gain competence in comfortably using the technologies; second, they must identify means to skillfully and transparently integrate those technologies into their social studies instruction, and third, they must expand their instructional repertoire to include both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches (p. 167).


- The TPACK (technological pedagogical content knowledge) framework builds on Shulman’s (1987, 1986) descriptions of PCK (pedagogical content knowledge) to describe how teachers’ understanding of educational technologies and PCK interact with one another to produce effective teaching with technology… TCK (technological content knowledge), then, is an understanding of the manner in which technology and content influence and constrain one another. Teachers need to master more than the subject matter they teach; they must also have a deep understanding of the manner in which the subject matter (or the kinds of representations that can be constructed) can be changed by the application of particular technologies. Teachers need to understand which specific technologies are best suited for addressing subject-matter learning in their domains and how the content dictates or perhaps even changes the technology—or vice versa.


- Pre-service teachers must not simply acquire skills that make them proficient at using technology,
but also learn how to use technology to make their teaching better than it would be without it. Therefore, pre-service instruction enabling teachers to integrate technology seamlessly into lessons is more productive than technology instruction that merely teaches pre-service teachers how to use specific computer skills. For example, pre-service teachers should not learn how to create PowerPoint presentations or Excel spreadsheets merely with the goal of mastering the technology. Rather, pre-service teachers should create PowerPoint presentations that aid in direct instruction of a particular social studies lesson or spreadsheets that help illustrate statistical data significant to the social studies student.


- Social studies teachers implement curriculum plans that include methods and strategies for applying technology to maximize student learning in social studies.


- A learning advantage has been found when students have developed multimedia presentations on social studies topics (p. 10).


- Novice teachers cannot possibly master all the knowledge and skills required for culturally responsive teaching, but they can develop a vision for what it entails and how it can be accomplished. This vision helps provide the impetus necessary for their continued growth…although this must be supported by long-term professional opportunities for ongoing critical reflection and collaboration…Perhaps the most vital feature of this type of ongoing professional development is the strong emphasis on peer collaboration. Working with colleagues can offer interdisciplinary insights, expose teachers to a wider array of social beliefs and perspectives, and provide opportunities for constructive critique of their pedagogy. Perhaps most importantly, peer collaboration offers teachers the chance to connect with others, to develop a joint vision for civic education that provides the encouragement to persevere in spite of its ample challenges (p. 178-179).


- Social studies in integrative by nature. Powerful social studies teaching crosses disciplinary boundaries to address topics in ways that promote social understanding and civic efficacy. It also integrates knowledge, skills, and dispositions with authentic action. When children pursue a project or investigation, they encounter many problems and questions based in civics, economics, geography and history. With teacher guidance, children can actively explore both the processes and concepts of social studies while simultaneously exploring other content areas (p. 253).

- Routine involvement in service activities, both in the school and in the wider community, can help students develop both long-lasting cooperative dispositions and a sense of contributing in progressively larger venues. (p. 10); Schools should provide an array of opportunities for service, including ongoing individual activities, periodic collaborations among students on school projects, and community service projects. (p. 11)


- To become responsible citizens, students must have access not only to content knowledge and core democratic values, but also to opportunities to learn citizenship skills and apply them to problems and needs in the community beyond the classroom. Service-learning provides essential opportunities for students not only to develop civic participation skills, values, and attitudes, but also to acquire first-hand knowledge of the topics they are studying in the curriculum. Service-learning provides an authentic means for using social studies content and skills to investigate social, political, and economic issues and to take direct action in an effort to create a more just and equitable society.


- Wagner proposes Seven Skills for the 21st Century, based on conversations with business and industry leaders.  The first of these is critical thinking and problem-solving:  “The habit of asking good questions was most frequently mentioned as an essential component of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.  It turns out that by asking good questions, critical thinking, and problem solving go hand in hand in the minds of most employers and business consultants, and taken together they represent the First Survival Skill of the new global ‘knowledge economy.’”  Equally important, they are skills that our kids needs in order to participate effectively in our democracy” (pp. 14-15).

- “All the people I spoke to stressed the importance of working in teams as a core competency.”  This led to the development of the Second Survival Skill:  collaboration across networks and leading by influence (p. 22).

- Leaders today want to see individuals take more initiative and even be entrepreneurial in terms of the ways they seek out opportunities, ideas, and strategies for improvement…the importance of individuals and teams being able to take the initiative to solve a problem or come up with a better solution was frequently mentioned (in interviews) (p. 32).

- The Fifth Survival Skill is effective oral and written communication.  Communication skills are a major factor highlighted in dozens of studies that focus on students’ lack of preparation for
Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

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<th>5. Knowledge of content</th>
<th>Connections to Standards, Research, and Expert Opinion</th>
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| **Teacher Characteristics:** A. Teacher demonstrates an understanding and in-depth knowledge of content and maintains an ability to convey this content to students. The teacher:  
1) Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the social studies content (U.S. History, World History, Kentucky History, Economics, Geography, Cultures and Societies, Government and Civics) in the grades and courses assigned.  
2) Imparts to the students the social studies content knowledge, skills and dispositions essential for understanding, appreciation and real world application and communication  
3) Provides intensive and recurring cross |
• The qualities of powerful and authentic social studies include that the skills necessary to help our students thrive in a world of continuous and accelerating change are emphasized. These include discipline-based literacy, multi-disciplinary awareness, information gathering and analysis, inquiry and critical thinking, communication, data analysis and the prudent use of twenty-first century media and technology. Skills are embedded throughout meaningful social studies lessons, rather than added on at the end. In addition, powerful and authentic social studies is characterized by teachers who are reflective in planning, implementing, and assessing meaningful curriculum. Reflective teachers are well informed about the nature and purposes of social studies, have a continually growing understanding of the disciplines that they teach, and keep up with pedagogical developments in the field of social studies.  
• The subjects that comprise social studies—i.e., history, economics, geography, political science, sociology, anthropology, archaeology and psychology—are rich, interrelated disciplines, each critical to the background of thoughtful citizens. The social studies curriculum is integrative, addressing the totality of human experience over time and space, connecting with the past, linked |
cultural study of groups.

4) Provides a clear and accurate examination of the past, present and future social world (its flaws, strengths, dangers, conditions, problems and promise) and human achievement and failures.

B. Teacher maintains ongoing knowledge and awareness of current content developments. The teacher:

1) Keeps abreast of current developments and research in the field of social studies and participates in professional learning (e.g., curriculum advisory committees, higher education, professional organizations, community affairs, professional magazines, study, and travel).

2) Participates and contributes to professional learning communities.

C. Teacher designs and implements standards-based courses/lessons/units using state and national standards.

D. Teacher uses and promotes the understanding of appropriate content vocabulary. The teacher:

1) Uses a variety of content vocabulary literacy strategies (e.g., verbal and visual word association, Frayer Model).

E. Teacher provides essential supports for students who are struggling with the content. The teacher:

1) Provides appropriate interventions and modifications (e.g., self assessments, study sheets, break down content into manageable


to the present, and looking ahead to the future. Focusing on the core social studies disciplines, it includes materials drawn from the arts, sciences, and humanities, from current events, from local examples and from students’ own lives.

- Social studies teaching and learning requires effective use of technology, communication, and reading/writing skills that add important dimensions to students’ learning.

- Social studies teachers recognize that students do not become responsible, participating citizens automatically. The values embodied in our democratic form of government, with its commitment to justice, equality, and freedom of thought and speech, are reflected in social studies classroom practice. Students are made aware of potential policy implications and taught to think critically and make decisions about a variety of issues, modeling the choices they will make as adult citizens. Students learn to assess the merits of competing arguments, and make reasoned decisions that include consideration of the values within alternative policy recommendations. Through discussions, debates, the use of authentic documents, simulations, research, and other occasions for critical thinking and decision-making, students learn to apply value-based reasoning when addressing problems and issues. Students engage in experiences that develop fair-mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility.

- Challenging social studies instruction makes use of regular writing and the analysis of various types of documents, such as primary and secondary sources, graphs, charts, and data banks. It includes sources from the arts, humanities, and sciences, substantive conversation, and disciplined inquiry. Disciplined inquiry, in turn, includes the teaching of sophisticated concepts and ideas, and in-depth investigation of fewer rather than more topics, with deep processing and detailed study of each topic. Challenging social studies includes the rigorous teaching of the core disciplines as influential and continually growing tools for inquiry.


- Nine characteristics were found in this study to be shared by the 10 outstanding graduates of the program, and were labeled the “Nine Cardinal Attributes of Star Social Studies Teachers.” The characteristics included (1) Outstanding content knowledge. In addition to their high grade point averages from undergraduate study, all of the teachers in this study either had already completed a Masters’ degree or were enrolled in an advanced degree program related to education. The Masters’ programs were instructional leadership, instructional technology, school counseling, secondary education, and history. The supervisors interviewed cited these teachers as extremely well grounded in their content knowledge; (2) Excellent pedagogical skills. The ability to engage all types of students in learning was cited by every supervisor interviewed as a major strength of the award winners (pp. 360-361).

Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools

- In order for social studies instruction to be meaningful, teachers must understand and meet the needs of their students. Teachers should capitalize on the diversity and natural interests of their students in the world around them. By building on students’ skills and experiences, teachers can design learning events that challenge students to make meaningful connections and expand their knowledge and viewpoints. In social studies as in any knowledge domain, learners benefit from having a variety of ways to understand a given concept. Increasingly, elementary teachers have students of diverse backgrounds and differing abilities in their classes, and must differentiate instruction to meet individual needs. Successful elementary teachers possess both a command of the subject matter and the ability to engage students in the learning process through a variety of instructional methodologies (p. 253).

- Challenging elementary school social studies can pave the way for life-long learning and active citizenship. Students should be provided with opportunities for in-depth investigation of a few concepts that challenge and engage them rather than superficial treatment of many topics that can create student apathy. Challenging social studies projects include debates, discussions, projects and simulations that require application of critical thinking skills. Instead of simply reading and answering questions, elementary students should be taught to question, evaluate, and challenge informational sources. Teachers should ask children the kinds of questions that stimulate decision making, problem solving, and issue analysis (p. 253).

- In effective social studies programs, elementary teachers use a variety of approaches, strategies, and materials to support children’s interests and abilities…Teachers guide learning rather than dictate (p. 253).

Student Characteristics:

A. Student demonstrates growth in content knowledge. The student:

1) Demonstrates an understanding of content knowledge through authentic presentations, written and oral expressions.

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- Social studies educators, as well as other teachers, must begin to develop practices that encourage students to wrestle with the gaps between civic ideals and realities and consider how these gaps are unevenly distributed throughout our society. Instructional practices that engage youth in considering problematic aspects of U.S. civic society can benefit all students. Frank discussion of civic rights, processes, and social disparities can encourage a more active civic identity, empowering youth who have experienced a gap between civic ideals and realities and challenging students who have not experienced this gap to look beyond their immediate concerns… The following “Principles of Problem-Posing Civic Education” are proposed: (1) Civic education should build upon students’ own experiences with civic life, including daily experiences with civic institutions and their agents; (2) Civic education should provide opportunities for students to consider and discuss key issues and controversies in civic life; (3) Civic education should build students’ discussion, analysis, critique, and research skills; and (4) Civic education should build students’ knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a way that connects directly to their own concerns (pp. 228-229).

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B. Student uses and seeks to expand appropriate content vocabulary.

C. Student connects ideas across content areas. The student:
   1) Makes connections between sub-domains of social studies (Government and Civics, Cultures and Societies, Economics, Geography and Historical Perspective).
   2) Makes connections to the other content areas (e.g., Math, Science, Humanities, Language Arts, World Languages)

D. Student uses ideas in realistic problem-solving situations. The student:
   1) Applies concepts to real world situations and multiple perspectives and communicates these ideas verbally and in writing using accountable talk.
   2) Uses critical thinking, observing, reading, writing, non-linguistic representations and discussion to effectively analyze artifacts, primary and secondary sources for historical perspectives and interpretations.

- Social studies should emphasize the linkages between past actions, present social, political, and ecological realities and alternative futures. Students should perceive the close relationships between past, present and future. The use of “historical flashbacks”, for example, can add to students’ understanding of the relation of past to present. Greater emphasis is needed on studies designed to improve students’ ability to see present choices as links to possible alternative futures.
- To become a more effective agent of citizen education in a global age… the social studies teacher… needs to continue to expand efforts to globalize the curriculum and the classroom. To engage students in global education, educators should use an interdisciplinary approach within and beyond social studies and make links to multicultural education; take advantage of technology, including Internet and e-mail; utilize primary sources from other countries, from constitutions to literature to artifacts, include internationally experienced persons; students, teachers, parents, and others in the community; emphasize interactive methodology, such as a model United Nations and cross-cultural simulations and role plays; address global issues with an approach that promotes multiple perspectives and intellectual honesty and action.

- Because of the ever-changing nature of knowledge in general and in the social studies in particular, the professional should engage in continued study of the changing world scene and remain an active student of and a critical participant in society. The professional should acquire additional education as required by his or her teaching responsibilities…. Social studies professionals should assume responsibility for personal growth, expanding their knowledge and sharing that knowledge with peers.

- An overriding theme that permeates throughout the research was the teachers’ willingness to learn, and thereby, they have been able to stay current with new knowledge and technology. All four profiles demonstrated, through various educational classes, workshops, professional development, and personal quests, this desire to continue learning to learn. This spirit and interest in learning were reflected by how these teachers worked with their students in the examination of material related to the Holocaust and comparative genocide (p. 17).
- Their application of modern technology enhanced the presentation of material utilized for examining the Holocaust and comparative genocide, by both students and teachers, according to their own testimony in electronic journals and interviews. The fact that all four teachers have received professional training recently for the purpose of teaching deliberation and discourse (which included sessions specifically related to genocide) is important to note (p. 19).
Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools


- Novice teachers cannot possibly master all the knowledge and skills required for culturally responsive teaching, but they can develop a vision for what it entails and how it can be accomplished. This vision helps provide the impetus necessary for their continued growth…although this must be supported by long-term professional opportunities for ongoing critical reflection and collaboration…Perhaps the most vital feature of this type of ongoing professional development is the strong emphasis on peer collaboration. Working with colleagues can offer interdisciplinary insights, expose teachers to a wider array of social beliefs and perspectives, and provide opportunities for constructive critique of their pedagogy. Perhaps most importantly, peer collaboration offers teachers the chance to connect with others, to develop a joint vision for civic education that provides the encouragement to persevere in spite of its ample challenges (p. 178-179).


- When reading social studies texts, vocabulary is critical to comprehending. Therefore, as part of social studies vocabulary instruction, teachers must provide meaningful opportunities for students to learn and use the words they are studying. Journaling about social studies content, having a social studies word wall, and implementing the technique of readers’ theater are all meaningful activities that enhance the use of social studies vocabulary. Ultimately, a reader will not truly understand the social studies content without knowing the meaning of most of the words in the text…Effective social studies vocabulary instruction offers rich information about words and their usage; it also provides many varied opportunities for students to think about and use words as well as further develops students’ language comprehension and production…Direct vocabulary word instruction should include providing students with specific word instruction and also teaching word-learning strategies…When teaching social studies vocabulary, students must be directly and explicitly taught content area words coupled with opportunities to integrate the new vocabulary in daily life (p. 145).


- Opportunities for language use are critical for ELLs. Social studies teachers, however, generally prioritize imparting content rather than opening up opportunities to explore content through language use. ELLs particularly profit from “comprehensible input” that is just beyond their current level of competence and from opportunities to provide “output” for meaningful purposes. This suggests that instruction for ELLs requires attention to learning through language; this should not be regarded as a distraction but rather as a necessary element of teaching social studies. Using language improves ELLs’ language acquisition and content mastery. Content-relevant language should be emphasized (p. 271).
### Characteristics of Highly Effective Social Studies Teaching and Learning in Kentucky Schools


- Two of three detracked social studies classrooms embodied a democratized approach to social studies learning that was conducive to the development of democratic skills and orientations. There were four common aspects to learning and knowledge in these classrooms. (1) There were many ways to learn social studies (e.g., discussion of issues, drawing maps, analyzing slides, viewing film clips, creating group skits and presentations, conducting research as well as listening to lectures and taking tests and quizzes)...the heterogeneity of the groups impelled these teachers to construct a more varied, active curriculum that enfranchised more students as learners and participants in the classroom (pp. 71-72). (2) Learning was a social activity; students interacted continually through discussion, group work, and peer teaching (p. 74). (3) Knowledge was constituted as meaningful and relevant to students’ lives; students’ experiences, interests and opinions were intrinsic to the process of learning, and engagement with the world was part of the learning process; students readily engaged in discussion of current topics, building discussion and critical thinking skills as well as cultivating the habit of interest in the world around them; some students made personal connections between regions of study and themselves (pp. 76-77). (4) All students can learn; in these schools, detracking provided opportunities for students who otherwise would have been relegated to a lower level class for social studies to engage with a high quality, college preparatory curriculum (pp 78-79).


- The authors propose three principles to guide teachers in adapting primary sources for struggling readers: (1) focusing, to help students focus on the source’s most relevant aspects; (2) simplification: selective modification of complex sentences and syntax; and (3) presentation: changing the way the text appears to make it less intimidating. They assert that “tampering” with sources allows all students, not just those ready and able to digest difficult text, to study history. “For struggling readers, the alternative to reading adapted sources is a world dictated solely by the textbook...Adapting sources allows teachers to steer students toward authentic historical inquiry and away from a version of history that rests on the textbook’s monopoly” (pp. 214, 216).


- Social studies in integrative by nature. Powerful social studies teaching crosses disciplinary boundaries to address topics in ways that promote social understanding and civic efficacy. It also integrates knowledge, skills, and dispositions with authentic action. When children pursue a project or investigation, they encounter many problems and questions based in civics, economics, geography and history. With teacher guidance, children can actively explore both the processes and concepts of social studies while simultaneously exploring other content areas (p. 253).


- The study demonstrated that the integration of local historical inquiry with community service-learning can lead to significant self-reported increases in civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intention to participate in community improvement in the future for 3rd-12th grade students. Consistent with service learning literature, the authors believe that learning, discussion, and reflection on social causes or civic issues in the CiviConnections program contributed to the positive outcomes students indicated. In addition, in most cases students were involved in choosing the issue they studied and for which they created service activities. The service-learning literature emphasizes the importance of student voice and ownership; these elements were present in most of the CiviConnections projects studied. The study provides confirmation that connecting learning and reflection on social and civic causes and including student voice and ownership in project design increase students’ civic efficacy and participation. An additional contribution of the study to the service-learning literature is that the CivicConnections program contributed to significant growth in students’ civic knowledge (pp. 380-382).


- History education can contribute to a democratic society and help students reason together, care for the common good, and listen to each other by (1) giving students the chance to take part in reasoned judgment by looking at evidence together and deciding on the best choice of action based on the reliability of information; (2) engaging students in consideration of the common good, an activity that depends on identification with larger communities—ethnic, national, global, or all of these at once—and on a sense of right and wrong; and (3) help students understand perspectives that are different than their own (pp. 10-11).

- Students often learn by writing in history. When combined with other forms of assessment, writing has tremendous potential for providing information into what students know and can do. To provide constructive information on student learning, written assignments must first and foremost be open-ended…Often, good written tasks ask students to organize what they have learned into forms other than expository sentences and paragraphs (pp. 180-181).


- The students overwhelmingly indicated that the use of primary sources made history “come alive” for them; they especially enjoyed the hide and seek with digital photographs. Not surprisingly, much time was initially spent on helping the elementary students understand primary sources. Many of these students had never engaged formally, on their own or in a school setting, in historical inquiry or been asked to consider historical perspective (p. 84).

- The students were more enthusiastic and lively with the artifact boxes. The areas of inquiry the students generated were the most beneficial outcomes of these lessons. Their questions helped
guide further lesson development by the classroom teachers. The challenges of this lesson informed us that it is well worth taking the instructional time to help students use and understand artifacts as evidence (p. 84).

- Over the course of our lessons, these elementary students clearly articulated that they, too, were makers of history. The notion of evidence and artifacts left behind greatly helped with this discovery. The concept of multiple perspectives and historical bias also surfaced with these students. Their grappling with print sources being primary sources and biased was of great importance. All of the students eventually made distinctions between primary and secondary sources, yet questions remained (p. 84).

- Both classroom teachers indicated that their students were more “engaged” in social studies than they had been previously. One teacher noted that she had not previously believed that elementary students could use primary source materials and engage in authentic inquiry…both teachers indicated that the use of digital resources allowed their students to connect with resources outside of the classroom and to engage in disciplined inquiry (p. 85).

- We learned that upper elementary students can, indeed, use and make sense of primary sources as well as create historical knowledge and when given appropriate time and scaffolding develop conclusions based upon evidence (p. 85).


- The “essential characteristics of powerful social studies” as described by NCSS consist of five principles. The second principle is: Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are integrative. Integration is encouraged when social studies subject matter is taught topically across disciplines, and social studies teaching and learning are connected to other subjects; and when the teaching makes effective use of technology (p. 12).


- To be proficient at integrating technologies into classrooms requires a threefold approach. First, teachers must gain competence in comfortably using the technologies; second, they must identify means to skillfully and transparently integrate those technologies into their social studies instruction, and third, they must expand their instructional repertoire to include both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches (p. 167).


- The TPACK (technological pedagogical content knowledge) framework builds on Shulman’s (1987, 1986) descriptions of PCK (pedagogical content knowledge) to describe how teachers’ understanding of educational technologies and PCK interact with one another to produce effective
teaching with technology... TCK (technological content knowledge), then, is an understanding of
the manner in which technology and content influence and constrain one another. Teachers need
to master more than the subject matter they teach; they must also have a deep understanding of the
manner in which the subject matter (or the kinds of representations that can be constructed) can be
changed by the application of particular technologies. Teachers need to understand which specific
technologies are best suited for addressing subject-matter learning in their domains and how the
content dictates or perhaps even changes the technology—or vice versa.

for using technology to prepare social studies teachers. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and
Teacher Education* [Online serial], 1 (1). Retrieved 11/30/09 from
http://www.citejournal.org/vol1/iss1/currentissues/socialstudies/article1.htm

- Pre-service teachers must not simply acquire skills that make them proficient at using technology,
  but also learn how to use technology to make their teaching better than it would be without it.
Therefore, pre-service instruction enabling teachers to integrate technology seamlessly into
lessons is more productive than technology instruction that merely teaches pre-service teachers
how to use specific computer skills. For example, pre-service teachers should not learn how to
create PowerPoint presentations or Excel spreadsheets merely with the goal of mastering the
technology. Rather, pre-service teachers should create PowerPoint presentations that aid in direct
instruction of a particular social studies lesson or spreadsheets that help illustrate statistical data
significant to the social studies student.

guidelines: A position statement of National Council for the Social Studies*. Silver Spring, MD:

- Social studies teachers implement curriculum plans that include methods and strategies for
  applying technology to maximize student learning in social studies.

Teacher: F4; Student: A, D1: Tanner, L. (2009). Teaching social studies to the media generation.*
Social Science Research & Practice, 4*(2), 140-144. Retrieved 12/2/09 from

- Studies...[have] found that student attitudes toward, and interest in, social studies can be greatly
  influenced by two factors: (a) active involvement and teacher enthusiasm and (b) the perceived
  value of the subject matter. Results from both of these studies show that students respond well to
knowledgeable, passionate teachers who include them as active participants in the learning
process through lively discussions and thought provoking activities (p. 141).

- Providing students with authentic instructional work is an important factor in increasing student
  engagement. Authentic instructional work, as defined in a study by Marks (2000), consists of four
component measures relating to the frequency with which the student is involved in meaningful
academic experiences in the core mathematics or social studies class: (a) You are asked
interesting questions and solve new problems; (b) you dig deeply into understanding a single
topic; (c) you apply the subject to problems and situations in life outside of school, and (d) you
discuss your ideas about the subject with the teacher or students. Other studies further illustrate the connection between student engagement and teachers who provide students with a well-balanced mixture of teacher- and student-centered activities. Teachers are also aided in their efforts to engage students in social studies when they create inquiry-based lessons that allow students to construct knowledge through the active involvement of exploring content and seeking appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. Teachers can further enhance this instruction by using the Internet to connect students to a wealth of resources that will make history come alive in their classrooms (p. 141).

- When faced with a classroom of these Media Generation students, social studies teachers need to be able to capture the attention and imagination of the class by using a student-centered, active learning approach that focuses on critical thinking and problem solving, while employing the Internet to display authentic resources (print images, audio, and video) that they would not otherwise have. These resources, along with the use of art and artifact analysis tools, allow students to examine historical relics, share reflections, and draw conclusions in a structured, thoughtful and engaging manner (p. 143).


- Wagner proposes Seven Skills for the 21st Century, based on conversations with business and industry leaders. The first of these is critical thinking and problem-solving: “The habit of asking good questions was most frequently mentioned as an essential component of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. It turns out that by asking good questions, critical thinking, and problem solving go hand in hand in the minds of most employers and business consultants, and taken together they represent the First Survival Skill of the new global ‘knowledge economy.’” Equally important, they are skills that our kids needs in order to participate effectively in our democracy” (pp. 14-15).

- “Leaders today want to see individuals take more initiative and even be entrepreneurial in terms of the ways they seek out opportunities, ideas, and strategies for improvement…the importance of individuals and teams being able to take the initiative to solve a problem or come up with a better solution was frequently mentioned (in interviews) (p. 32).

- The Fifth Survival Skill is effective oral and written communication. Communication skills are a major factor highlighted in dozens of studies that focus on students’ lack of preparation for college and the workplace, and these skills are going to come increasingly important as teams are increasingly composed of individuals from diverse cultures. The ability to express one's views clearly in a democracy and to communicate effectively across cultures is an important citizenship skill as well (p. 34).

- The Sixth Survival Skill is accessing and analyzing information…To be active and informed citizens today, we have to be able to access and evaluate information from different sources (pp. 36-37).

**Student: A1, D1, D2:** Zemelman, S., Daniels, H. & Hyde, A. (1998). *Best practice: New standards*
Drawing on the most forward-looking ideas and arguments in recent national reports the authors offer recommendations for best practice in teaching social studies, including that social studies should involve students in reading, writing, observing, discussing, and debating to ensure their active participation in learning (p. 143).


NCSS believes that the core mission of social studies education is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens. An effective citizen: (1) Embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them; (2) Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one’s family, and the community; (3) Has knowledge of the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world; (4) Has knowledge of our nation’s founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes; (5) Is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national, and global levels; (6) Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; (7) Asks meaningful questions and is able to analyze and evaluate information and ideas; (8) Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; (9) Has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group; and (10) Actively participates in civic and community life.


The public discussion of students’ interpretations of the documents deepened their understanding of the author’s perspective and the implications for their interpretations. These findings support previous studies indicating that group discussions enhance students’ understanding of complex social issues and events… By sharing their interpretations with their classmates who often disagreed, the students had the opportunity to create a richer, more complex representation of an historical event than they could have created individually (p. 52).


Based on the findings of this study, instructional strategies that piqued students’ own questions and interests appeared to be the key in facilitating their motivation to learn history and an increased level of student learning. These fifth graders demonstrated a motivation to learn history for the sake of learning rather than superficial rewards or achievement goals. Evidence supports the contention that when a story, in this case history, interests a child, his or her level of motivation is increased, often resulting in increased student achievement…Based on the findings
of this study, inquiry-based instruction not only motivated students’ interest and motivation to learn history but also, perhaps most importantly, prompted them to learn independently outside the classroom — learning for the sake of learning (p. 127).

Additional Resources
Kentucky Department of Education Program of Studies, Revised 2006
Kentucky Department of Education Academic Expectations
Kentucky Department of Education Core Content for Assessment, Version 4.1
Kentucky Department of Education Standards and Indicators for School Improvement
Kentucky Department of Education Guide for Reflective Classroom Practices: A Self-Assessment Tool for Teachers (draft)