College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Inquiry and Engagement Online: Fostering Digital Civic Participation through Critical Inquiry

A Report by the NCSS Task Force on College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Inquiry and Engagement

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Preface

There has, arguably, never been a time when children and youth are more in need of social studies and civic empowerment. Yet, access to technology reveals stark inequities in learning opportunities. Beginning in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic initiated a nationwide, unplanned experiment in remote and hybrid learning. While the era of remote learning during the pandemic posed new educational challenges, it also presented possibilities for rethinking instructional practices. As social studies educators grapple with the schooling and societal implications that resulted from the school closures and shelter-in-place policies necessitated by COVID-19, we continue to confront numerous challenges, such as the equity issues raised by the shift from face-to-face to online learning; the role of social studies in addressing the personal, societal, and policy issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and the lasting effects of quickly designing and implementing student- and inquiry-focused online learning.

While the pandemic forced schools to reckon with a dependence on technology to facilitate learning, it also allowed educators to explore uncharted possibilities of online learning. This unanticipated shift revealed stark inequalities in learning opportunities which require intentional actions to revise policies and practices. Perhaps of even greater significance is the collective recognition of a need for fostering informed, reasoned online civic engagement. This report offers research-informed strategies and models of practice to guide the post-pandemic positioning of social studies as a leader in fostering digital civic participation and critical inquiry.

As school districts migrated instruction during the pandemic from face-to-face to remote delivery, of which online learning is a prominent component, a variety of equity challenges arose in engaging all students with high quality, student-centered learning experiences. These challenges are not new but reveal a long-standing digital divide among students (Anderson & Perrin, 2018). A 2018 report from the Pew Research Center analyzing 2015 U.S. Census Bureau data found:

- 15% of households with school-aged children do not have a high-speed internet connection at home,
- One in four teens whose annual family income is less than $30,000 does not have access to a home computer, and
- 17% of teens often or sometimes are unable to do their homework due to a lack of access to a computer or the internet.

These digital inequities confound issues of learning loss and digital civic engagement. Moreover, the pandemic has challenged us to think critically about technology, schooling, and society.

Social studies curricula ought to promote technology and media rich, experiential-based inquiry into critical matters of concern to preK-12th grade youth and the public so as to enable students to explore personal and societal identities; to critically engage with digital information, ideas, and individuals; and to become civically active in diverse digital democratic settings. Yet, many districts and schools are struggling to engage all students with high quality, student-centered, action-oriented learning experiences. Internet or technology issues are exacerbated by limited resources available for online learning. Pre-COVID, not all school districts had 1:1 computers for their students, nor did all families have internet in

their homes. Although students may access the internet via cell phones, completing homework—much less a full day of online instruction—can prove extremely arduous. Web-conferencing platforms like Zoom, Teams, Adobe Connect, or Google Hangouts can quickly drain cellular data plans and are quite variable in quality depending on bandwidth available. School districts attempted to fill the access gaps when it became evident that many students lacked access to high speed connections, computers, laptops, and/or printers.

As a stopgap measure during the pandemic, some districts initially provided students with paper packets of material to pick up and complete, but after the enactment of "shelter-in-place" policies, students received the packets in the mail. As districts opted to close for a more extended time or even the remainder of the school year, they sought to ensure that each student was provided an appropriate tablet/computer and viable internet access. For example, the Philadelphia School District approved $11 million for the purchase of up to 50,000 Chromebooks. The New York City School District offered students access to Wi-Fi hotspots. In addition to hardware and software-related equity issues, it proved challenging to provide at-home services to English language learners and students with special needs. Such challenges were a prelude to the hybrid approach and continued online instruction ensuing in the 2020–2021 school year.

Social studies is uniquely well-suited to exploring issues of equity, whether related to investigating inequities across student populations worldwide in relation to technology, healthcare, or unemployment benefits, or in situating these inequities within cultural, historical, or public policy contexts. As social studies educators, we must remain sensitive to the fine line between helping students cope with current conditions without fostering undue anxiety, on one hand, and investigating many effects and ways to help anticipate, minimize, and act on the problems created by the pandemic, on the other. In most online settings, for example, teachers lack the visual cues to help gauge how students are responding to what they are learning. Yet the ability for us as individuals and as a people to democratically rise to the occasion requires an understanding of and ability to act productively in response to what is occurring, which makes learning social studies of paramount importance.

For many teachers, this challenge is compounded by the need to discern and offer an appropriate mix of online and home-based learning, particularly learning oriented around inquiry and civic engagement. Prior to the pandemic, few teachers possessed much experience fully utilizing online learning. The current situation demands that they dramatically remake how and what they teach, raising many questions and concerns, and, sometimes, doing so within the context of their own elevated levels of anxiety and frustration in making this change under such extraordinary time pressure. For example, how might educators engage with students via synchronous platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams? What is an appropriate mix of synchronous and asynchronous instruction? How might social studies educators engage learners in meaningful asynchronous instruction? Academically, what is healthy and reasonable to expect of students, and how does that expectation differ across grade level? Conceptually, what does digital civic engagement mean? As with inquiry learning, the challenge lies in becoming comfortable with posing such questions and allowing time and experience to develop the skills necessary to answer them.

Although greatly demanding, these challenges and others we encountered in the pandemic offer an opportunity to explore social studies learning and teaching in a virtual environment. Many students' and teachers' abrupt immersion into online learning necessitated consideration of how best to cultivate students' ability to inquire into and act as citizens on matters of personal, social, and civic concern in digital spaces. To that end, a critical goal of the Task Force on C3 Inquiry and Engagement was to guide NCSS members on how best to incorporate inquiry into teaching and learning about matters of personal and public concern, civic advocacy and engagement, and technology and social media, especially at this time when many social studies educators have had the experience of shifting toward online learning during a public health crisis and time of social distancing. What follows is the task force's recommendations for how to foster digital civic participation through critical inquiry.

Overview

The National Council for the Social Studies created the Task Force on C3 Inquiry and Engagement to offer guidance to preK-16 social studies educators on the development of "a powerful and rigorous social studies curriculum" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2016) that integrates inquiry, civic engagement, and related use of technology. We recognize that what characterizes digital civic engagement is still emerging (Kligler-Vilenchik & Thorson, 2016) and how best to use "social media as a space for informal learning" is under development (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016, p. 6). Nevertheless,

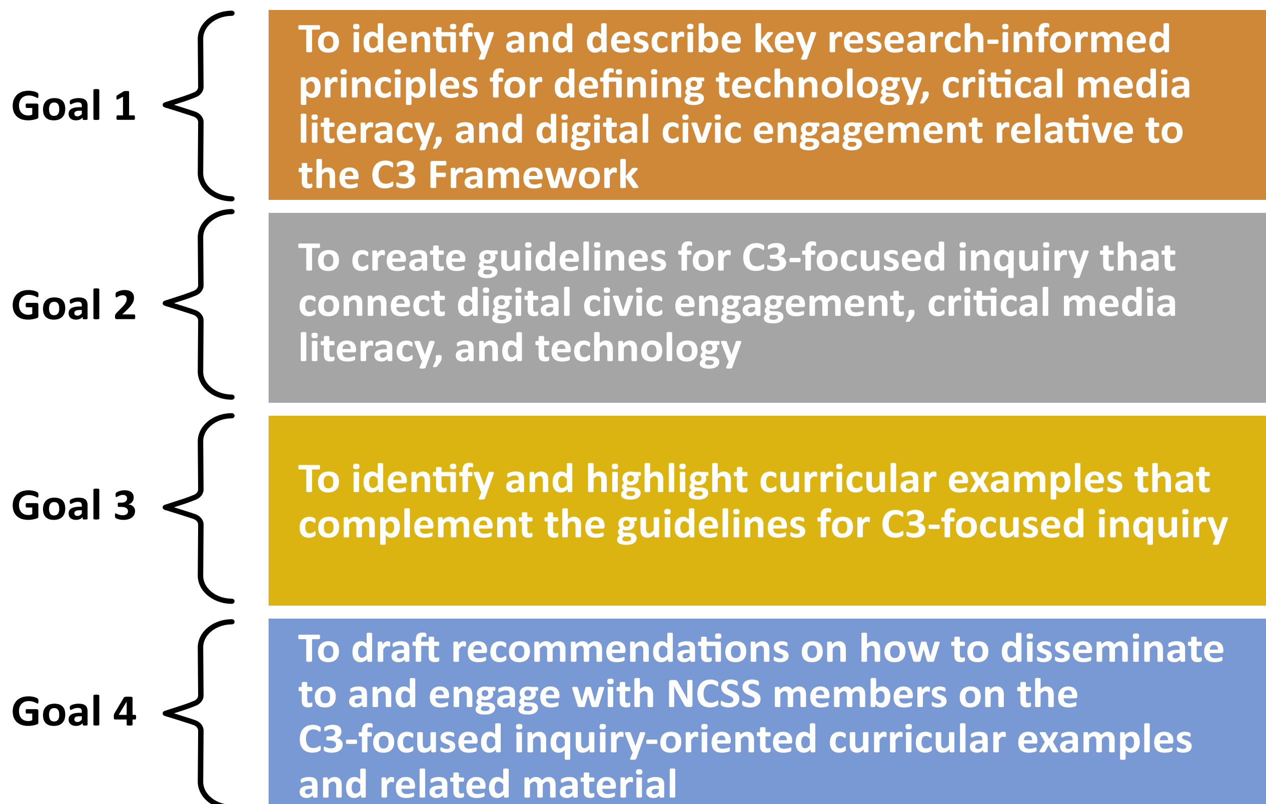

Figure 1. ***Goals of the NCSS Task Force on C3 Inquiry and Engagement***

research does suggest that “integrating social media in learning and teaching environments may yield new forms of inquiry, communication, collaboration [and] identity work” (p. 7). In view of the ways in which the digital ecosystem helps to shape “forms of inquiry,” as well as personal and civic engagement, we as social studies educators are challenged to address this provocative question: how might students best learn to critically inquire into and act on matters of personal and civic importance to them and their communities in digital spaces? Recognizing the unique intersection of inquiry and civic engagement with digital spaces and media, as members of the task force we crafted four goals (see Figure 1) to guide our exploration of this question and the curricular and instructional implications arising from it.

In addressing the first goal, we decided to focus on digital civic engagement, while remaining attentive to related forms of face-to-face engagement. In the context of media literacy, the word “critical” refers to the “analysis [of a] communicative act for the purpose of considering its myriad connections/intersections with contextual factors and the ways that culture reproduces dominant relations of power and subordination and thus serves the interests of ruling groups” (Funk et al., 2016). We recognized how personal and civic engagement in digital spaces entailed acting on the substance of what is conveyed via digital media, such as information about immigration, as well as how such information is conveyed through digital media, such as an online platform’s use of “fake news.”

The report contains two main sections, which correspond to the first three goals respectively. In the section “Principles,” we discuss distinguishing features of a digital environment and then explain each of five research-informed principles that guided the remainder of our work. In the section titled “Curriculum Purpose Statement and Guidelines with Accompanying Resources,” we first discuss a curricular purpose statement that depicts the integration of inquiry and civic engagement with digital spaces and media. We then review a set of guidelines that might facilitate the inclusion of relevant ideas, skills, and materials into a curriculum and support each guideline with relevant resources. While we suggest resources that complement each curriculum guideline, we anticipate eventually creating an online version that offers more resources and suggests criteria to consider when selecting such resources.

Principles

Background: Distinguishing Features of a Digital Environment

The investigation of ways in which students might best learn to critically inquire into and act on matters of personal and civic importance to them and their communities in digital spaces is predicated on the premise that digital civic and social engagement is distinct from that of face-to-face interaction. We wish to pose some questions related to possible curricular implications of these differences. The relative absence of physical space in a digital environment, for example, results in a blurring of lines between spaces and roles typical in a face-to-face environment, raising questions about when a young person who engages with peers in an online setting is no longer a student. What if, while at home, a young person uses an online social network for cyber-bullying and a fellow student is the target? Is that young person answerable to the principal because of the school’s no bullying policy and/or to the local police? What if that same young person took a selfie with their dog in their home

and uploaded the picture to an account open only to several school friends, one of whom shares the picture with a friend with thousands of followers? Although the youth purposefully chose to operate in a limited networked public, how many other such publics are their friends linked to, raising questions about who is entitled to do what with personal information shared online? How do we enable students to understand and operationalize the distinctions between socially interacting with a cadre of peers in a face-to-face school setting and in digital spaces, particularly when many are encouraged to use collaborative online spaces to continue academic endeavors with their peers outside of school?

Stepping back from the school analogy and moving to a community context, what distinguishes personal, governmental, and commercial space in digital settings, and how attuned are youth to the expectations of each? Given that there typically are physical demarcations distinguishing one type of face-to-face space from another, how might the prevalence of sharing across the millions of limited public networks blur the lines between types of spaces in a face-to-face environment? For example, what is a company like Facebook comparable to in a face-to-face environment? Although obviously a business, doesn't a company like Facebook share many of the attributes of a local government in the way the company oversees the social interaction of users and offers users limited input into policy review and formation? How are digital networked "publics" similar to and different from face-to-face public spaces like parks, community centers, and town halls? What are the ramifications of socially and civically adhering to corporate regulations as opposed to governmental ones? How might the government regulate social media and technology giants to protect the interests of users or the integrity of civic engagement?

This blending of social, commercial, and governance functions in certain digital spaces has resulted in the emergence of adolescent adults, that is, youth able to assume agency and responsibility largely not available to them in face-to-face settings. While often not perceived in this manner, aren't user agreements, which typically are open to those as young as 13 with parental permission, akin to a contract? How many comparable agreements are 13-year-old youth able to enter in a face-to-face setting that enable them to instantaneously and globally collaborate with anyone at any time with a smart device? While empowering and highly democratic, Livingstone et al. (2019) noted that "actions intended…to be either private… or public…in nature now take place on digital networks owned by the private sector, thereby introducing commercial interests into spheres where they were…largely absent." Companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter realize that "the design of the digital environment and the regulatory, state and commercial organizations that underpin it" offer ways to collect and monetize personal information (Livingstone et al., 2019, pp. 6–7). As Zuboff (2019) notes, the "commodification of human experience" (p. 31), which drives the emergence of surveillance capitalism, is not only largely unregulated, but major technology companies vigorously lobby against governmental interference. This is particularly troubling given how "advertising to children is a lucrative, booming business" (Center for Digital Democracy, 2019, p. 2). The "online activities are the focus of a multitude of monitoring and data-generating processes, yet the possible implications of this 'datafication of children' has only recently caught the attention of governments, researchers and privacy advocates" (Livingstone et al., 2019, p. 3).

While the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act requires companies, for example, to seek permission to collect identification, contact, and location information from those under 13, a recent complaint filed against YouTube stated that the company collected such information for "interest-based advertisement" (Maheshwari, 2018). In response, YouTube paid a $170 million settlement, which represented but 1% of the company's net worth. "The available evidence suggests that commercial privacy is the area where children are least able to comprehend and manage on their own" (Livingstone et al., 2019, p. 4). Youth's growing sense of user agency, as represented by their participation in and contributions to a seeming online democratic culture, is on a collision course with the increasing monetization of their online lives and companies' willingness to commercially treat them no differently than adults.

Research indicates that young people daily devote over seven hours to their screens (Rideout & Robb, 2019), which suggests that the operationalization of online networked publics on sites like Facebook and Twitter deftly capture elements of social media like collaboration, sharing, user agency, and interest-driven activities that are so appealing to youth. While face-to-face groups like the 4H, Girl Scouts, and student council offer discrete forays into informal democratic experiences, participation in networked publics enables users to become immersed in such experiences. Despite the privacy and commercial risks associated with the civic and social digital engagement of youth, Kahne et al. (2016) noted how the use of social media by young people helps to foster participatory politics, which "are interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern" (p. 2). Educators like Bull et al. (2008) recognize the need for teachers to purposefully connect these informal experiences to more formal civic experiences. Harking back to a point raised earlier, the following question poignantly captures a distinction between digital and face-to-face spaces: What are the implications of operationalizing democratic principles, which traditionally were defined by peoples' interaction in face-to-face public places, in online networked publics that largely operate in for-profit commercial digital spaces?

Five Basic Principles

Posing such questions only begins to address how the "use of digital media in the development of democratic movements outside of formal

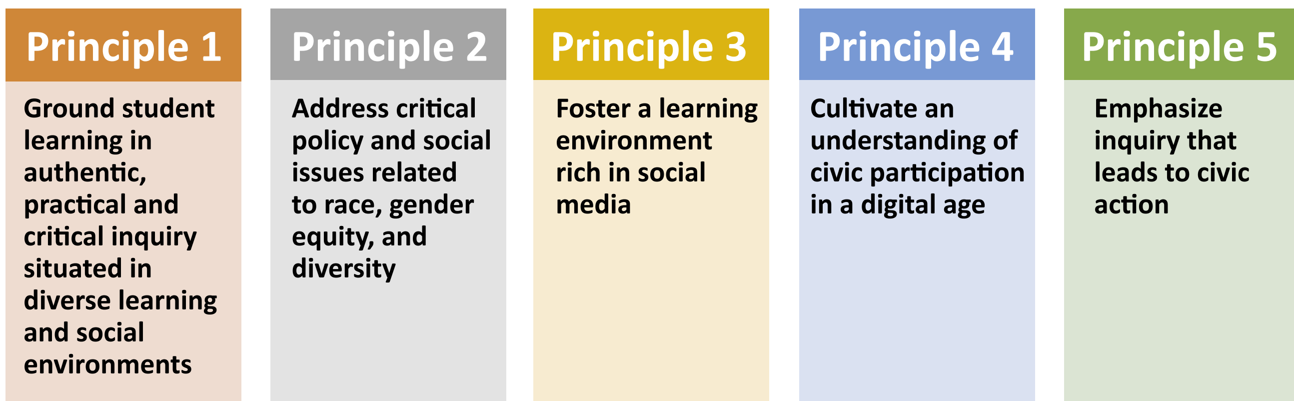

Figure 2. ***Digital Civic Participation through Critical Inquiry***

institutions has little to no relevance to the types of citizenship education happening in most K-12 schools in the United States" (Stoddard, 2014, p. 1). In an effort to better enable students to learn how best to use social media "to be heard, to join together, and to work for change" (Kahne et al., 2016, p. 2), we have identified in Figure 2 five principles that serve to foster digital civic participation through critical inquiry. The civic engagement emerges both from inquiry and technology, especially social media, for learning and living in a democratic and global society.

What follows is a discussion of how the principles relate to each other, a description of each principle, several suggestions and questions associated with each principle for curriculum developers to consider, and supporting research and further reading related to each principle.

Connecting the Principles

As social studies moves toward embracing inquiry-oriented learning, as illustrated in the section of this document titled "Background: Distinguishing Features of a Digital Environment," so must the spaces change in which we prepare students for college, career, and civic life. Online learning, social media, and digital platforms are ubiquitous attributes of information access, social engagement, and knowledge creation in our contemporary world. Faced by the plethora of information about personal and social issues available on mobile computing devices and phones, youth must learn how to critically inquire into and act upon that information in intentional and informed ways. Social studies, which nurtures a questioning mindset aimed at making sense of the world and humanizing civic society, relies upon an inquiry-oriented way of thinking. This intellectual orientation engenders a critical understanding of the face-to-face and digital communities in which we live, learn, and work, which is reflected in the Principles and the relationship among them (see Figure 3).

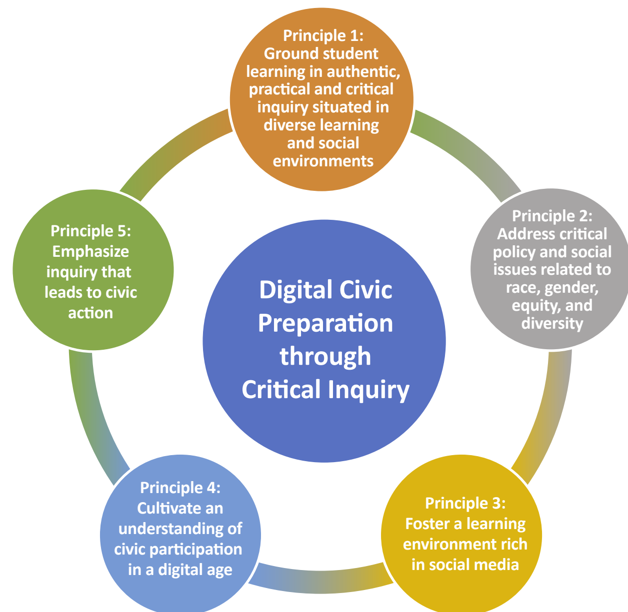

Figure 3. ***Digital Civic Participation through Critical Inquiry***

Principle 1 creates a pedagogical context for the task force's recommendations that is hallmarked by authentic, critical inquiry. This inquiry is sensitive to and ultimately situated in both the learner's setting and the larger digital and societal democratic community. When planning such inquiry, as depicted in Principle 2, we recommend highlighting the importance of the diversity and uniqueness of individuals and peoples. This acknowledgement should stimulate self-empowerment and social betterment related to matters of personal and public concern. As stated in Principle 3, we also contend that, where appropriate, students should become immersed in digital, as well as face-to-face, learning and social environments as they investigate various aspects of our pluralistic democracy. In doing so, educators will promote learning that exploits the affordances of digital settings as well as fostering youthful agency and participating in synchronous

inter-school collaboration, both of which are essential for engagement in an associational democracy. Nevertheless, we also stress the importance of remaining mindful of issues such as privacy related to personal information, security concerns like cyberstalking, and critical media literacy matters related to consumption and production of online material. In Principle 4, we recognize the distinctiveness of civic engagement in a digital as opposed to a face-to-face environment, which necessitates learning what distinguishes personal and civic life in the two settings and how to personally and civically act on those differences. While a large majority of students are avid users of social media, they likely fail to recognize the democratic potential of many of their digital experiences, such as the formation of online limited public networks and the use of social media to promote an idea.

Of course, it needs to be stated that these platforms can also be used for what might be considered anti-democratic ends, especially if they are manipulated by third-party actors in ways that circulate and promote misinformation and fake news. Students may also be relatively unfamiliar with the perils and pitfalls of online commercial and social life for their privacy, such as online stealth marketing seemingly tied to a social justice cause, and the commercialization of personal data. Building on the first four principles, we argue, as noted in Principle 5, that students must become knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced as critical consumers in both digital and face-to-face spaces. A pluralistic democracy requires reliance upon inquiry and a certain degree of informed skepticism about matters related to the public sphere—for example, by asking questions about who is promoting certain ideas and what are the vested interests represented by the promotion of these ideas. We strongly encourage students to inform themselves about public issues and then engage in civic action in alignment with their investigations and values. Such actions might range from posting a PSA on a school website to conducting an online petition about a local concern to questioning a company's management of users' personal information to sharing information about the topic via social media and/or participating in events like the Women's March and March for Our Lives.

Principle 1.

Ground Student Learning in Authentic, Practical, and Critical Inquiry Situated in Diverse Learning and Social Environments

1. Description of the Principle and its Connection to the C3 Framework

Social studies curricula have long focused on preparing students to acquire a body of knowledge and on assessing students' acquisition of that knowledge via some type of selected response assessment. Classrooms dedicated to offering students authentic intellectual learning may be found, but they are rare (Saye et al., 2018). Rote learning is no longer sufficient to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. Educators and students should have access to high-quality authentic curriculum that engages the intellect of students and challenges them to think and act in ways that professionals and adults would in order to better understand the world in which we live, solve complex problems, and make important decisions. With such a curriculum, students would produce authentic intellectual work in a cohesive sequence of instructional units that also engages the personal intellect of the student. This will make for effective implementation and create higher student engagement.

Given the importance of an informed and active citizenry to the well-being of a democracy, the preparation of students not only to engage online with each other but also to interact with online sources and to recognize vested interests behind such sources is crucial. The ability to engage in civic reasoning and online research about policy matters depends upon and begins with students asking three questions: "Who is behind the information?; What is the evidence?; What do other sources say?" (McGrew et al., 2018). Authentic inquiry in a social and/or educational environment is grounded in the reality of digital spaces as distinct from face-to-face ones, where students need to "critically analyse relationships between media and audiences, information and power" (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). This can be done by investigating authorship of sources and examining "the social functions of texts and the way in which individuals and groups of people are positioned in them" (Kersch & Leslie, 2019, p. 44), as illustrated by Krutka and Heath's (2019) student-focused inquiry into how social media has influenced tactics used to promote social justice. Critical inquiry should also examine inclusion and exclusion in democratic social media spaces as well as how oppressed communities generate digital counterpublics. Counterpublics are social media spaces where oppressed and marginalized people gather to engage in democratic discourse and liberatory civic practices, mobilize and advocate around injustice, and uplift cultural perspectives and community interests (Hill, 2018; Jackson & Foucault, 2016). Included here are some key design elements to consider in designing curriculum that is authentic and provides practical classroom use for diverse environments in the context of technology and critical media inquiry.

2. Key Elements to Consider when Designing Curriculum (Design Principles)

Curriculum should:

- Align key skills, content, and understandings from multiple disciplines and clearly articulate what learners need to know and understand, what learners will be capable of doing, and how learners will demonstrate understanding.
- Ensure learning is coherent, sequenced, and comprehensive and indicate the tools and resources that teachers and learners will need to meet the intended outcomes.
- Foster the use of authentic pedagogy grounded in compelling, real-world contexts that enables students to construct knowledge that has value beyond school and that requires the original application of knowledge and skills as opposed to routine use of facts and procedures (disciplined inquiry). This includes the use of field work, case studies, and real-world observations and encourages students to bring their "out-of-school, informal civics lessons into the classroom to be explored" (Clay & Rubin, 2020, p. 178).
- Allow students to be co-creators, such as with the production of a digital history (Manfra, 2020), and to develop their own inquiries to pursue using the Inquiry Arc of the C3 Framework.
- Cultivate interdisciplinary learning and design thinking.
- Contain equitable and inclusive learning opportunities for all students. This includes utilizing culturally and linguistically responsive materials for inquiry.
- Explore the networked publics through the hegemony of mass media and consumer

culture as well as the exclusion of oppressed groups and the democratic counterpublics that are created by them as a result of their marginalization.

- Help students understand how to make sense of what they see, hear, and learn from all sorts of media, with a critical but not cynical lens. This ensures, for example, that as consumers of daily news media, students will be able to distinguish so-called fake news from legitimate argument and news (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017).
- Employ the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Students.

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Principle 2.

Address Critical Policy and Social Issues Related to Race, Gender, Equity, and Diversity

1. Description of the Principle and its Connection to the C3 Framework

When formulating curriculum, social studies educators should remain responsive to the differences among youth in exploring identity issues such as gender, race, class, and their intersections, and the investigation of critical policy and social issues that reflect the

importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As the nation's public schools moved toward the status of "majority minority" institutions and as the diversity within these schools becomes ever more multi-dimensional, curriculum must serve as both a "window and mirror" for students, providing learning experiences that both reflect and extend their life experiences, histories, concerns, and issues as they take up use of instructional technology and media literacy in social studies. Curriculum, whether it focuses on historical or contemporary issues related to civic and political topics or the use of a variety of disciplinary tools, should be inquiry-oriented and problem-focused, in keeping with the models offered in the NCSS C3 Framework documents. This curriculum should provide all students with an opportunity to consider how they might "take action" in response to their inquiries. The curriculum should enact citizenship education that is informed by a recognition of the ways in which race/ethnicity, gender, language, sexual orientation, etc. and other social identity markers shape citizens' experiences in this nation, while remaining sensitive to how difficult knowledge possesses the "power to disrupt, unsettle, and implicate the identities and self-images of learners" (Miles, 2019, p. 475). It should also recognize the need for students to engage with multiple histories and gain exposure to diverse ways of becoming civically active.

When designing curriculum to address these learning priorities, it is important to attend to the capacities, skills, and knowledge we hope to promote and to the diverse youth with whom we are working. We present some design principles below that we think are particularly important for ensuring that the curriculum responds well to the priorities, perspectives, knowledge, and needs of the diverse youth in our schools.

2. Key Elements to Consider when Designing Curriculum

Curriculum should:

- Support youth in identifying their civic and political priorities and interests and provide opportunities for youth to enter into inquiry that is concerned with such interests. Not all content needs to meet these criteria, but links to student interests and priorities should be common, not rare.
- Recognize and draw on students' expertise and lived experience. Often, students know a great deal about the issues and dynamics that shape young people's lives and matter most to them. Tapping into their expertise and experiences about effective ways to use media is important. Youth still have much to learn, which makes the deepening of their knowledge an essential goal.
- Legitimize students' real-life, racialized experiences as a part of the ''official'' curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2016). Drawing on youth's priorities, interests, expertise, and lived experience is likely to surface issues related to students' identities, as well as issues of power and authority.
- Utilize students' digital identities and digital history as networked spaces for community agency and liberation. Integrate counterpublics as authentic civic spaces that promote inquiry and social justice, empower marginalized and oppressed communities, and authentically support democratic processes and civil discourse.
- Provide opportunities to consider the relevance of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other dimensions of identity and to foster informed reflection and analysis tied to these issues.

3. Essential Questions for Curriculum Designers to Consider

- In using technology in the classroom, and teaching about technology and society, how does the teacher make adequate provision for respecting the diversity of students, voices, and perspectives? This question needs to be raised regarding pedagogy and curriculum and has particular salience to Principle 2 given the research on technology use and students of diverse backgrounds.
- How does the use of technology impact one's sense of citizenship, democracy, agency, and activism?
- How do social and racial hierarchies manifest themselves and operate within social media and networked publics within democratic societies?
- How might social media offer unique ways to effect positive social change that are not typically found in in-person civic and social settings?
- How does the corporate media influence the ways in which people perceive and think about race, gender, equity, and diversity?
- How do counterpublics resist racialized media narratives, challenge universal interests, and deconstruct mainstream discourse?

4. Supporting Research and Resources

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Principle 3.

Foster a Learning Environment Rich in Social Media

1. Description of the Principle and its Connection to the C3 Framework

Social media use saturates youth's everyday lives, offering complex, rich challenges and opportunities for cultivating their skills with and disposition toward online participatory politics in "a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (National Council for the Social Studies). In an era increasingly

dominated by online content, studies show that civic online reasoning, meaning the ability to effectively search for, evaluate, and verify social and political information online, has become a prerequisite for meaningful civic engagement (Breakstone et al., 2019). The Task Force on C3 Inquiry and Engagement suggests drawing upon youth's informal personal use of social media and seeking to transfer these experiences into formal civic and academic settings so as to enable them to become civically engaged in digital spaces. Fostering a learning environment rich in social media offers "benefits for active learning, community-building and civic participation" (Greenhow & Chapman, 2020, p. 348), which lie at the heart of social studies education.

As demonstrated by the past two presidential elections and the increasing numbers of youth who use digital devices as their primary news and information source (Shearer, 2021), learning to discern the quality of online information is an integral component of a learning environment rich in social media, and it is a prerequisite for digital civic engagement. Although the increased use of social media lowers barriers to information access, particularly among youth of color, this comes at a cost in reliability and accuracy (Hodgkin & Kahne, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2020; McGrew et al., 2018) due to factors like an amplification effect where fake news and false rumors reach more people, penetrate deeper into the social network, and spread much faster than accurate stories (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Weak analytical skills, the lack of abilities to vet information, confirmation bias, and motivated reasoning enhance susceptibility to misinformation, perpetuate a natural inclination to perceive information within existing cultural frames and rhetorical preferences (Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Journell, 2021), and hinder students' abilities to accurately assess truth or credibility (Breakstone et al., 2019; Journell, 2019; Manfra & Holmes, 2018; Miller, 2016). Thus, misinformation threatens civil discourse and fractures the foundation of democracy. Empowering students to critique and question claims, to communicate ideas using diverse sources and reliable evidence, and to take informed civic action (National Council for the Social Studies, 2016) in an unregulated social media landscape becomes paramount, particularly given the accelerating trend toward digital academic, civic, and social engagement.

While the continual emergence and growing popularity of platforms like TikTok and Clubhouse illustrate the dynamic, rich role social media plays in students' everyday lives, the pandemic revealed the centrality of video-conferencing systems like Zoom and WebEx to their remote learning. As discussed in a feature in *Social Education*, "Teaching Remotely During the Coronavirus Pandemic" (*Social Education* staff, 2020), educators' use of such systems potentially served as a nationwide field test of instruction rich in social media, hybrid learning systems, and digital civic engagement. While concerns about equity, reaching as many students as feasible, and assessing student learning abounded, as well as the concern that remote learning was no replacement for in-person learning, educators discovered new ways to "allow students to personally connect with and experience history" and "found great success with apps that give students a voice" (p. 149). In turn, youth often assumed an advocacy role when addressing the equity concerns, as illustrated in one situation where several students lobbied their teacher to transfer New York City's My Brother's/Sister's Keeper program for historically marginalized, struggling students to an online setting (p. 147).

As the nation shifted to remote learning during the pandemic, many social studies

educators sought to capitalize on several features that characterize youth engagement in digital spaces: user-generated knowledge, sense of agency, networked publics, (re)sharing of one's self and ideas, and being interest driven (National Council for the Social Studies, 2018). Regarding user-generated knowledge, the wealth of online information, coupled with multiple means to shape and express such information, enables media-literate users to create knowledge in ways unparalleled in history. The cultivation of media literacy partially depends on students publishing their work online, which gives them "the opportunity to interact with peers in different regions and share their ideas with a larger audience" (Roberson, 2018, p. 241).

In a time of fake news and disinformation, though, students "must learn more than to detect and reject false information [but] to integrate concerns for accuracy and evidence into everyday practices of consuming and sharing media" (Middaugh, 2018, p. 33). More specifically, when interrogating online evidence, students must move beyond simply checking the facts (Sperry & Sperry, 2020) to undertaking tasks like challenging claims on social media, reasoning with (mis)information, analyzing how a homepage's content and organization convey distinct, purposeful messages, and comparing argument and evidences across several websites (Breakstone et al., 2019, p. 10). In doing so, users gain a sense of agency while also developing analytical and reasoning skills, as they make decisions about their environment, ranging from matters as simple as what to watch to whether they should supplement their digital exposure with evidence from other media. Often, such use occurs in networked publics where physical geography no longer limits one's ability to form relationships with people globally, as illustrated by crowdsourcing projects like Zooniverse's *Decoding the Civil War* and *By the People* at the Library of Congress (Berson & Berson, 2019). Youth now are able to create and sustain collaborative, diverse networked publics dedicated to civic action. The (re)sharing of one's self and ideas represents a prominent feature of engagement in digital spaces and illustrates the dynamic, generative relationship within networked publics as well as the social and civic responsibilities of information dissemination. Finally, complementing the access to people and information worldwide is the ability of youth to seek out and act on their interests, which often distinguishes their face-to-face academic engagement in schools from their social and civic engagement in digital spaces.

2. Key Elements to Consider when Designing Curriculum

Curriculum should:

- Ensure student access to secure, digitally networked spaces that are respectful of diverse opinions, where youth critically grapple with matters of civic importance as they form an online public identity and sense of agency and share their ideas with peers.
- Create online learning experiences where students seek to transform their social networking experiences with online gaming and social media like Instagram to create networked publics devoted to civic matters of social justice, yet remain mindful of individual needs.
- Familiarize youth with the uniqueness of digital spaces, such as the commercial reality of most online relations and the difficulty of sitting through online sources to ascertain the implications of public matters.

- Discern how best to ensure students' privacy and security, while enabling them to participate in quasi-public, online networked spaces.
- Use teacher-facilitated online peer-to-peer deliberation to identify public matters of concern to students, to formulate questions and plan inquiries about such matters, and to negotiate the validity of and diverse perspectives on related knowledge in digital spaces.
- Provide students with formal and informal learning experiences in the creation and articulation of, and participation in, online networked publics, while realizing the often non-linear, nebulous, and unpredictable nature of such publics.
- Promote not simply the creation and sharing of user-generated knowledge on interest-driven social justice issues, but also the means to thoughtfully and purposefully act on such knowledge via online networked publics.
- Explore nascent yet evolving social norms in online networked publics, remaining sensitive not simply to challenges of online interactions, but to the importance of articulating and operationalizing young peoples' privileges and rights in democratic and commercial digital spaces.
- Discuss the implications of the spread of dis/misinformation in social media and factors like confirmation bias and motivated reasoning, which amplify the effects of dis/misinformation.

3. Essential Questions for Curriculum Designers to Consider

- How to create a deliberative, digital public space(s) for young people with diverse perspectives to exercise their public voice about matters of interest and importance to them.
- How to cultivate the ability of young people to form and nurture networked publics devoted to civic engagement and matters of social justice in a culturally, linguistically, and age-appropriate manner.
- How to foster among youth a personal interest in and commitment to matters of collective importance.
- How best to ensure equity of access to civic face-to-face and digital spaces, while protecting youth's privacy in such spaces.
- How and why dis/misinformation is created and what skills and understanding students must acquire to counteract it.
- How confirmation bias and motivated reasoning affect how information is perceived and used in civic and digital spaces.

4. Supporting Research and Resources

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Principle 4.

Cultivate an Understanding of Civic Participation in a Digital Age

1. Description of the Principle and Its Connection to the C3 Framework

In order to effectively engage within an increasingly digital and partisan civic and political ecosystem, young people need to understand the nature and function of contemporary civic and political spaces and the role they play within them. We argue that any curriculum or pedagogical models focused on having media literate, informed, and active citizens must help students to become critically conscious and reflective of their own actions and role within social networks and online political spaces and of how they access and share information. Students, for example, must understand how their data is used by political entities (e.g., special interest

groups, campaigns) to target their advertising and efforts to influence young people and their social network connections. They also need to understand how the digital ecosystem in which they operate shapes who and what they engage with, and therefore influences their ideas and experiences and is influenced by their actions (Berson & Berson, 2020). Krutka (2020) offers some provocative questions about digital civic engagement that students might explore as a prelude to their preparation for digital civic engagement. We hope that informed citizens make more conscious choices about where they access their information and are reflective consumers as well as producers or distributors of information.

We recognize that schools represent vastly different and complex contexts that are influenced by policy, funding, access, and issues of equity. Students in these schools come from very diverse contexts, have widely varying experiences and expertise in civic knowledge and engagement, and approach the world from distinctive epistemic and ideological viewpoints. One group often neglected within these curricula are younger students in early childhood and K-5 groups. We encourage these young students and citizens to consider how their data and likenesses are being collected and used and how they are being shaped by the digital worlds in which they engage. They have a higher capacity than is commonly understood to both understand and make informed choices as informed and active citizens.

2. Key Elements to Consider when Designing Curriculum

Curriculum should:

- Develop thoughtful inquiries into civic and political structures and issues by enabling young people to become more sophisticated and reflective of the inquiry process and their own epistemic understanding of the sources, tools, and environments of inquiry.
- Foster students' abilities to reflect upon their own understandings of civic and political issues and their understandings of the digital ecosystem in which they are engaging these issues.
- Cultivate an understanding of how this system may influence the information they receive and ideologies to which they are exposed. This understanding needs to include: (1) the role of emotion in how they engage with and distribute information sources within online friend networks, (2) the way in which their community's social, political, and economic context may influence the perspectives and worldviews they commonly see in their timelines and feeds, and (3) the way in which search engine algorithms, key terms, and optimization practices impact the information they view at the top of their search results.
- Focus on the dynamic way in which political influence and power are garnered today, such as how political groups use data to micro-target individuals and to influence and deploy followers to further their influence via social media campaigns.
- Ensure that young people understand the larger information ecosystem and its function in contemporary civic and political environments prior to applying individual skill sets in analyzing or evaluating news sources.
- Reconsider and expand the notion of action in a digital setting, given how thought is an action and an increasingly important action in engaging in a more digital and partisan civic space.

- Promote an understanding of civic participation in the context of a digital age, including the potential impacts of their digital actions, such as the effects of sharing memes, stories, or other pieces of digital information to their networks that they know may be taken out of context or be inflammatory (or inaccurate), and develop an "ethic of sharing" (Middaugh, 2018).
- Enable students to develop civic awareness or action campaigns using their digital networks. This entails an understanding of and ability to reflect upon who is in their networks and the ways they can reach the audience they seek, as well as effective strategies using evidence to inform and compel others to action, and an understanding of how their actions may impact others. This goes beyond clicktivism and requires young people to harness their knowledge of the digital environment and issues to take informed action on causes and issues that they care about.
- Offer students learning experiences that allow them to develop a sense of agency, to collaboratively engage with others of similar and differing ideological and epistemic views found online, and to critically reflect on these experiences.

3. Essential Questions for Curriculum Designers to Consider

How can we help students understand the influences on modern journalism and other information sources, the standards used, how political power and money drive what may be published or viewed most often, and the role that individuals play in this system?

4. Supporting Research and Resources

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Principle 5.

Emphasize Inquiry that Leads to Civic Action

1. Description of the Principle and Its Connection to the C3 Framework

Supporting students to develop disciplinary knowledge in social studies is necessary and serves as a key foundation for college, career, and civic life. However, promising and proven practices in civics education suggest that we move beyond knowledge to help students apply that knowledge as they actively engage in their school, community, and society (Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools et al., 2011). Action-facing civics is a central tenet of the new Educating for American Democracy Roadmap (2021), which is an inquiry-oriented content framework for improving civic and history education for all students in the U.S. This framework strives to develop the capacities of youth to engage with and actively participate in American constitutional democracy as well

as understand the complexities of civic life in a pluralistic society.

The C3 Framework's inquiry arc culminates in opportunities for students to communicate their conclusions and take informed action. "Engagement in civic life requires knowledge and experience; children learn to be citizens by working individually and together as citizens. An essential element of social studies education, therefore, is experiential—practicing the arts and habits of civic life" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013, p. 6). When students have opportunities to communicate their conclusions and take informed action, they can synthesize and apply what they have learned in meaningful and authentic contexts—which has been linked to a number of positive outcomes such as (1) the development of social trust, (2) respectful engagement, (3) the development of collaborative action/engagement skills, (4) opportunities for youth agency, (5) social relatedness, and (6) political-moral understanding (Youniss & Yates, 1997).

Given that civic and political participation has been transformed in the digital age, there are new skills and dispositions needed to help young people communicate their perspectives and take action effectively and thoughtfully in this new landscape (Kahne et al., 2016). In particular, the digital age opens new opportunities for young people to learn about issues they care about, to have their voices heard, to raise awareness, and to work with others to respond to issues they care about. Educators can play a key role in supporting youth to analyze issues fully in order to identify relevant and effective tactics and strategies for informed action, as well as learn the skills needed to tap into the power of digital media to participate in a variety of ways (Berson & Berson, 2019). "This skill can be taught effectively in schools, and students can learn to be effective producers of news. Given these recent developments, the need for news media literacy education is acute" (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017, p. 5). Providing opportunities for youth to engage in informed action via the core curriculum in schools will be a critical way to ensure all youth are prepared to be thoughtful and effective civic actors.

2. Key Elements to Consider when Designing Curriculum

Curriculum should:

- Enable students when planning civic action to draw on their lived experiences, knowledge, and skills in order to identify areas of concern or need, as well as strengths and assets, within their defined communities.
- Engage students in issues that are relevant and meaningful to their lives and that allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to civic and political ends with digital tools and platforms, starting with pre-K, as demonstrated by students designing and making decisions about a simulated community playground (Wargo & Alvarado, 2020).
- Focus on how our new digital landscape has transformed civic and political life, resulting in new opportunities and important challenges in navigating that landscape.
- Address a range of new and different skills needed for taking informed action in digital spaces, while also drawing on a variety of examples of effective civic and political change that make use of offline, online, and hybrid formats.

- Allow students to learn and gain practice with ways to take informed action as effective civic actors and to make reasoned use of and decisions about digital media. Educators can help young people understand and identify the various offline, online, and hybrid tactics and strategies for communicating their perspectives and taking informed action in the digital age.
- Promote student reflection on taking action and on the impact of such action on themselves, their collaborators, and their community. In particular, educators can help young people reflect on the opportunities and challenges of putting their voice out there in online spaces, as well as the afterlife/footprint of engagement online.

3. Essential Questions for Curriculum Designers to Consider

Given this context, we encourage educators to consider the following questions related to the importance of integrating opportunities for young people to engage in civic action in the digital age as a part of their civic education:

- How do we help young people draw on their lived experiences and knowledge to identify areas of concern or need, as well as strengths and assets, within their defined communities?
- How do we support young people to learn about various examples of civic engagement and ask questions about the effectiveness and impact of those efforts?
- How can we help young people to work individually and collectively to communicate their conclusions, raise awareness, and take action in order to achieve their goal?
- How can we help young people reflect throughout the experience of taking action on the impact on themselves, their collaborators, and the community?

4. Supporting Research and Resources

Here are some examples of informed action being tied into the social studies curriculum:

10 Questions for Changemakers: https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/10-questions-young-changemakers

Berson, I. R., & Berson, M. J. (2019). Crowdsourcing the social studies. *Social Education, 83*(2), 103–107.

Black Youth Project, *Digital Media and Struggles for Justice* [video]: http://blackyouthproject.com/how-digital-media-aids-and-complicates-the-struggle-for-justice/

Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools; Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics; National Conference on Citizenship; Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement; American Bar Association Division for Public Education (2011). *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools*. https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf

The Civic Action Project encourages a wide variety of approaches to policy change through informed action, and digital components play a significant role in much of what the students do (http://www.crfcap.org).

Digital Civics Toolkit-Action Module: https://www.digitalcivicstoolkit.org/action

"Digital Documentary Shorts" provide students with the opportunity to engage and impact areas of social concern while also addressing the need for developing skills in both civic and media literacy (https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2018/02/06/using-digital-documentary-shorts-to-explore-social-issues-with-students).

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OUSD's Taking Action Project: https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/prepare-civic-engagement-edda

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Curriculum Purpose Statement and Guidelines with Accompanying Resources

After deliberating about the connections among the principles, the task force composed the following curriculum purpose statement on how best to foster digital participation in matters of personal and public interest through critical inquiry. The statement serves as a basis for the curriculum guidelines that follow.

Curriculum Purpose Statement

> Social studies curricula ought to promote technology- and media-rich, experiential-based inquiry into critical matters of concern to preK-12th grade youth and the public so as to enable students to explore personal and societal identities, to critically engage with digital information, ideas, and individuals, and to become civically active in diverse face-to-face and digital democratic settings.

The list of potential curriculum guidelines, which represent a synthesis of the five principles, is intended to aid curriculum developers in integrating and operationalizing the above statement into preK-12 social studies curriculum. In creating these guidelines, the task force sought to align them with the four dimensions of the C3 Framework:

Dimension 1
Developing questions/planning inquires

Dimension 2
Applying disciplinary tools/concepts

Dimension 3
Evaluating sources/using evidence

Dimension 4
Communicating conclusions/taking informed action

The NCSS College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework (2013) positions inquiry at the heart of teaching and learning. Social studies inquiry cultivates empathy, fosters respect for diverse perspectives, and informs actions that are essential for a just and equitable society. Utilizing these curricula, educators can develop tasks that facilitate authentic inquiry (King et al., 2009; Saye, 2014) through varied forms of production and approaches to civic, geographic, historic, and economic reasoning which expand beyond traditional sources to new digital forms such as blogs, social media, or multimedia storytelling, expressing civic and political views, and participating in open-access activist forums (Manfra, 2020).

Curriculum Guidelines and Suggested Resources

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** The focus of inquiry arises from student interests, particularly those related to public matters of critical importance to students, whether these inquiries are local or global. [*C3 Dimension 1*]

Suggested Resources: The three-day inquiry module of the World History Digital Education Foundation and National Council for the Social Studies, *History and Geography of a Pandemic* (2021), examines the nature of pandemics, investigates the early twentieth century Spanish influenza and the COVID-19 pandemics, and compares the two. The Right Question Institute offers ideas about formulating questions, a critical step in the first phase of the inquiry.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Students' face-to-face and digital life experiences and reflection upon them, their prior learning, and their personal and social contexts inform their inquiry and related learning. [*C3 Dimension 1*]

  Suggested Resources: inquirED's *Together When Apart* explores how to enable students to stay together while practicing physical social distancing. Platforms like *Poll Everywhere* and *Survey Monkey* represent simple ways to collect information on what students think about personal and social matters.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Student-driven inquiry is predicated upon learners' exploring their personal and societal face-to-face/online identities as related to matters and questions of ethnicity, gender, class, and other social identity markers and to critically engaging with online information and related digital spaces. [*C3 Dimension 1, C3 Dimension 3*]

  Suggested Resources: The National Writing Project's *Youth Voices* "connects [students'] personal interests to meaningful relationships and real-world opportunity." As students posed questions about the ways COVID-19 affected students across the nation, Facing History and Ourselves developed *Coronavirus: Protect Yourself and Stand Against Racism* and a related podcast that enabled them to analyze how the pandemic affected people differently. Teaching Tolerance's Learning Plans cover an array of topics related to personal and online identity, ranging from high school plans like Gender and the Media to primary ones such as *Questioning Identity while Respecting Diversity*.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Students learn and act on what distinguishes digital from face-to-face personal and civic engagement [*C3 Dimension 2*]

  Suggested Resources: Recognizing the distinctions between face-to-face and digital learning and teaching likely serves as a useful springboard to exploring civic engagement in digital spaces. Some companies have helped students and teachers make the transition from face-to-face to online learning and teaching. Pearson, for example, offers a range of digital tips, even including ideas for those **without an online learning management system** (LMS). Facing History and Ourselves offers suggestions on making the transition with a one-stop shopping site that provides access to online resources, *Taking School Online*. At *Free Tech for Learning*, enter "social studies" in the search text box and click on one or more grade levels on the left menu. Scholastic's Learn at Home offers elementary students ways to use fiction and non-fiction books to learn cross-curricular ideas, suggesting ways to blend online learning with at-home learning. For K-12 ideas, go to National Geographic's Learn at Home and NatGeo@Home.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** When engaged in inquiry learning, students use authentic culturally and disciplinary relevant pedagogy grounded in compelling face-to-face and digital world contexts. [*C3 Dimension 2*]

  Suggested Resources: The *New York Times' Coronavirus Resources: Teaching, Learning and Thinking Critically* provides a helpful blend of information about COVID-19, interactive discussions centered on interpreting graphs and pictures, and lesson ideas to support the site's resources. *Teaching American History* (TAH) offers resources for creating document collections and posting them online with relevant discussion questions. A short video explains how to create a collection. *Kid Citizen* is a nice complement to the TAH site for elementary grades. Finally, National Geographic's Coronavirus Coverage site offers a plethora of cross curricular sources about COVID-19.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** In understanding how their personal and political views shape how they access, comprehend, share, and produce information, students need to critically, but not cynically, engage with a range of media. [*C3 Dimension 3*]

  Suggested Resources: The *DigCit* site contains a host of resources ranging from media and digital literacy to thoughtfully and safely engaging with others online. Teaching Tolerance's *Digital Literacy* project covers a range of topics from how digital information is selected and presented to a person's role as an online consumer. *When Experts Attack* is a podcast series where an expert starts each episode by addressing a question: what does everybody get wrong about what you do? Each expert demonstrates how to question one's thinking and that of others.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Focus on the dynamic way in which political and economic power is operationalized in a digital setting, such as how political groups and businesses employ user data to micro-target individuals and use questionable information to secure their support through social media. [*C3 Dimension 3*]

  Suggested Resources: While noted for work in historical thinking, the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) researched students' *Civic Online Reasoning* and developed material to facilitate students' evaluation of online information. The Critical Media Project offers students a means to interrogate media representations of groups of people and a platform for their own voice. The Global Critical Media Literacy Project produced an Educators' Resource Guide.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Students digitally construct and communicate knowledge resulting from their inquiry via multiple online means that has value beyond school and requires original application of knowledge and skills. [*C3 Dimension 4*]

  Suggested Resources: In *Digital Civics*, Hodgin et al. (2018) offer a road map on how to enable students to investigate a matter online and take digital civic action, which is supported by the *Digital Civics Toolkit* and a related podcast. Apps like Seesaw and Flipgrid enable students to digitally present the results of their inquiry.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Students make thoughtful and thought-provoking use of existing and emerging technologies to make decisions about and to act on important public matters in digitally diverse contexts based on their inquiries. [*C3 Dimension 4*]

Supporting Resources: Selma Online illustrates a distinct blend of inquiry and illustrations of civic engagement conveyed via student online navigation of site. It is supported by teaching material. At the end of the online user-navigated tutorial, users are asked how they might continue to ensure voting rights for all. Joseph South offers contemporary examples of how Young Voices Turn to Social Media, while sites like YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram represent platforms for students to act and exercise their online public voice. For an international example with a local focus, students might investigate the tools at CitizenLab.

- ***Curriculum Guideline:*** Students critically and affectively reflect on their own personal and civic actions, their role within face-to-face/digital social networks and political spaces, and on the means/results of their inquiry. [*C3 Dimension 4*]

  Suggested Resources: *iCivics* places students in the position of civic decisionmakers and has vetted some of their material for remote learning. Project Zero's Connect, Extend and Challenge routine serves as a simple way to encourage student reflection, while apps like Floop allow teachers to offer students feedback.

Additional Teacher Supports

There is no time in our contemporary lives in which the study of social studies has been more critical and central to understanding. For teachers to adopt NCSS's vision for digital inquiry and online civic engagement, schools and districts have a responsibility to ensure time and access to social studies professional learning. School districts should also ensure that social studies teachers have access to the technology they need to facilitate online instruction and that instructors have the necessary training to properly use virtual classroom hardware and software (Hanover Research, 2015). Professional development for online instruction should help social studies teachers develop discipline-specific skills in online instruction, course design and management, and building justice-oriented communities of inquiry in virtual environments. Beyond the resources provided in this report, NCSS also recommends professional learning supports for social studies educators which include the attributes of quality online instruction that can be found in many virtual schools which have successfully served learners for years. Online instruction should include:

- Strategies to motivate individual learners (Hanover Research, 2015).
- Approaches to enhance student learning without the presence of visual cues (Hanover Research, 2015).
- Better understanding of how online tools can apply to civil and civic lessons and curriculum (Oliver et al., 2010).
- Conceptualization of different ways to assess student learning and outcomes (Oliver et al., 2010).
- Differentiation of lessons, especially for students with special needs (DiPietro et al., 2008; Hanover Research, 2015).
- Development of skills for communicating primarily in various online forms. This includes being aware of the nuance and tone of word usage because the lack of tone and inflection in a non-visual format can lead to misunderstandings (Hanover Research, 2015).

- Initiation of inquiry which offers students opportunities to connect content to their lives (Krutka, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2016).

Professional development should also include developing inquiry and aims in support of *Youth, Social Media and Digital Civic Engagement* and the recommendations put forth in this report.

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