

Evaluation Results

Author: [REDACTED] Evaluated by: Beth Lehman (<i>evaluator's name is not visible to author</i>) Date Evaluated: 04/26/2012 11:29:02 AM (EDT) DRF template: Student Teaching Portfolio 2011-12 Program: Student Teaching Portfolio 2011-12 Evaluation Method: Using Rubric

Evaluation Summary for EMU Outcomes 1-3: Philosophy of Education

Final Score:	Meets Requirement
---------------------	-------------------

Detailed Results (Rubric used: Capstone Philosophy of Education F11)

Beliefs about conceptual framework [Scholarship]		
(3) Exemplary Articulates clearly the teacher education department's conceptual framework within one's philosophy of education.	(2) Competent Articulates some characteristics of the education department's conceptual framework within one's philosophy of education.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not identify important elements of the education department's conceptual framework.
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Beliefs about the relationship between an ethic of care & sustainability [Scholarship]		
(3) Exemplary Articulates clearly the teacher education department's conceptual understanding of caring within the context of sustainability.	(2) Competent Articulates some characteristics of the education department's conceptual understanding of caring within the context of sustainability.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not identify important elements of the education department's conceptual understanding of caring within the context of sustainability.
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Beliefs about the aims or purposes of schooling [Inquiry]		
(3) Exemplary Identifies important aims and purposes of schooling; supports beliefs with a logical rationale that is well supported by scholarly literature.	(2) Competent Identifies a few important aims and purposes of schooling; supports most beliefs with a logical rationale that is supported by scholarly literature.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not identify important aims and purposes of schooling; incomplete or missing rationale that is not supported by scholarly literature.
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Beliefs about what children should learn [Inquiry]		
(3) Exemplary Identifies important content to be learned by children in his/her discipline & provides evidence based research to support the rationale for the content.	(2) Competent Identifies some important content to be learned by children in his/her discipline & provides evidence based research to support the rationale for the content.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not identify important content to be learned by children in his/her discipline & provide evidence based research to support the rationale for the content.
Criterion Score: 3.00		

Beliefs & attitudes about how children learn [Inquiry]		
(3) Exemplary Thoroughly explains the link among the stages of development, motivation, and learning theory; supports with a logical rationale that is well supported by scholarly literature.	(2) Competent Explains the link among the stages of development, motivation, and learning theory; supports with a logical rationale that is supported by scholarly literature.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Incomplete or missing explanations of link among the stages of development, motivation, and learning theory; incomplete or missing rationale that is not supported by scholarly literature.
Criterion Score: 2.00		
Beliefs & attitudes about how teachers should teach ALL children within specified discipline [Inquiry]		
(3) Exemplary Thoroughly explains the link among the styles of learning, differentiation of instruction to meet individual student needs, and assessment that guides instruction within specified discipline; supports with a logical rationale that is well supported by scholarly literature.	(2) Competent Explains the link among the styles of learning, differentiation of instruction to meet individual student needs, and assessment that guides instruction within specified discipline; supports with a logical rationale that is supported by scholarly literature.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not explain the link among the styles of learning, differentiation of instruction to meet individual student needs, and assessment that guides instruction within specified discipline; incomplete or missing rationale that is not supported by scholarly literature.
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Beliefs about the impact of teacher effectiveness on the learning community [Inquiry]		
(3) Exemplary Thoroughly explains the link between a caring learning community and teacher effectiveness to student achievement; supports with a logical rationale that is well supported by scholarly literature.	(2) Competent Explains the link between a caring learning community and teacher effectiveness to student achievement; supports with a logical rationale that is supported by scholarly literature.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not explain the link between a caring learning community and teacher effectiveness to student achievement; incomplete or missing rationale that is not supported by scholarly literature.
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Beliefs about the roles of family, language, community, and culture in education [Inquiry]		
(3) Exemplary Thoroughly explains the critical interrelationships among the family, language, community, and culture in the education of individual students; supports with a logical rationale that is well supported by scholarly literature.	(2) Competent Explains the interrelationships among the family, language, community, and culture in the education of individual students; supports with a logical rationale that is supported by scholarly literature.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Citations & APA format [Scholarship]		
(3) Exemplary Cites 7+ scholarly references; content connected to appropriate theorists to support statements & positions; paper written in APA format	(2) Competent Cites 4-6 scholarly references; some content connected to appropriate theorists to support statements & positions; written in APA format	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Cites 3 or less scholarly references; little or no connection to appropriate theorists to support statements & positions; not written in APA format
Criterion Score: 3.00		
EMU Writing Standards [Scholarship]		
(3) Exemplary Reflects "A" work according to EMU's undergraduate level writing standards.	(2) Competent Reflects "B" work according to EMU's undergraduate level writing standards.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Reflects "C" or less work according to EMU's undergraduate level writing standards.

Criterion Score: 3.00		
Integration of sustainability and the discipline: Identification of 1) a sustainability issue that relates to the discipline or 2) how the discipline can address a sustainability issue		
(3) Exemplary Identifies an appropriate issue, clearly explaining connection between sustainability and the discipline.	(2) Competent Identifies an appropriate issue; connection between sustainability and discipline only vaguely explained.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations Does not identify an appropriate issue and/or makes no attempt to connect sustainability and discipline.
Criterion Score: 3.00		
Presentation of solution or sustainable course of action related to the discipline		
(3) Exemplary A particularly creative or innovative solution or course of action is presented and accompanied by a thorough analysis of the issue. The solution/course of action is applicable to the issue.	(2) Competent A solution or course of action is presented and the solution/course of action is applicable to the issue.	(1) Does Not Meet Expectations A solution or course of action is not presented or the solution/course of action is incongruent with the issue.
Criterion Score: 3.00		

Bridging the Divide:
Connecting School with the Wider World through the Social Studies
Foundations of Education
April 2012

Philosophy of Education

American schools are failing. Or so the mad media, polarized politicians, biased bloggers, and piqued parents would like people to believe. Of course, this is only one perspective, but the overall opinion of public schools in the United States is at a near all-time low. A Gallup poll from July of 2011 revealed that only 34 percent of Americans have a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in public schools (Morales, 2011). Why the low opinion? Perhaps one reason stems from the simplicity of what schools aim to do: that is, preparing students for college and careers.

The purpose of schools across the country, according to their mission statements, is to get students “college and career ready.” It is a valiant goal and worthy of obtaining. But too often, this becomes the only goal of schools. So what? Many people, including teachers and administrators, see the primary objective of schools as preparing students to be economically productive in the existing structures and institutions that govern the world. While there is a lot of good rationale behind the “college and career ready” slogan (U.S. Department of Ed., 2011), its underlying objective is maintaining the existing structures and status-quo that govern the world by creating good, complacent, and efficient workers. Steven Wolk (2007) highlighted this problem in his article, *Why Go to School?* “If the purpose of our schools is to prepare drones to keep the U.S. economy going,” he comments, “then the prevailing curricula and instructional methods are probably adequate. If however, we want to help students become thoughtful, caring citizens... [who can] figure out how to change the status quo rather than maintain it, we need to rethink schooling entirely” (p. 648). This is exactly the problem: many people, including the all-knowing teachers and administrators, see schooling as a fixed thing that, at its core, often remains unexamined in pursuit of reaching current goals, objectives and pressures schools face to prepare students to be economically productive in the existing structures and institutions that govern the world. Schools exist to create good workers.

Yet there are so many other facets of life that exist outside of work and college. College is generally four years, and a career is usually an 8-10 hour workday, 5 days a week: what about the rest of life? Should schools aim to teach about the things that happen outside of college and career? Certainly. And schools do. But there is much more to examine about the philosophy of education that goes way beyond college and career readiness. The social studies curriculum is particularly poised to prepare students for a holistic understanding of the life ahead of them, by examining not only issues in schools and workplaces, but by allowing students to evaluate their worldview and the things that happen throughout individual homes, communities, the United States, and the rest of the world. Uniquely charged with fostering each students understanding of what it means to be a citizen of the United States and the larger world, the Social Studies teacher should utilize various teaching strategies that nurture critical inquiry in a student-centered classroom, promote collaboration and participation, plan for the needs of diverse students, and bridge the divide between the learning modalities of school, home, the community, and the wider world.

The Purposes of Schooling

Given the current climate of education, it may seem that the purpose of schooling is to pass tests. While this is an oversimplification of what many states are trying to do with standardized tests, it does highlight what is most important for children to “learn” in schools. Tests act as a check on schools. Particularly, most standardized tests check the reading, writing, and mathematic skills of students. What is emphasized on tests reveal

what school is actually for: creating functionally literate workers. This is important. But with such a huge emphasis on high-stakes testing, creating competent readers, writers, and mathematicians often becomes the only emphasis within schools. This happens at the expense of other subjects like the social studies and sciences, and even more so for electives (Misco & Shiveley, 2010).

The large emphasis on core subjects like reading, writing, and math in schools is largely due to a fear of falling behind. How many times has a television report, radio discussion, or newspaper article focusing on education discussed the importance of preparing students for their future as workers? This stems from a fear that America is losing its competitive edge as the economic hegemon (world superpower). Wolk (2007) argues that schools exist to create good workers and sadly, virtually no one contests that. As a result, the U.S. has become a passive nation, uninformed on current events, without empathy for people in other countries or even for people living right next door. "Workers just need to produce and fulfill their roles as consumers. In the end, the only educational data that really matter aren't our children's GPAs, they're the GDP and Dow Jones Industrial Average" (p. 651). Simply put, schooling exists to ensure American economic dominance in an increasingly globalized world.

Creating competent workers who can read, write, and do math in order to maintain American economic hegemony should be a little disturbing. Despite the negative connection between schooling and working illustrated above, schooling does exist for some non-monetary benefits. Jerolimak (1997) identifies three such purposes for schooling; literacy, citizenship education, and personal development. Literacy skills are integral for developing competent citizens (through citizenship education) who are informed, global-minded, and in-tune with what is going on around them (Beal, 2009). It includes being able to communicate an understanding of the self and the strange world that surrounds the student to help students' personal development. Jerolimak's principles are succinct and helpful, but not holistic.

Schools should not be solely concerned with creating competent learners who understand the world around them as Jerolimak identifies, but should also seek to develop compassionate learners who are curious and intrinsically motivated to learn throughout their lives. Schools should allow students to examine the institutions that govern the world, highlight issues of justice, power and privilege, and develop alternative visions of what the world could be like (McIntosh, 1990). Schools should be places that empower communities by allowing their students to enact those alternative visions. Since current students will ultimately shape the institutions and structures of the world, educational institutions are one of the primary agents of societal change.

Students need to critically examine the political, social, economical, and religious institutions that govern this world and schools (primarily through the social studies curriculum) should provide the necessary tools for students to do this. This was most apparent to me while studying in the Middle East during the Arab Spring of 2011, a protest movement led by students against authoritarian regimes that produced dramatic changes to the future of the said political, economic, social, and religious structures guiding the region. In war torn and conflict laden situations both large conflicts abroad and small conflicts within individual communities, education can play an essential role in working towards mending broken relationships; these conflicts need to be studied in schools (Scarlett, 2009).

In a smaller and more violent setting, I saw the need for social reconstructivism in education while studying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In Israel and Palestine, I met with

the founder of several schools that do just that by bringing both Israeli Jewish students together with Arab Palestinians (Khativ, 2011). The school teaches both Arabic and Hebrew, it teaches both cultures of Islam and Judaism, and the classroom is a place where students evaluate the problems facing their society.¹ This creative process, while controversial among both Palestinians and Israelis, is the basis of social reconstructivism, allowing students to act as the primary agents of social change.

While talking about the challenges of education in Israel and Palestine, founder of the schools, Noha Khativ (2011) stated that “Ignorance is our best enemy.” It is easy to imagine “the other” as something terrible when one never comes face to face with it. There is a lot of “other” in the world and it is not to be feared. This is where schools can help, by introducing students to that which they do not know, to break down the ignorance that propagates fear, which in turn leads to many injustices. By breaking down ignorance, schools can truly become sustainable.² By empowering all students, staff, and the wider community to enact restorative measures that give voice to the powerless, and uphold dignity and the common humanity of all people, schools can break cycles of destruction and violence, creating vitality that sustains not only the individual student, but the entire school and wider community. Stated concisely, at its core, the purpose of schooling should be to create life-long passionate learners who can effectively communicate with the world around them through restorative and sustainable practices. The social studies teacher is the one who affects this process. Whether this is actually happening in many schools is a different subject in itself.

What Students Should Learn

The Social Studies curriculum is critical for students to learn when considering the purpose of schooling as creating passionate, life-long learners who understand and can effectively communicate with the world around them. The Social Studies encompasses a wide array of disciplines from history to economics, psychology to geography, and the list goes on. Despite the particular, somewhat incoherent and unique disciplines that make up the Social Studies curriculum, one common goal unites them all; citizenship education. Citizenship education involves creating free-thinking students who are knowledgeable in the ways that societies organize themselves and are capable of being effective citizens, so that any student would have the knowledge and skills necessary to hold a public office (Beal, 2009, p. 24 and Misco & Shiveley, 2010). It is only through the incorporation of literacy that citizenship education can take place, for without literacy, there would be no means of communication (Paquette & Kaufman, 2008). In particular, critical literacy skills will help students become effective citizens in the complex world in which they live.

Soares and Wood (2010) expand on what critical literacy looks like: critical literacy aims “...to raise students’ responsiveness toward societal problems in their world and to prompt students to ask why and for what reason are things the way they are, to question who profits the most, and then to act on making the world a better place” (p. 487). Students need to be able to articulate the ways in which political, economical, historical, and cultural forces influence their lives. Allowing students to examine the world in which they live, through the studies of other cultures, histories, geographies, and values, as well as the culture, history, geography, and values of the self is vital to carrying out this mission. Stein and Prewett (2009) propose this should be done by critically examining media (i.e.

¹ One of these schools was highlighted in a documentary; Heymann, B. & Heymann, T. (Directors). (2008). *Bridge Over the Wadi* [Motion picture]. Israel: Heymann Films and ITVS International.

² The sustainability in education component and connection between sustainability is weaved throughout the paper.

newspapers, television, advertisements, etc...). To understand the world is to understand the self. And with a strong understanding of the world and self, students can best be prepared to live abundantly as competent, concerned, and critical citizens of the world wherever they are.

In being effective citizens, students should also learn how to deal with conflict. Conflict is inherent in life. Schools should be places where students practice how to effectively work with it. Restorative Discipline/Restorative Justice is something that schools and more particularly the social studies curriculum should teach. History is full of conflict. But so is the present day. Social Studies teachers should creatively weave present day (macro conflicts in the world, and micro conflicts in the classroom) into the study of past conflicts of which there are many examples that deal with both problems violently and nonviolently. Amstutz and Mullet (2005) explain that Restorative Discipline seeks to understand the need behind behavior. When an "offense" is committed, the first question is not who did it, but rather who was hurt. In so doing, Restorative Discipline seeks to mend relationships that have been harmed by bringing all sides of a conflict together and processing together what happened, why it happened, and how the hurt relationships can be mended. Restorative Discipline values everyone in the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, harmed, or oppressed (p. 15). By incorporating Restorative Discipline in schools, students can learn essential problem solving skills that create sustainable communities that understand how to deal effectively with problems.

How Students Learn

The best methods for teaching the Social Studies curriculum is through inquiry based methods of instruction with some guidance from the teacher (when necessary). Students should have some autonomy to direct their own learning by looking at what they are interested in. In this way, students will be motivated to learn about that which interests them as much as possible (Pahl & Roswell, 2010). A set curriculum generally does not allow this, but whenever possible, a student-centered inquiry-based approach to education will truly intrinsically motivate students more than a teacher-centered approach. First hand experiences, real life-applications, physical learning objects, and engaging stories are several of many great ways students will effectively learn the Social Studies curriculum .

John Dewey in *Experience and Education* (1938) suggests that the process of learning does not simply happen in the classroom by the teacher but is an ongoing development through one's life experience. Learning happens all of the time, in and out of school. Dewey refers to this as "...the principle of continuity of experience [which] means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 35). The teacher is not the only one involved in the education process. Rather, life experiences can mold and shape students as much as, if not more than a teacher can. Dewey emphasizes the importance of creating intrinsic motivation for students to learn. This desire to go on learning is what sustains students to learn outside of school and what can motivate students to connect what happens in school to what goes on outside of school. As Dewey states "Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular things he is studying at a time" (p. 48). Understanding that students learn by doing and that learning extends beyond the control of the classroom is crucial for cultivating a desire for students to learn in class.

A brief study of education throughout history reveals many ways education has been theorized, tried, and tested (Mondale, 2001). The tendency of these tests and theories have resulted in great swings from one end of the spectrum to the other (i.e. progressive

education, the Gary plan and industrial education versus traditional, English speaking, intellectual education). It is easy to define one theory against another and explain why one is right and the other is wrong. But why polarize? Why pick one or the other? Is it not possible to hold multiple theories at the same time?

This same concept of holding multiple perspectives is critical for students to grasp. One would think that the US is great at teaching democratic ideals and values because this language is so prevalent. But what often happens in politics, social, and religious organizations would suggest otherwise. The polarization of political, social, economical, and religious institutions suggest that the US is deprived of these democratic ideals held so highly. Way too often people simply take their underlying beliefs and values and seek to find evidence to support it. In so doing, those beliefs and values are never actually challenged. Schooling is the place to examine worldviews; Social Studies is the content area in which this is best done. Despite what many American's may think, is it not possible to be both critical of the US, examining why the US does what it does in social studies education *and* still be committed to the US, still be "patriotic"? To prepare literate life-long, passionate learners who understand themselves and effectively communicate with the world around them, is it not vital that they see past the degrading and simple dichotomies so often perpetuated in this polarized country? The answer should be a resounding yes. How can a student effectively understand the self and the world around it without truly understanding multiple perspectives? How can one live abundantly in the world if one can only associate with a small part of it?

This understanding of the multiplicity of perspectives in the world carries directly into the classroom. Students are diverse, not only in beliefs and values, but in the ways they learn. They should be treated as if they are. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory holds that not all students are alike and that they do not all learn the same way. There are 8 intelligences generally considered in this theory; linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist (Baum, 2005, p. 10). Spatially intelligent children for example, learn by seeing physical examples of what is being taught. If a teacher is teaching about the geography of a region, the spatial learner would need to see pictures of the region to be fully engaged in the lesson and grasp the concept. When teaching, one needs to keep in mind other intelligences to ensure that all children are learning, and not only the ones to whom the teacher is catering towards. Hawkey (2004) validates this idea that all students learn differently and argues that traditional reading from a textbook and writing about that reading is not effective for all students. Hawkey (2007) shows how narrative (story-telling) is a great way for students to learn history. Both teacher and student constructed narratives are ways for students to put the study of particular historical events into context (2007, p. 265).

In understanding multiple perspectives, it should be noted that students often learn best when they learn together. Cooperative learning is an engaging method of teaching that centers around students working together to construct an understanding of a particular topic. Johnson (2009) identifies five basic elements of cooperative learning (p. 2). Students should be positively interdependent, interactive with each other, individually accountable and responsible in some way to achieve the group's goal, use relational skills, and use group processing to assess the functionality and effectiveness of the group. In essence, cooperative learning in the history classroom relies heavily upon students working together, thinking for themselves, sharing ideas, and collaborating to discuss or debate their learning (Haenen, 2008). Through this process, or any lesson, students learn best when given multiple opportunities for reinforcement of learning, and when students can

put learning in their own words, it is much more likely to become memorable (Key, Bradley, & Bradley, 2010). When children are allowed to think and collaborate together, they not only learn better individually, but the whole group learns better (Cho & Riech, 2008).

How Teachers Should Teach All Children in the Social Studies Curriculum

Understanding that all students learn differently is the first step in teaching for every unique student within a class. Differentiation is crucial for allowing all students to feel successful. Differentiation is not doing something different for every student one teaches, but it does include knowing the specific learning needs and abilities of each student and using that knowledge of each student to help any students that are falling, challenge students who are bored, and motivate students who are keeping up. Differentiation is not limited to those on Individualized Education Plans and 504s, though the teacher must be familiar with them. Tomlinson (2005) identifies several practical ways to differentiate instruction: pre-assess students at the beginning of the year and at the outset of each unit, meet in small groups to see where students are at, use multiple modalities when teaching rather than relying on a few teaching techniques, scaffold reading, differentiate homework assignments, and encourage students to express their learning in different ways.

Teachers must understand the needs of students to help them best succeed. Under the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines, teachers must first provide multiple means of representation; teaching through various methods (CAST, 2008). In the history class, this can include using realia, interactive lectures, story-telling, or various cooperative learning strategies. Secondly, teachers must also provide multiple means of actions and expression. Cooperative learning can be a great way to meet all the needs of students by having different students within the group responsible for doing something they are good at. Teachers should allow students to express what they have learned in forms other than traditional assessment, and focus more on authentic assessments. Thirdly, teachers should provide multiple means of engagement such as keeping student interest in the topic by giving students individual choice or making learning relevant (Heward, 2009). It can often be hard for many students to see the relevance in history, but connecting learning to student's lives will increase student interest. Meeting the needs of diverse students means not only understanding student needs, but providing the necessary accommodations and modifications for all students and the UDL model allows for a better class structure for all students and teachers.

Teacher Effectiveness and the Learning Community

To be effective to the learning community, teachers must create and promote a "culture of inquiry" inside and outside of the school (Reagan, 2000, p. 28). "All inquiry is ultimately based on curiosity (p. 40)." Teachers must allow inquiry to take place by allowing students to have autonomy in their studies. Dewey (1938) explains that it is only in the freedom to talk, move, and interact in the classroom that the student can engage in learning without feeling pressured by the teacher to do something (p. 62). Allowing students to have autonomy in the learning process creates sustainable learning that is not limited to the classroom. Learning happens all of the time; at home, school, in the community, religious institutions, etc. Teachers need to understand this and work at bridging the divide between what happens at school and what happens elsewhere. What is learned in the classroom should have applications outside of it. Helping students make connections should be a top priority for teachers (Canestrari, 2010, p. 116). Too often students see learning as a chore rather than something they are actually interested in. To

truly make learning sustainable, students need to be interested in the topics and pursue them on their own. Teachers should help promote student interest by connecting learning between school and the rest of the world. There are limitations to student-based inquiry approaches, namely standards that guide curriculums and the pervasiveness of ultimatums that judge student performance and subsequently, teacher ability: high-stakes tests are inevitable in the current educational climate, but it is still possible to give students autonomy in the decision making process about *how* they learn, even if *what* they learn is prescribed.

By working with students particular interests, teachers can build caring and positive relationships. When a positive student-teacher relationship can be developed, students can learn in a strong and uplifting environment and the teacher can have a great effect on the learning community. An effective teacher will value and care for the relationships he or she has with his or her students, colleagues, and community (Harris, 1998). When students know that their teacher cares about them, they will strive to do better and succeed in the classroom (Dozier, 2006). When teachers collaborate with each other, everyone benefits because they can make the best decisions about what to teach or how to go about teaching a lesson. And when teachers care for their community (by getting involved with volunteering or being on the town council for example), the students see that the teacher truly cares for them and the community sees the teacher as someone whose words spoken in the classroom are reflected by his or her actions. Landau sums up the idea of a caring teacher in this quote: “Inevitably, the quality of the teacher’s response to the human’s with whom he interacts, and the quality of the ‘person’ teaching are part of the persistent interest of educational innovators as they search for the answer to the educational riddle-what is teaching (1976, p. 1)?”

By showing an ethic of care, teachers should empower every one of their students equally. Pahl and Roswell (2010) identify their theory of “Artifactual Literacies” as a way to do this. Simply put, artifactual literacies are the sharing of artifacts and stories that evoke personal and emotional experiences that bring the important and relevant learning that happens at both home and school together. This theory is not only a teaching strategy but also a community building exercise that empowers individuals, families, and communities and gives voice to the learners/individuals who feel as if they are at the margins of schooling/society. The theory holds that the sharing of everyday experience allows for multiple intelligences and ethnicities to be valued and respected in the classroom and community. By listening to each other’s stories and examining the artifacts in the lives of others, students can get a better understanding of the world around them, both locally and globally. This is only one way teachers can be effective to the learning community, but the idea of empowering students should be central to any method of effective teachers.

The Education Department’s Conceptual Framework (at Eastern Mennonite University), “preparing caring, reflective teachers, for a changing world,” offers a more holistic understanding into the impact of teacher effectiveness on the learning community (Teacher education, 2012).³ Based around the theory of constructivism, the framework promotes scholarship, professional knowledge, inquiry, communication, and caring as elements essential to being an effective teacher. Caring about students is not a simple act but rather a mode of being. For teachers to impact the learning community, students need to feel genuine empathy from the teacher. This is not a care that lets students get away with not achieving their top potential, but rather a deep ethical care that pursues each student,

³ Beliefs about the conceptual framework are throughout, but highlighted here.

challenging them to model back to the teacher the same elements of caring present in the teacher present in the Conceptual Framework.

The Role of Family, Culture, and Community in Education

While state and national mandates limit schools in certain aspects (funding requirements, grants, and standardized testing), schools exist for the benefit of the localized community in which they reside. It is those communities that are most involved with the school more than any state and federal mandate can be. With this mindset, it is critical that families and surrounding communities are engaged in the work of the school and vis-versa. It is vital that the family of each student is engaged in the student's life and knows what is happening in the school. Dozier (2006) explains how when families are not connected with schools, students can suffer because of the gap between what happens in school and what happens at home. As a result, parent-teacher communication is perhaps one of the best ways to meet the needs of students. Who else knows students better than their parents? When families and communities are supportive and engaged in what happens at school, everyone benefits.

Families and communities should be empowered by engaging with local schools. Pahl and Rowsell (2010) highlight the benefit of using artifactual literacies in the community by describing how it creates space for families to share their stories of struggle and hardship thereby empowering not only them, but also their children. Through community storytelling, a sense of pride can develop among the community. They describe how if the collection of a community's artifacts is displayed like a museum, the community develops a sense of pride for who they are (p. 62). This act of collectively telling stories allows the community to say what is important to them and not simply accept what other people tell them is important. Artifactual Literacies is a particular way of identifying multimodal literacies; the multiple ways of representing how people communicate. Whether through storytelling, pictures, autobiography, a play, an artifact, or any other creative expression of one's life, the act of sharing personal stories with one another can profoundly change us. Doing this with artifacts is certainly a creative way to connect the learning of home, school and the community, respect cultural diversity, and empower the community in the process.

Conclusion

For many students the culture of school and the rest of the world could not be more different. There is all too often a lack of coherency between learning that takes place in the different locations students spend their time. If schools are to be sustainable, they must actively work to bridge the divide between what happens in the classroom and the rest of the world. Many examples of how to empower teachers and students to do this have been given and more could still be added. One of the biggest impediments to creating sustainable schools is the underlying belief so prevalent in the U.S. that schools exist to create good workers who will continue to propagate the U.S. as an economic hegemon throughout the world. When this is the motivating factor behind schools, it is no wonder students struggle to see any connection between what happens at school and the wider world. When learning in school centers around being "college and career ready," filling out worksheets and paperwork, following orders, and being extremely productive workers, students will not feel empowered to address the rest of life outside of school.

Schools should do more than just create good workers. Schools must empower students to address injustice and violence in a restorative manner. Teachers must enable students to articulate alternative visions of how the world could be and give them opportunities to carry out those visions. Students must care enough to learn throughout

life and be active and engaged in life outside of work. Communities and families must be an integral part of the educational experience because learning does not just happen in schools. The social studies curriculum is particularly poised to prepare students for a holistic understanding of the life ahead of them, by examining not only issues in schools and the workplace, but by allowing students to evaluate their worldview and the things that happen throughout their homes, communities, and the rest of the world. Uniquely charged with fostering each student's understanding of what it means to be a citizen of the United States and the larger world, the Social Studies teacher should utilize various teaching strategies that nurture critical inquiry in a student-centered classroom, promote collaboration and participation, plan for the needs of diverse students, and bridge the divide between learning that occurs in school, home, the community, and the wider world.

References

- Amstutz, L. S., & Mullet, J. H. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline for schools: teaching responsibility; creating caring climates*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.
- Baum, S., Viens, J., & Slatin, B. (2005). *Multiple intelligences in the elementary classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Beal, C., Bolick, C. M., Martorella, P. H. (2009). *Teaching social studies in middle and secondary schools* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Canestrari, A. S., & Marlowe, B. A. (2010). *Educational foundations: an anthology of critical readings* (2nd. ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- CAST (2008). *Universal design for learning guidelines* version 1.0. Wakefield, MA.
- Cho, S. & Reich, G. (2008). New immigrants, new challenges: high school social studies teachers and English language learner instruction. *The Social Studies* [serial online], 99(6):235-242.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York: Touchstone.
- Dozier, C., Johnston, P., & Rogers R (2006). *Critical literacy/critical teaching: Tools for preparing responsive teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Haenen, J., & Tuithof, H. (2008). Cooperative learning: the place of pupil involvement in a history textbook. *Teaching History*, (131), 30-34.
- Hawkey, K. (2004). Narrative in classroom history. *Curriculum Journal*, 15(1), 35-44.
- Hawkey, K. (2007). "Could you just tell us the story?" pedagogical approaches to introducing narrative in history classes. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 37(3), 263-277.
- Johnson, D. W., & T. R. (2009). *An Overview of Cooperative Learning*.
http://clearspecs.com/joomla15/downloads/ClearSpecs69V01_Overview%20of%20Cooperative%20Learning.pdf
- Khativ, N. (2011, March). Personal Interview. Galilee, Israel.
- Key, L., Bradley, J., & Bradley, K. (2010). *Stimulating instruction in social studies*. *Social Studies*, 101(3), 117-120.
- Landau, E. D., Epstein, S.L., & Stone, A. P. (1976). *The teaching experience: An introduction to education through literature*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Morales, L. (2011, July 29). Near record-low confidence in U.S. public schools. *Gallup*.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/148724/Near-Record-Low-Confidence-Public-Schools.aspx>.
- Misco, T., & Shiveley, J. (2010). Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Some Renewed Thinking on Dispositions Specific to Social Studies Education. *Social Studies*, 101(3), 121-126.
- McIntosh, P. (1990). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*. Independent School, 1990. <http://www.amptoons.com/blog/files/mcintosh.html>.
- Pahl, K. & Rowsell J. (2010). *Artifactual literacies: every object tells a story*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Paquette, K., & Kaufman, C. (2008). *Merging civic and literacy skills*. *Social Studies*, 99(4), 187-192.
- Reagan, T. G., Case, C. W., & Brubacher, J. W. (2000). *Becoming a reflective educator: How to build a culture of inquiry in the schools* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Scarlett, M. (2009). Imagining a World beyond Genocide: Teaching about Transitional Justice. *Social Studies*, 100(4), 169-176.
- Mondale, S. (2001). *SCHOOL: the story of American public education* [Motion picture]. United States: Stone Lantern Films, Inc.

- Soares, L., & Wood, K. (2010). *A Critical literacy perspective for teaching and learning social studies*. *Reading Teacher*, 63(6), 486-494.
- Stein, L., & Prewett, A. (2009). Media literacy education in the social studies: Teacher perceptions and curricular challenges. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 36(1), 131-148.
- Teacher education handbook: Preparing caring reflective teachers for a changing world (2011-2012). *Education Department; Eastern Mennonite University*. Retrieved from: http://emu.edu/education/conceptual_framework_current.pdf.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). Differentiating instruction: why bother? *Middle Ground*, 9(1), 12-14.
- Unrau, N. (2008). *Content area reading and writing: fostering literacies in middle and high school cultures*. (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011). College and career ready students. Washington, DC. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/college-career-ready.pdf>.
- Wolk, S. (2007). Why go to school? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88(9), 648-658.