The Great Lakes Social Studies Journal
Volume 3 - Issue 1 - Spring 2023

Humanizing the Founding Fathers

The Great Lakes Social Studies Journal

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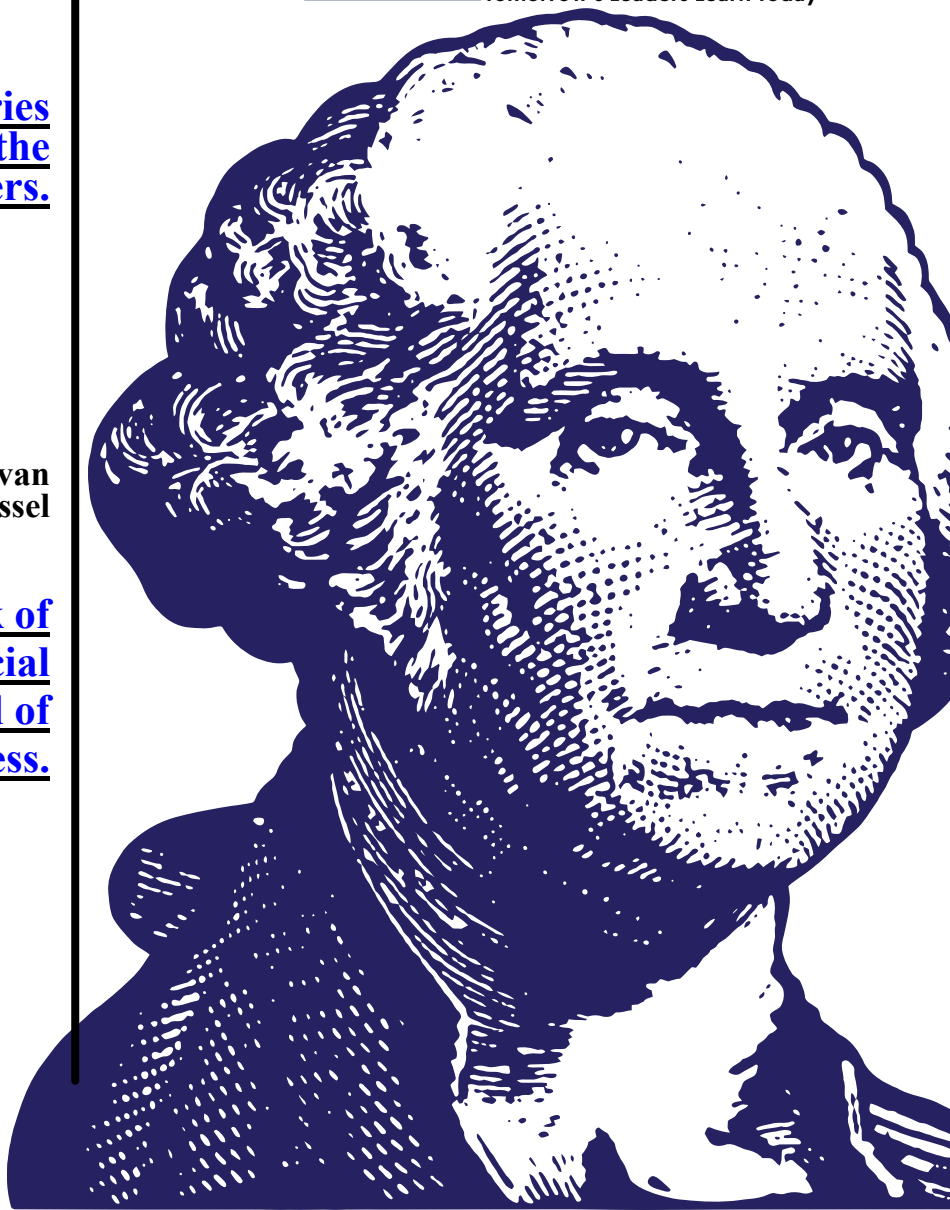
Tomorrow's Leaders Learn Today

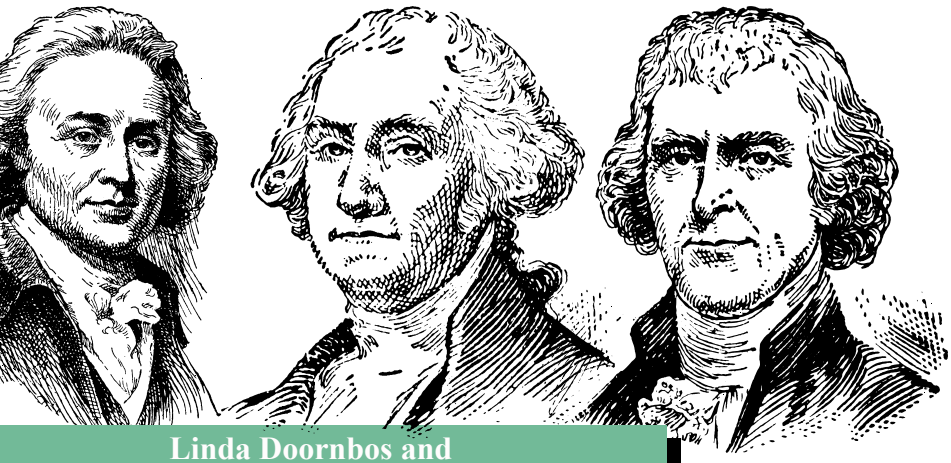


From the Editor...

Dr. Annie McMahon Whitlock
Grand Valley State University

You might notice that this issue of the *Great Lakes Social Studies Journal* looks a little different than others in the past. This issue highlights inquiries written by pre-service teachers at Oakland University in Rochester, MI. In Dr. Linda Doornbos and Michele Phillips' methods classes at OU, these students studied ways to teach elementary social studies from the book *Social Studies for a Better World: An Anti-Oppressive Approach for Elementary Education* by Noreen Naseem Rodríguez and Katy Swalwell. As a way to apply their learning, these students created inquiries that teach about historical figures in a way that humanizes them, rather than heroifying them. Doorbos and Phillips introduce the project and their anti-oppressive philosophy, followed by a special section featuring six inquiries written by their OU students. To round out the focus on elementary social studies, this issue features an article from Cathryn van Kessel and Cassidy Lindell on why the lack of social studies in elementary classrooms is, yes, evil.

Humanizing the Founding Fathers



Elementary Pre-Service Teachers Write Lessons to Humanize our Nation's Founders

Linda Doornbos and
Michele Phillips

In this introduction, we—two university elementary social studies educators at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan—share how we involved preservice teachers (PSTs) in an anti-oppressive, truth-sayers approach to teaching and learning about history. Specifically, we used the Inquiry Design Model (IDM) of the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) to write lessons in our "Social Studies 2" methods classes to enact in K-5 classrooms within our university-partner schools. These lessons sought to humanize, rather than heroify, the "Founding Fathers" (Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2021) so that as truth-sayers, PSTs can paint a more nuanced picture of the past. In what follows, we describe the why, what, and how of this work. In this special issue of the *Great Lakes Social Studies Journal*, we share several lessons written by our PSTs and a list of resources so that in the teaching and learning of social studies, we are part of creating a more just and equitable world.

Our Vision for the Work

Jeanette Driscoll Alarcón, a teacher educator at the University of Houston, wrote in her forward of *(Re)Imagining Elementary Social Studies: A Controversial Reader* (Shear et al., 2018) that she strives "to facilitate social studies teaching and learning that leads to both elementary students and educators seeing themselves as learners, truth-sayers, and problem solvers" (Alarcón, 2018, p. xii). We join with Alarcón in this endeavor and share how we invited our PSTs to be truth-sayers in an activity within a social studies methods course. Importantly, we believe truth-sayers:

- Disrupt the dominant narrative that says European immigrants settled our country and Americans are white (Takaki, 2012). This narrative dehumanizes–marginalizes, omits, or silences–the experiences and perspectives of marginalized communities such as Black and Brown people, Indigenous Peoples and Nations, non-Christians, and those from the Global South (Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2021).
- Contend with the principles of equity, justice, and freedom as upheld as our nation's democratic values.
- Engage in being comfortable with the uncomfortable act of naming oppression in the past and present.

- Study the past to understand the present better and imagine and act on creating a more just and equitable future for all people (Martell & Stevens, 2021).

However, social studies in elementary education is often marginalized, viewed through a Eurocentric lens, and taught using didactic-based instruction (Alarcón, 2018). Centering issues as truth-sayers can be difficult and require "innovative, imaginative, and anti-oppressive" (Rodriguez & Swalwell, 2021, p. xvi) social studies teaching and learning. Therefore, throughout the three social studies courses in our teacher education program at OU, we work on developing well-prepared beginners that will continue throughout their professional careers who:

- Critically discern their assumptions about how they have come to know and live in the world.
- Constantly disrupt those assumptions to make the world's inequalities visible and problematic.
- Continually develop with others ways to define, imagine, and act to create a more just and equitable pluralistic democratic society.

The Need for the Work: Inquiry-Based Teaching Embedded in the Core Practices

Recent research indicates social studies is the only subject to positively impact reading outcomes for elementary students, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or whose first language is not English (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2018). However, elementary students spend less time learning social studies than any other core subject, especially in historically underfunded schools (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2018; Dilberti et al., 2023). In a recent survey, elementary school teachers and leaders noted that quality social studies materials are often missing or inconsistent, and professional development focuses on reading and math, leaving teachers with few opportunities to learn how to teach social studies in meaningful ways (Diliberti et al., 2023). Improving the quality and accessibility of social studies in elementary classrooms requires state-level academic standards to be developed to align with existing national frameworks (Diliberti et al., 2023).

Fortunately, this social studies framework already exists. Adopted in 2013 by the National Council of Social Studies, the College, Career, and Civic (C3) Framework was designed to strengthen state-level academic standards and support inquiry-based social studies instruction. Shortly after, Michigan began updating state social studies standards to better align content with the inquiry-based skills recommended in the C3 Framework. Since 2018, the Michigan social studies standards have provided explicit examples of how to teach content through inquiry within and across K-12 social studies. Simultaneously, the Michigan Department of Education identified 19 research-based core teaching practices that preservice and in-service teachers must demonstrate across content areas. Developed through the University of Michigan's TeachingWorks initiative, these core practices were designed to better inform teachers and teacher education programs on practices that advance equity and social justice in K-12 schools (TeachingWorks, 2018).

Taking Up the Work: Humanizing, not Heroifying, the Founding Fathers

One of the persistent challenges for teacher education programs is that PSTs do not always see the connections between their preparation programs and classroom instruction (Allsopp et al., 2006; Yin, 2019). To help bridge this theory-to-practice gap, we worked with our PSTs to see, understand, and learn how to work within an anti-oppressive, truth-tellers, inquiry-based approach to the teaching and learning of

social studies. Using the Focused Inquiry Design Model (IDM) of the C3 Framework, they wrote lessons that incorporated core teaching practices and, if necessary, could be incorporated into reading instructional blocks in their field placements.

To accommodate the desires of our classroom mentor teachers, most PSTs in each of the two method classes chose to write a focused (20-30 minute) inquiry-based lesson on George Washington. Exceptions to this were a few lessons, including Betsy Ross, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. In preparation for the work, we spent time reviewing:

- The pitfalls of heroification as presented in Chapter 5 of *Social Studies for a Better World: An Anti-Approach for Elementary Educators*, with specific attention to how to de-heroify the "Founding Fathers" and instead humanize them and contextualize their accomplishments (Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2021, pp. 89-95).
- The "Great/Not so Great Framework" (Roberts et al., 2019).
- The Focused Inquiry Design Model (IDM) of the C3 Framework and the importance of the questions, tasks, and sources of the inquiry-based approach.
- Decompositions of the core practices of setting up and managing small groups and whole group discussions (although with the younger grades, the emphasis was more on whole group discussion).

PSTs worked with partners and with us for a month to write, receive feedback, and edit as many times as needed to have the lesson ready to teach in their field-based classrooms. They received mentor-teacher feedback and wrote personal reflections. We particularly drew their attention to the ongoing work needed to discern, disrupt, and develop with others an anti-oppressive, truth-sayers approach to teaching and learning about history. In this issue, we share some of the lessons they wrote to continue the work to build the collaborative relationships needed to bridge the theory-to-practice gap in teacher education.

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Children's Books Sources for Humanizing the Founding Fathers and Acknowledging Women, African Americans, and Indigenous Peoples[1]

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[1] Many of these texts were also recommended on the *Social Studies for a Better World* companion website (www.ssfabw.com)

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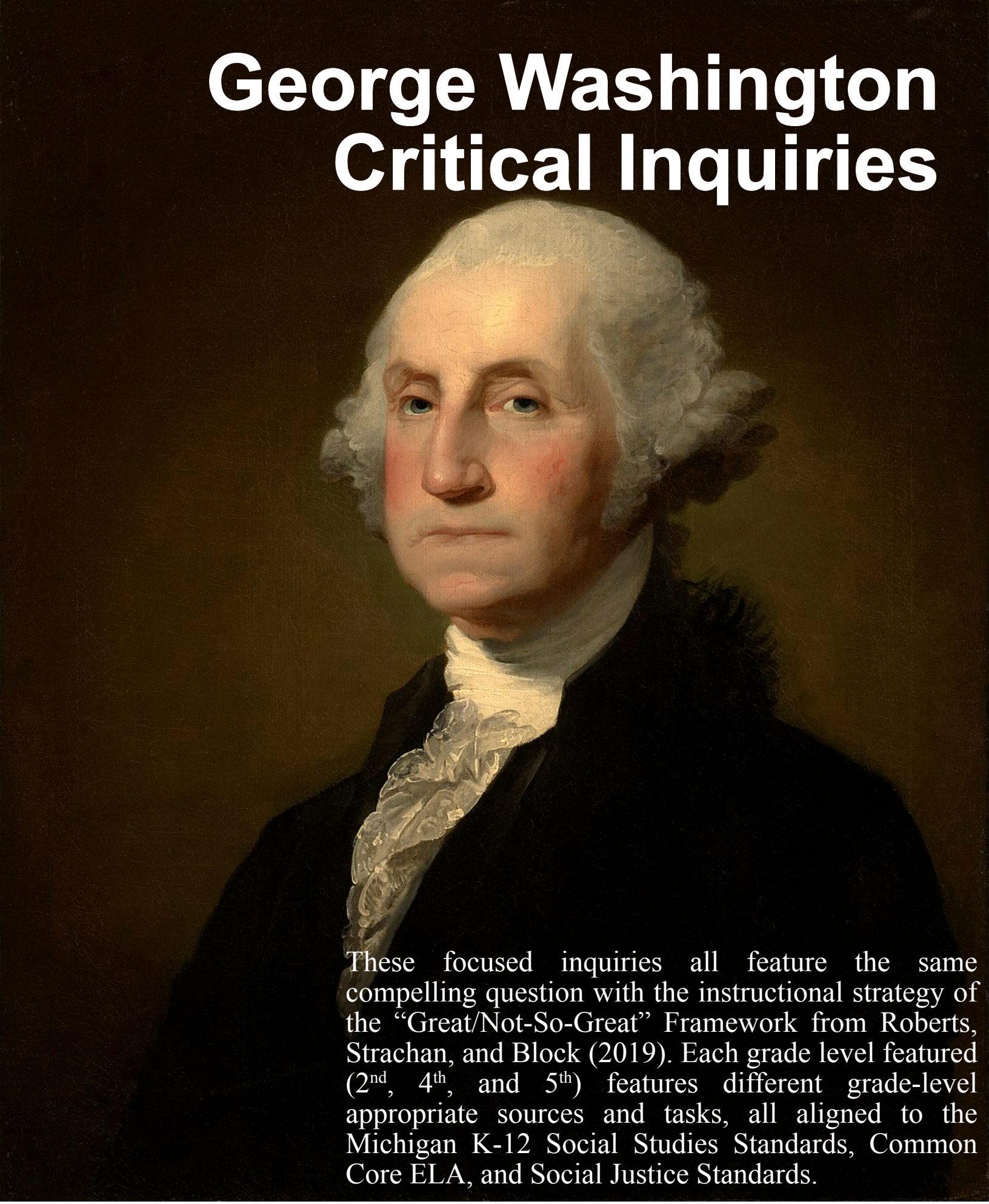
George Washington Critical Inquiries



These focused inquiries all feature the same compelling question with the instructional strategy of the "Great/Not-So-Great" Framework from Roberts, Strachan, and Block (2019). Each grade level featured (2nd, 4th, and 5th) features different grade-level appropriate sources and tasks, all aligned to the Michigan K-12 Social Studies Standards, Common Core ELA, and Social Justice Standards.

How should George Washington be remembered? 2nd Grade By Carlie Sienkowski and Cait Stumpf	
MI Standards	**2 – H2.0.3** Explain how individuals and groups have made significant historical changes
CCSS	**R.I.2.9**-Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.
Social Justice Standards	**Justice 14.** Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
Staging the Question	Prompt students to think about someone they think of as a hero and why they think of that person as a hero. Use this activity to invite students into the question: *How should George Washington be remembered?*
Supporting Questions	
What is great about George Washington? What is not so great about George Washington?	
Formative Performance Task	
Use a "Great Not so Great" T-chart to record evidence from the sources.	
Featured Sources	
Source A: "Meet George Washington" (Adapted from Newsela Article and Ducksters Article) **Source B**: "George Washington Owned Slaves" (Adapted from Newsela Article)	
Summative Performance Task	Using the "I think George Washington is" handout, construct a written **argument** supported with evidence that addresses the compelling question: *How should George Washington be remembered?*
Extension	Students will petition to include some not-so-great things that Washington did in their school's social studies' lessons. This petition can include reasons why hearing all sides of a story is important and allows for a broader narrative.

Lesson Procedure

Stage the Question

- Ask students to think of someone they think of as a hero and why.
- Allow students to turn and talk about who their hero is and why.
- Invite a few students to share with the whole class.
- Point out that students listed many positive things when talking about their heroes.
- Explain that a lot of times, people in history are remembered for the positive things they did but in this lesson, we will also consider things they did that may have been not so positive or that may have harmed others.
- Remind students of the recent celebration of President's Day.
- Display an image of George Washington to invite students into the investigation to learn more about him--the good and maybe not so good about a very famous President and thinking about how he should be remembered.
- Introduce the compelling question that is written on the board, *How should George Washington be remembered?* (Write this on the board.)

Investigate the Sources

- Explain that students will all be historians reading articles to help them gather evidence about who George Washington was. Explain that historians study the past—the good parts and the not so good parts. Explain that reading these articles will help us determine the great and not so great things about Washington and determine how much of a hero he really is.
- Create a T-chart on the board: One side titled "Great" and the other side titled "Not so Great"
- Model how the information found will be recorded on the T-Chart.
- Tell students to listen for some ideas about what is great and not so great about George Washington as the articles are read.
- Project **Source A**: "Meet George Washington" and read it with the students. Explain that as the article is read, they should pay attention to who George Washington was and things he is commonly remembered for.
- Ask the students what they learned in the article that they thought were *great* things and record these ideas on the board.
- Ask the students to now locate information in the article regarding *not-so-great*-things (if any) and record on the board.
- Note: This article is all generally positive.
- Summarize the information we found.
- Introduce **Source B**: "George Washington Owned Slaves"
- Ask the students to locate information in the article regarding great things (if any) and record these ideas on the board.
- Note: This article is all generally negative.
- Elicit students' thoughts about what they learned in the article that they thought were not-so-great-things (if any) and record them on the board.
- Note: If students come to a disagreement about whether a piece of evidence is "great" or "not so great," create a third column titled "both"
- Summarize the information we found.

Make Sense of the Sources as a Whole Group

Norms for Discussion

- Students will raise their hand to speak.
- Students will let others speak freely without interruption.
- Students will be respectful, kind, and understanding of everyone's answers.

Launch the Discussion

- Explain how to use the evidence gathered to have a group discussion to help them decide: *How should George Washington be remembered?*
- Explain that each student is going to make their own decision in the end, and that this discussion is going to help them think about their final decision.
- Remind students that they should use the sources to explain their answers.

Orchestrate

- What were some great things that George Washington did? Why were they great? Were they great for everybody? Why/ why not?
- Would some people see the great things he did as 'not so great?'
- Would some people see the "not so great" as great?
- What were some not so great things that George Washington did? Why were they not so great? Why do you think he decided to do that?

Recording Student Responses
Annotate the T-chart with additional student ideas/explanations related to those ideas already on the T-chart that come up during the discussion.

Close the Discussion

Say: "So we just had a discussion about some things that George Washington did and how it affected people and our country. We learned he did some great things and some not-so-great things. Now each of you are going to be answering the question: *How should George Washington be remembered?* "

Summative Task

- Pass out the Great, Kind of Great, Not so Great Worksheet.
- Walk through the worksheet with the students by saying: "On your own, you are going to rate George Washington. You are going to color in 1 star if he is not so great, 2 stars if he is kind of great, and three stars if he is great. Remember to look at all the ideas we collected, really think about all the things he did, and remember the discussion. After you make your decision, write two sentences about why you think that using the information on the board."
- Instruct students to make a final judgment about George Washington by rating "great," "kind of great," or "not so great" and writing their two-sentence justification.

Closure

- Remind students that people we think of as heroes are not always perfect, and there is always a larger story to consider.
- George Washington did great things for our country, but he also did not so great things While we do want to honor him for what he did to help start our country, we also have to remember that he also did some things that harmed others. It is important to look at the larger story.

How should George Washington be remembered? 2nd Grade By Lauren Artemenko and Jenna Bailey	
MI Standards	**2 – H2.0.3** Explain how individuals and groups have made significant historical changes
CCSS	**R.I.2.7**- Explain how specific images contribute to and clarify a text.
Social Justice Standards	**Justice 14.** Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
Staging the Question	Hand out money to each table group, with each bag containing coins and $1 bills. Students will look at the money and discuss who those people are and why they think they are there.
Supporting Questions	
Why are the founding fathers important? What are the great and not so great things we can remember about George Washington?	
Formative Performance Task	
Complete a T-chart labeled on one side, “What I know” and on the other side, “What I learned.”	
Featured Sources	
Source A: George Washington (Herweck, 2004)	
Summative Performance Task	Construct a written **argument** supporting your rating of George Washington with evidence that addresses the compelling question, *How should George Washington be remembered?*
Extension	Look closer at historical figures during the same time as George Washington. Have students think about what they now know about George Washington and how this may compare to the herofication/normalization of dominant narratives of other historical figures. Then, have students put together a class book discussing the true history behind America’s Founding Fathers and other “influential” historical figures. Share this text among the school community and school board meetings.

Lesson Procedure

Stage the Question

- Invite students' attention to the front of the room to listen to directions.
- Tell students that at their tables, they were given a bag of money.
- Discuss that each bag has a few dollar bills and a few quarters.
- Ask students to take time to analyze and examine the money.
- Invite students to discuss in their group about what they see, think, and wonder about the money.
- Allow students time to share their ideas with the whole group.
    - Invite one member from each group to share out what the group noticed about the money.
- Guide students towards the person on the money. Ask them to think about who this is and why he might be on our money.
- Introduce George Washington as the focal point of today's lesson.
- Ask students to come to the carpet and to sit in their learning spots.
- Construct a T- chart with the headings "What I Know" and "What I learned" with the main title saying George Washington
- Have students turn and talk about what they already know about George Washington.
- Have the class come together and have each pair share what they know about George Washington.
- Record what they know on the T-chart.
- Invite students into an investigation of George Washington.
    - Share that they will be putting on their historian hats to read a book to get a larger view of his life. Often we are only told about the great things he did. However, the book will allow a deeper dive into his life and develop a larger picture of who George Washington is–seeing the human side of him–the good, the bad, and maybe even the ugly.
- Introduce the compelling question students will answer after investigating the source (book), *How should George Washington be remembered?*

Investigate the Sources

- Read the book George Washington book by Dona Herweck.
- Before reading, demonstrate how to read pictures and written text can help make sense of the source (the book).
- Model how to ask the types of questions historians and how you will record findings on the T-chart.
- Stop on page 8.
    - Ask students to turn and talk and describe what they notice about the pictures. If students do not recognize the enslaved people in the background, point them in the right direction and ask "Who is in this picture? What are they doing? Ask students "What can you tell me about what George Washington is doing? Does he look like he is doing much of the work? Why or why not? Who is doing most of the work?"
- Stop on page 10-11 and look at the word plantations. Pull up the definition on the e-book and focus on the third definition.
    - Ask students if they are familiar with the word "plantation."
    - Ask students to read the definition, which says a "planted area; especially: an agricultural estate worked by laborers." Have students think about this word as we continue reading.
- Stop on page 12
    - What do we notice about George Washington in this picture? What is he doing? What is he not doing? What does this make you wonder?
    - Who in this image is doing the work?
- Stop on page 14-16
    - What does it tell us about George Washington on these two pages?
- Stop of page 16
    - In these photos, the author says that George Washington had many businesses that helped him on his plantation and made them more profitable. What does the word profit mean? What is George Washington doing? Who do you think is benefiting the most from this business? Who might not be making a profit? What make you think this?
    - Explain to students that people in these pictures worked all day long with no pay, little food, and water. The term we use is "enslaved."
    - Ask students how they think these people felt having to work all day and sometimes having to be separated from family members?
- Stop of page 16
    - Spend time talking with students about the words in the box where it says "Temper Temper." Elicit and interpret what it might mean and who it might affect that George Washington had a temper.
- Stop on page 24-25
    - What do we find out about George Washington on these pages?
    - What do you wonder about his work as a president?
-

Make Sense of the Sources as a Whole Group Discussion

Norms for Discussion

- Listen actively to peers as they share their thoughts and ideas about the sources. This means using eye contact, putting your full attention towards the person talking, and being respectful to others ideas.
- If someone disagrees, use the sentence stem: Another way I thought of it is… or I think about _____ in a different way…
- When sharing your thoughts, be mindful of what others have said before you. Think about how you can politely respond to others' ideas while also expressing your own opinions.

Launch the Discussion

- Direct students' attention back to the compelling question, *How should George Washington be remembered?*
- Inform students that they will be using evidence from the sources to form their opinions on how George Washington should be remembered.
- Instruct students to back up their claims about George Washington with evidence from the sources we investigated.
- Model an example, saying that George Washington should be remembered for _____ because (using evidence for text).

Orchestrate the Discussion

- What did you learn about George Washington that made him great? Why is this great? What evidence from our sources can support this?
- What did you learn about George Washington that made him not so great? Why does this show him as not-so-great? What from the book made you think this or change your original opinion?
- What information was shocking to you? How did this new knowledge change your original ideas about him? What might this tell you about other historical figures you have learned about? What evidence from the sources makes you think this? What did you learn about how famous historical people are shown to the world?
- How can we find ways to learn more about these people so we can get the full picture?
- What questions do you still have about George Washington?
- Conduct a turn and talk to share things they learned about George Washington. Have partnerships share out and record these answers on the "what I learned" section of the T-chart.

Close the Discussion

- Today we learned about George Washington and what makes him great and not so great.
- Historians look at the past to learn the truth about our country. It is important to see both great and not so great of historical figures. Today we did so to get a larger, more human view of our past presidents.

Summative Task

Great/Not So Great Framework

- Explain to students that they will fill in the number of stars to show how great or not so great George Washington is. One star means you think he is not great at all and five stars means you think he is the greatest historical figure.
- Fill in a sentence stem, I think George Washington should be remembered by _____
- Remind students to use evidence from the source to back up why they think he is great or not so great and how he should be remembered.

Closure

- We often only know fun facts about famous people from the past. However, our investigation helped us see that we often do not know everything about a historical figure unless we dig deeper into resources.
- Digging deeper requires investigating f more than one source. What we hear about someone may not give us the full picture.
- We are all human, and just because someone does "not so great" things, it is a part of America's complex history, and we can help build a truer history by learning more about historical figures and events and teaching others about it.
- This can help us make changes in the future in how we talk and think about these figures.

How should George Washington be remembered? 4th Grade By Sarah Campbell	
MI Standards	4 – C1.0.1 Identify questions political scientists ask in examining the United States.
CCSS	**RI.4.2** Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
Social Justice Standards	**Justice 14:** Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
Staging the Question	Compare great and not so great things about household pets. Use this activity to connect students to the topic of the investigation. Invite them into the compelling question, how should George Washington be remembered.
Supporting Questions	
What is great about George Washington? What is not so great about George Washington?	
Formative Performance Task	
Complete the Great not so Great Framework to record evidence from the sources.	
Featured Sources	
Source A: YouTube Video: Biography of George Washington for Kids: Meet the American President **Source B**: George Washington (Herweck, 2004)	
Summative Performance Task	Use the Great/Not so Great Summative Task to construct a written **argument** supported with evidence that addresses the compelling question, *How should George Washington be remembered?*
Extension	Pair students with students from another fourth-grade class and allow them to share what they learned about the great and not so great about George Washington and why it matters.

Lesson Procedure

Stage the Question

- Ask students if they would rather have a dog or a cat.
- Direct students to stand on the side of the room with the similar animal group.
- Invite each group to come up with one reason why the other group came to their decision. (e.g. Dog group would think of why the other groups think cats are great.)
- Allow each group time to share out to the whole group.
- Explain reasons why some people think some things are great and others do not. Include some personal examples (such as food you think is great, but your friend won't eat, sports, toys, etc.)
- Make the transition to thinking about President's Day.
- Invite students to think about why some people might think a certain president is great and others may think they are not so great (or invite them to think about that even great people are human and have things about them that are just ordinary or things that they have been involved in that might not be great for some groups of people).
- Invite students into investigation of the compelling question, "How should George Washington be remembered?" by reviewing the recently celebrated President's Day.
- Explain that sources will be used to investigate great and some not-so-great things about George Washington.

Investigate the Sources

- Model how students will investigate the sources by examining each source– a video and a book–by analyzing the pictures and text and writing and discussing great and not so great things about George Washington.
- Show the Great not so Great Framework on flex cam where student ideas will be recorded.
- Ask "Why do you think it is important that we consider good and not so good things about presidents?"
- Explore George Washington- who he was as a hero but also as a human who did great things as well as some not-so-great things.

Source A: Biography of George Washington for Kids: Meet the American President.

- Invite students to watch the video and to keep in mind the Great not so Great Framework that will be displayed on the flex cam
- Pause the video at the following time stamps to discuss:
  - 0.42 his success as a cartographer
  - 2:42 George Washingtons' role in the army
  - 2:52 and 2:56: who is who is not pictured in this photograph
  - 3:39: what different people are pictured and what they are doing
  - 4:14: George Washington's role in founding the United States
  - 4:40: how George Washington is remembered and elicit their thinking about who else is in the video, yet not named (recognized) in aiding the starting of the country

Source B

- Display on the smartboard: George Washington
- Reiterate the purpose of the activity– critically examining George Washington as a president/hero/founder of the country but also looking for other character traits.
- Record evidence on Great not so Great Framework on flex cam.
- Read the book aloud to the class.
- Pause intermittently to discuss reading and the pictures shown in the book* Stop on pages 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22 to elicit, interpret, and probe their thinking about the great and not so great things they see and hear about George Washington.

Make Sense of the Sources as a Whole Group

Norms for Discussion

- Raise hands to share ideas.
- Respect peers' ideas.
- Listen when others are talking.

Launch the Discussion

- How should George Washington be remembered?
- Remind students to refer to the evidence found in the source?

Orchestrate the Discussion

Possible questions:

- What great things did we discover and record about George Washington?
- Who did we notice specifically?
- What did we notice about some not-so-great things about George Washington?
- Why might it be important to think about all of these things (great/not-so-great)?
- Did you learn anything new?
- Did this change your perspective on how you view George Washington? If so, how?

Recording Student Responses

- Teacher records students' ideas on a notepad.

Close the Discussion

- Direct students to think about what they have learned about George Washington.
- Ask students to consider the great/not so great qualities of George Washington.
- Invite them to now decide individually how George Washington should be remembered and to record their thinking on the Great/Not so Great Summative Task.
- Pass out the handout and review the instructions.

Summative Task

Complete the Great/Not so Great Summative Task.

Closure

- Ask students to put a thumbs up if they decided George Washington was "Great," thumbs down if they thought he was "not so great," and a sideways thumb if he was somewhere in the middle (If you are running out of time and/or the students are getting restless just bring the lesson to an end).
- Ask one student from each group why they made that decision– share evidence.
- Explain to students that American leaders/heroes have many great and not so great qualities that we must keep in mind when remembering them as "heroes."

How should George Washington be remembered? 5th Grade By Jennifer Badley, Alex Ensley, Jillian Langlois, and Christian Rickel	
MI Standards	5.P2.3 Use supporting questions to help answer compelling social studies questions. 5.P2.4 Know how to find relevant evidence from a variety of sources. 5.P3.3 Construct an argument and justify a decision supported with evidence.
CCSS	**R.I.5.2** - Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
Social Justice Standards	**Justice 12:** Students will recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals
Staging the Question	Conduct a See, Think, Wonder using a dollar bill to elicit and interpret students' understanding and prior knowledge of George Washington. Use this activity to invite students into the compelling question, *How should George Washington be remembered?*
Supporting Questions	
What is great about George Washington? What is not so great about George Washington?	
Formative Performance Task	
Complete the Great/not so Great T-Chart to record characteristics and actions of George Washington using the sources listed below.	
Featured Sources	
Source A: *Lives of the President"* Pages 10-13 of book (Krull & Hewitt, 2011) **Source B**: 11 Little Little-Known Facts About George Washington (History.com) Adapted version of Source B	
Summative Performance Task	Students will use the George Washington Report Card to answer the question, How should George Washington be remembered? Students will use evidence from the sources to back up their claims.
Extension	As a class we will list who we should share this information with and why. Small groups will then choose how and with whom they will share their information.

Lesson Procedure

Stage the Question

- Conduct a see, think, wonder of an actual one dollar bill. Invite the students to share while the teacher will write what the students see, think, and wonder about the dollar bill/George Washington.
- See: What do you see on the dollar bill? Who is featured on the dollar bill?
- Think: What qualities and or characteristics do you think one must possess to be given that honor?
- Wonder: Why do you think the "powers that be" decided he was the one to be featured on the dollar?
- Invite students into the investigation of the question, *How Should George Washington be remembered?*

Investigate the Sources

- Explain to students that two sources will be used to search out evidence to answer the question about how George Washington should be remembered.
- Set the purpose for reading by explaining that we will be collecting data about the Good and Not So Good Things about George Washington.
- Introduce the two sources.
    - Source A: Pages 10-13 *Lives of the President*
    - Source B: 11 Little Little-Known Facts About George Washington (adapted version)
- Pass out packets with the information they will need to conduct their investigation.
- Model how to find evidence and record on the graphic organizer as they consider the great and not so great things about George Washington.
    - Direct students to underline/annotate the copied pages in the book and in the article as they read.
    - Using Source A, complete the first 3 paragraphs together, modeling expected participation, and highlighting important information, and record on the graphic organizer great or not so great graphic things about George Washington.
- Pair students. Teacher may consider assigning one student to research Source A and the other Source B and then share their findings with each other.
- Set a timer and instruct students what to do if they finish before other groups.

Make Sense of the Sources as a Whole Group

Norms for Discussion

- Share the class discussion norms

Launch the Discussion

- How should George Washington be remembered?

Orchestrate the Discussion

- What does your investigation uncover about George Washington's character?
- What was great? What was not so great?
- If an Alien came down to earth how would you describe George Washington to them?
- Has your perspective of George Washington changed at all from earlier?
- Why might many sources only portray George Washington for the good he did but not the bad?
- How do you think he should be remembered? What from our sources makes you say that?

Recording Student Responses

- Jot down ideas students. Use this if needed when they are working individually on the summative task.

Close the Discussion

- Summarize what the students found about the good and not so good things about George Washington.
- Invite them to individually construct an argument to answer the original compelling questions, *How should George Washington be remembered?*

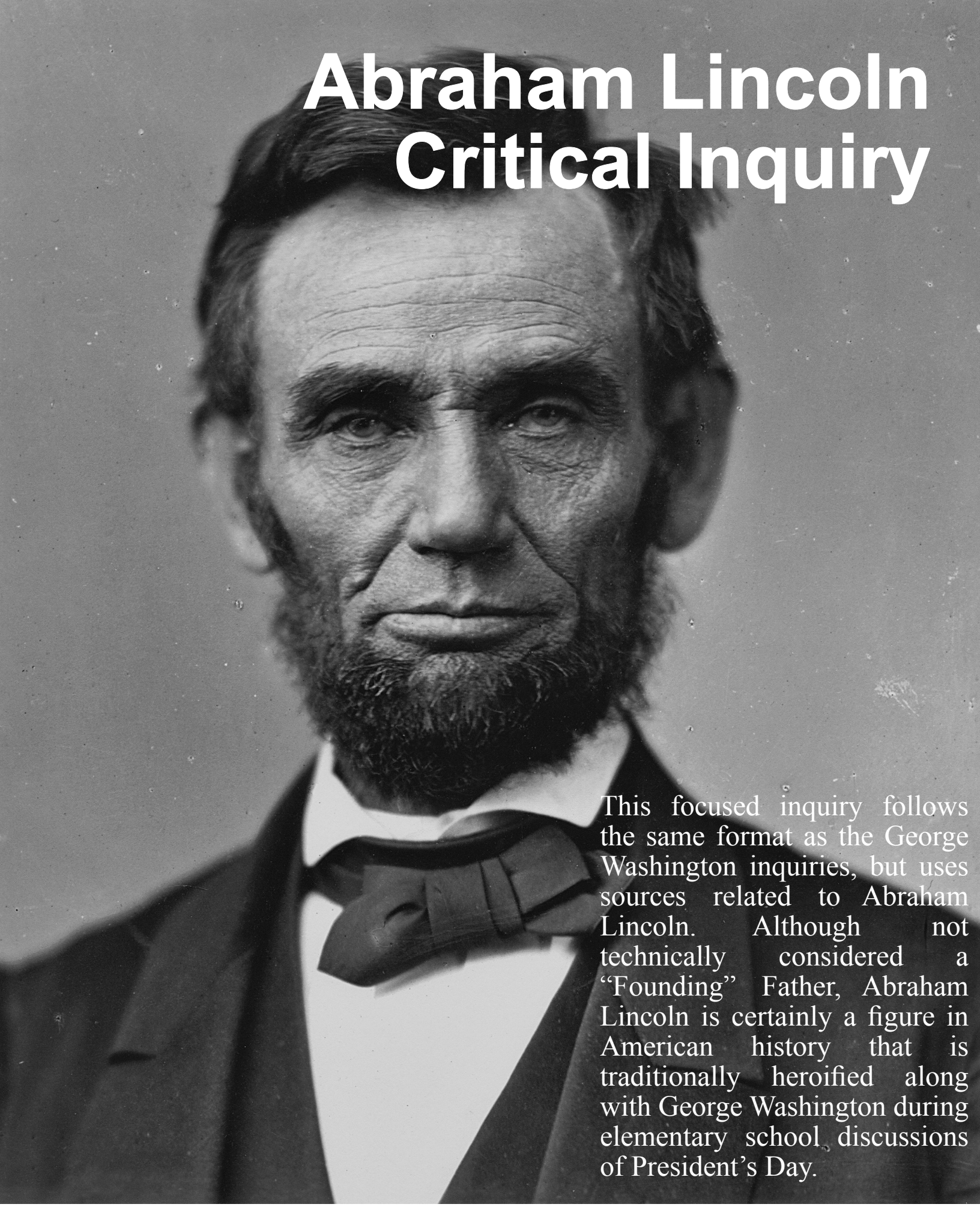
Summative Task

- Direct students to construct an argument based on the evidence found in sources to determine how George Washington should be remembered.
- Explain the directions on the George Washington Report Card.
- Provide a grade for George Washington.
- Back up your grade by using evidence from the sources.

Closure

- Collect the report cards and if time allows, have students share their claims.
- Sum up the investigation.
- In this investigation you examined 2 sources to answer the compelling question.
- We recorded evidence to help paint a realistic picture of who George Washington was and what he did.
- We sought to humanize not heroify him by mentioning all the good and not so good things he did. We wanted to show who he was as a real person who has pitfalls and successes.
- We asked the question, did research, discussed our findings, and drew conclusions based on evidence.

Abraham Lincoln Critical Inquiry



This focused inquiry follows the same format as the George Washington inquiries, but uses sources related to Abraham Lincoln. Although not technically considered a "Founding" Father, Abraham Lincoln is certainly a figure in American history that is traditionally heroified along with George Washington during elementary school discussions of President's Day.

How Should Abraham Lincoln Be Remembered? 4th Grade By Jessica Bryson	
MI Standards	4 – C1.0.1 Identify questions political scientists ask in examining the United States.
CCSS	**R.I.4.2** - Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text..
Social Justice Standards	**Justice 15:** I know about the actions of people and groups who have worked throughout history to bring more justice and fairness to the world.
Staging the Question	Show an image of a $5 bill and invite students to share what they know about Abraham Lincoln.
Supporting Questions	
What did Abraham Lincoln do that was great? What did Abraham Lincoln do that was not so great?	
Formative Performance Task	
Complete the Great/Not So Great Source Evaluation Sheet to record evidence from the selected sources.	
Featured Sources	
National Geographic Kids: Abraham Lincoln White House: Abraham Lincoln Time for Kids: Abraham Lincoln Ducksters: Abraham Lincoln BrainPop: Abraham Lincoln Video Read Aloud: I am Abraham Lincoln by Brad Meltzer	
Summative Performance Task	Use the Great/Not So Great source evaluation sheet to construct a written argument supported with evidence that addresses the compelling question, *How should Abraham Lincoln be remembered?*
Extension	Students will use the same framework to investigate the compelling question *How should Mary Todd Lincoln be remembered?* Students will create a poster or slideshow to share their findings about the Lincolns with their classmates or peers in other classes.

Lesson Procedure

Stage the Question

- Show students an image of a $5 bill and ask students if they know who is pictured on the $5 bill.
- Explain that they will be investigating Abraham Lincoln, who was the 16th president of the United States.
- Prompt students to turn to a neighbor and share one thing they know about Abraham Lincoln.
- Allow students to share with the whole group.
- Invite students to think about why some people might think a certain president is great and others may think they are not so great or invite them to think about that even great people are human and have things about them that are just ordinary or things that they have been involved in that might not be great for some groups of people.
- Explain that sources will be used to investigate the question *How should Abraham Lincoln be remembered?*

Investigate the Sources

- Ask "Why do you think it is important that we consider good and not so good things about presidents?"
- Explain that Abraham Lincoln was a hero but also as a human who did great things as well as some not-so-great things.
- Distribute the Great/Not So Great Source Evaluation Sheet.
- Explain that students will choose three of the six available sources about Abraham Lincoln and use the evaluation sheet to record their findings.
- Prompt students to take out their laptop or iPad, so that they can investigate their selected sources either individually or with a partner. Consider having the hyperlinks available for students to click as they work.

Make Sense of the Sources as a Whole Group

Invite students to transition from their investigation and to participate in a class discussion of their findings.

Norms for Discussion

- Raise hand to share.
- Listen to one another with kindness.
- Share accurately and honestly.

Launch the Discussion

- Ask the students, "*How should Abraham Lincoln be remembered*?"
- Ask students to use evidence from the text to support their reasoning.

Orchestrate

- What great things did we discover and record about Abraham Lincoln?
- What did we notice about some not-so-great things about Abraham Lincoln?
- Why might it be important to think about all of these things (great/not-so-great)?
- Did you learn anything new?
- Did this change your perspective on how you view Abraham Lincoln? If so, how?

Recording Student Responses

- Teacher will record student responses on white board or template.

Close the Discussion

- Explain how we can have different opinions and we may not always think the same people are great or nor great.
- Discuss the great and not so great aspects of Abraham Lincoln we discovered through research.

Summative Task

- Prompt students to open a document on their electronic devices or distribute lined paper to each student.
- Explain that they will be using the evidence from their investigations to individually write a paragraph about how Abraham Lincoln should be remembered.
- Scaffold as necessary for students.

Closure

- Invite students to share their paragraphs, including evidence from their investigations about how Abraham Lincoln should be remembered.

Betsy Ross Critical Inquiry

We can't forget about the "Founding Mothers!" Betsy Ross is often taught to elementary students as the woman who created the American flag. However, her contribution wasn't considered significant at the time, and only popularized much later (Rodrígeuz & Swalwell, 2021). This critical inquiry allows students to examine the truths and myths about Betsy Ross.

How Should Betsy Ross Be Remembered? Kindergarten By Cassidy Smith, Ana Troncoso, and Tina Metz	
MI Standards	K – H2.0.3 Describe ways people learn about the past.
CCSS	**R.I.3** - With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
Social Justice Standards	Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.
Staging the Question	Conduct a See, Think, Wonder using the American flag. Use this activity to invite students into the compelling question: "How should Betsy Ross be remembered?"
Supporting Questions	
Who is Betsy Ross? What did she do?	
Formative Performance Task	
Complete as a class a T-chart listing the evidence from Source A on one side and Source B on the other.	
Featured Sources	
Source A: *Betsy Ross* (Wallner, 1994) **Source B:** YouTube Video JYF Museums: 3 Minute Myths|Besty Ross and the American Flag	
Summative Performance Task	Construct a verbal **argument** supported with evidence explaining their claim as to how Betsy Ross should be remembered.
Extension	Students will further their thinking by drawing pictures of someone in their life who is making a difference to help make the world a better place.

Lesson Procedure

Stage the Question

- Bring in a flag,
- Conduct a See, Think, Wonder of the Signing of the Constitution.
- Ask the students if they know who or what the founding fathers are.
- Briefly fill in the information they may not have about who they are and what important things they did to bring change in the starting of our country. Be sure to use the words Founding Fathers
- Invite students to then consider who the founding mothers might be?
- Briefly discuss their wonderings about what women may have done to bring about change in the beginning of our country.
- Use the discussion to then invite them into the investigation of one particular founding mother, Betsy Ross.
- Explain that together we will be putting on our historian hats, looking way back in time, and searching out clues to answer the question, *How should Betsy Ross be remembered*?

Investigate the Sources

Explain the use of sources to search for our clues.

Source A: *Betsy Ross* (Wallner,1994)

- Describe that while reading the book we will stop, ask questions about the pictures and the text to find out what they are showing us about Betsy Ross.
- Record students' answers on the Source A side of the T-chart.
- Stop on the following pages. Ask:
  - Page 5: Why was Betsy's job as an upholsterer so important? (draw out how women were often not allowed to work, and how they could have gone to be jailed if caught)
  - Page 13: Do you think Betsy's design was better than what George Washington had planned?
  - Page 15: What do you think it was like for Betsy to take on with no husband, a business to own, and children to take care of?
  - Page 18: Describe Betsy Ross as a worker.
- Skip pages 19 and 20 and half of 21
- At the end of the book ask:
  - Who was Betsy Ross?
  - According to this source (book), how should she be remembered?

Source B: 3 Minute Myths|Besty Ross and the American Flag

- Before viewing the video make sure students understand the meaning of the word "myth." Use examples of myths they may be familiar with.
- Prepare them to watch the video by telling them to listen carefully to the first 46 seconds and to listen to what the video is telling us about Betsy Ross.
- Show the first 46 seconds and see and check for understanding.
- Record their findings on the other side of the Source B side of the T-Chart.
- View of other portions of the video show if necessary and if students are understanding (may need to much prior knowledge)
- At the end of the video ask:
  - Who was Betsy Ross?
  - According to this source, how should she be remembered?
  - Is this similar or different from the book?
  - How might we decide which source to believe (share about historians have looked at many sources and asked many questions. They have discovered that the idea of Betsy Ross creating the first flag is not entirely true and the story was made to be true years later to increase the popularity of the flag.

Make Sense of the Sources as a Whole Group

Norms for Discussion

- Raising a hand to speak.
- Following the social contract (class rules).

Launch the Discussion

- How should Betsy Ross be remembered?

Orchestrate the Discussion

- Ask questions that will help elicit their thinking.
- What do we know about Betsy Ross?
- What did she do?
- Do we know for sure whether she sewed the first American flag?
- How do historians know what to believe is true?
- How do you think Betsy Ross should be remembered?

Recording Student Responses

- Jot down students' responses for your own record of their thinking and to determine what else they might need to know or do to understand history and how it is recorded.

Close the Discussion

- Summarize students' thoughts and invite them to consider how they will answer the question, How should Betsy Ross be remembered?

Summative Task

- Pass out a piece of paper to each student.
- Invite them each to draw a picture of the American flag as we know it today. Have a flag visible for the students to see.
- As they draw, walk around the room and ask each of them to verbally answer the question, How do you think Betsy Ross should be remembered? Remind them to explain their answer using what they learned from the book/video.

Closure

Summarize the work they did as historians:

- Asked questions.
- Searched for answers using two sources.
- Talked about their findings.
- Came to a decision on how they think Betsy Ross should be remembered.

Conclude by thanking them for doing the hard work of being historians today.

Considering a Lack of Elementary Social Studies as an Evil of Thoughtlessness

Cassidy Lindell and Cathryn van Kessel

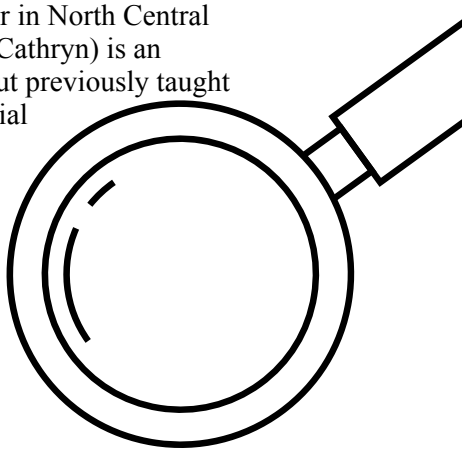
Evil can come in the form of thoughtlessness (Arendt, 1963/2006; Minnich, 2014). Although many might assume evil to be noticeable and dramatic, ordinary people living their quotidian lives can perpetuate harm when they fail to see how their (in)actions affect others. At times, these banal individuals can be part of something noticeably horrific (e.g., genocide). On other occasions, a failure to think independently from authority while being interconnected with others results in a less dramatic, but nonetheless harmful process (e.g., patterns of food consumption and production) (van Kessel & Crowley, 2017; see also van Kessel, 2022).

Thoughtlessness isn't a lack of thinking per se. It is failing to think about deeper issues and how individuals are affecting others. As an example, Author and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates (2013) has noted a similar process in relation to racism in everyday life. Simply going about our business and failing to see how our small, daily activities can compound systemic problems is a banal, yet disturbing form of evil.

Considering thoughtlessness as a form of evil-doing in education, as Zembylas (2022) has noted, can encourage students (and us all as humans) to become "aware not only of dire consequences emerging from an incapacity to think critically, but also of their own complicity and responsibility" (p. 11, see also Zembylas, 2020). It is essential for democratic citizenship education for students to see their roles and responsibilities as members of communities, rather than to fall into a banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) that thoughtlessly perpetuates institutions and practices that can be harmful or even catastrophic.

Social studies is the subject area in the United State and Canada often tasked with preparation for civic life. Consequently, it is important to not only explicitly include this subject area, but also ensure that this inclusion is thoughtful. Social studies in any context can be thoughtless, but structural elements (e.g., defined subject areas, mandated curriculum outcomes) can affect how strong an invitation for thoughtfulness can be. This article's goal is to encourage both aspiring and experienced educators in their efforts to teach social studies at the elementary school level in contexts where the subject can easily be neglected, and also push administrators and policymakers to take social studies education seriously.

There are many ways of teaching social studies in elementary, and each will have strengths and weaknesses. As examples, this article will give quick snapshots of Texas in the United States and Alberta in Canada, since we have taught in those contexts. The first author (Cassidy) is currently a Master's student and elementary teacher in North Central Texas and the second author (Cathryn) is an associate professor in Texas but previously taught elementary and secondary social studies in Alberta.



Our Understanding of Social Studies

Cassidy defines social studies as the study of a variety of disciplines to assist students in their learning by looking at the past, present, and future. Social studies aids in the development of the skills needed to become a knowledgeable and responsible citizen. To assist students in developing relationships in the future, social studies teaches them about various cultures and geographic locations in the past and present. Cathryn grew up and taught in Alberta but recently moved to Texas. She is now thinking about Albertan social studies (and social studies more broadly) in a new light, given the separation from it geographically and personally. Of particular note is the multidisciplinary nature of social studies in Alberta.

Social studies is, as the name suggests, the study of the social, but there are layers to that. Who counts as part of society? What knowledge, skills, and attitudes contribute to thoughtful educational engagements while studying society? Debates about content versus skills are perennial topics in curriculum development (Kliebard, 2004), and yet those debates really are not in good faith because students need content in order to develop their skills. If taken as a multidisciplinary subject area with a focus on skills, social studies can provide a unique opportunity for a lived curriculum (Aoki, 2004) that engages students in ethical ways, implicated as individuals within communities and society (den Heyer, 2009). Put simply, thoughtful (rather than thoughtless) social studies encounters can help both teachers and students understand the past as a way to think and feel deeply about our present and possible future circumstances.

Context

Teacher education and school contexts are different in Texas and Alberta, as is the nature of social studies. For the purposes of this article, we will discuss elementary schools in Texas and Alberta as kindergarten to sixth grade. Looking at elementary social studies as a subject area in these two contexts, there are distinct differences. In Texas, students do not have a specific course to take until beyond elementary school; i.e., seventh grade, when they take Texas History (Texas Education Agency, 2015). In elementary school, students typically learn about social studies in their language arts (English) class (e.g., Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The situation is substantially different in Alberta. There, social studies is one multidisciplinary course (i.e., not separated into civics, economics, geography, history, etc.), and is mandatory from kindergarten all the way through Grade 12 (Alberta Education, 2005).

Despite these differences, there are some commonalities in elementary social studies, such as an emphasis in kindergarten on students considering themselves in relation to their homes, families, and classroom, as well as a broad emphasis throughout multiple grades on democratic values and responsible citizenship. Content-wise, there is a lot shared between the two programs of study; for example, in Grade 2 students in both contexts consider local and national communities with a focus on culture and heritage, as well as geography and economics.

The skills, however, are notably different. Again, using Grade 2 as an example, in Texas students use their critical thinking skills to gather, organize, and use information; interpret multimodal material; communicate orally, visually, and in writing; and use problem-solving and decision-making skills independently and in groups (Texas Education Agency, 2018a). In Alberta, these same skills are noted, but there are also skills that are much more social studies specific, like historical thinking, geographic thinking, social participation, and media literacy outcomes. Grade 2 students in Alberta are asked specific skills such as to "demonstrate the ability to deal constructively with diversity and disagreement" (Alberta Education, 2005, Grade 2, p. 7). Perhaps these specific skills appear because of the explicit class time devoted to the subject. Although of course a curriculum document is only as good as its implementation, the skill outcomes in the Alberta program of study lend themselves more to a thoughtful rather than a thoughtless engagement because students are invited to see themselves in their learning in ethical relation with others.

Lack of Social Studies Emphasis in U.S. Classrooms

Despite relative strengths and weakness of particular programs of study, social studies as a

subject area offers unique opportunities for thoughtfulness relative to other subjects. Thus, ignoring social studies is itself a thoughtless act. Across the United States, many elementary schools focus primarily on math, language arts, and sometimes (but not always) also science (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010).

As a subject area, social studies is marginalized (Brugar & Whitlock, 2020), and this situation is not new. As Houser (1995) noted, there are several reasons for this situation, including teacher and student (lack of) interest, teachers lacking resources, and curricular issues. Social studies can be pushed out by other subject areas, as one of Houser's (1995) participants from Delaware noted, "(S)ocial studies is… one of those things that's kind of tacked onto the end… You know, if you need to do extra math, the first thing you cut is social studies and science" (p. 155). Twenty years later and in Massachusetts, Strauss (2015) noted that "some elementary schools, social studies instruction has been reduced to no more than 20 minutes per week so that classes can spend more time for instructions in literature, mathematics, and science" (para. 6). Although the status of science can vary, social studies remains as a subject that can all too easily be crowded out by other subjects.

In a study by Hawkman, Castro, Bennett, and Barrow (2015), over the course of a 60-hour field practicum, 67% of the 91 participants did not see a social studies lesson in the third-grade class they observed. When participants did see social studies in the classroom, most of the time students were using a textbook or worksheet to learn. This type of learning is not optimal for students in third grade or younger because students are still learning to read or at the beginning stages of reading to learn. Also, when social studies are integrated into literacy, the focus is not entirely on social studies but on reading, too. This inclusion of reading skills is not necessarily a bad thing, but the information that is being taught could be overlooked by considering reading techniques and not focusing on the information being learned in the reading.

Lack of Social Studies Emphasis in Texas Classrooms

In Texas education, there is a big focus on students passing the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). This state exam is used to measure student understanding of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKs; Texas Education Agency, 2016, 2018b). This is the Texas version of the common core recommended by the Department of Education of the United States. Since this is a state exam, teachers spend most of their class time covering the material included on the STAAR exam. According to the frequently asked questions on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website, during the elementary year, students are required to take the reading and math tests from third grade to eighth grade. Meanwhile, a social studies course does not get tested by the state until eighth grade. In jurisdictions other than Texas, social studies testing might come earlier, but seem to come near the end of elementary programming (e.g., Michigan's M-Step tests Grade 5 students).

This disparity in testing explains why there can easily be less of an emphasis on social studies at the elementary level and more focus on all other subject areas (e.g., Pace, 2008). In the United States nationwide, Fitchett and Heafner (2010) linked the subsidiary nature of social studies instruction to high-stakes testing and concomitant emphasis on mathematics and language arts. By teaching to the test, teachers cannot always cover everything, and the first subject to go would be social studies since it is not being tested until the students are older. This means that students are losing out on skills early on because of this thoughtlessness.

Returning to the comparison with Alberta, testing of elementary students in the form of Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) is done in the third and sixth grades, and in the sixth grade, social studies learner outcomes are assessed. There is overall less testing, but when there is testing, social studies is treated as a core subject. Like Michigan's M-Step, though, this testing is at the end of elementary school. Despite a similar lack of testing, due to the particular nature of social studies in Alberta, teachers devote specific class time to the subject.

To make this aspect of our argument clear, the answer to the problem of a lack of social studies isn't to do more testing of social studies knowledge and skills—there is less elementary

testing in Alberta than in Texas. The unintentional and troubling consequences of high-stakes standardized testing are better solved by reducing these types of tests; i.e., favoring formative over summative assessment with a view toward identifying (and then meeting) intellectual, financial, medical, and other needs (e.g., Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Ritt, 2016). Instead of more testing, other ways of encouraging teachers to engage with social studies concepts and skills can be emphasized, especially at the school level (e.g., administrators building in protected time for social studies like there is in Alberta).

Thoughtlessness and Social Studies

Social studies can help students develop lifelong skills and consider ways to contribute to their communities. There are many ways that someone can contribute to a society striving to embrace the complexities of democratic citizenship (e.g., Murray-Everett & Demoiny, 2022; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). On a deep level, there is an opportunity for social studies education to question troubling assumptions about who counts as a citizen and what counts as citizenship education (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2021; Sabzalian, 2019) and what thoughtless evils we might perpetuate if citizenship education does not question these assumptions.

Social studies can offer children ways to explore crucial life lessons in elementary school. These are skills that would help benefit learning as well as relationships within the classroom. Students can learn how to navigate differing viewpoints and reach a compromise in social studies. Discussions and debates in social studies can help students learn to work through seeing different perspectives (Siegel-Stechler, 2021). Scenarios reasoning can help students imagine the futures they want, and what changes need to happen for that future to become probable (den Heyer, 2017), co-creating collective action for justice, and these are just a few of the benefits of social studies. Robbing student of such opportunities is a thoughtless evil.

Another evil that could come from the lack of social studies in the classroom is students' lack of knowledge about the development of the systems and institutions that have the power to change society. How voting systems work, who they work for (and don't), and the mechanisms for change are vital knowledge, as are other parts of our society. Additionally, history education can give learners knowledge of historical events to ensure that we do not repeat history but rather learn from it. A multidisciplinary course, like Alberta's social studies curriculum, invites students to consider history alongside approaches from political science, psychology, sociology, and other fields, thus enriching these analyses in the messy space between personal and societal responsibility.

The thoughtless evil that stems from a lack of social studies in elementary schools does not imply that the teachers are acting wrongfully. They are constrained by the systems they are part of. It is nonetheless important to be aware of the potential effects of their lack of social studies instruction on their students. Although, teachers do not intend to harm their students, the way social studies can be neglected in the United States can have a negative impact. By not teaching social studies in the classroom, it indicates to the students that it isn't important. Also, if a pre-service teacher is in a classroom to learn and social studies is never taught, it is likely that this will continue through their future teaching.

Thoughtful Social Studies

Beyond the straightforward, but at present less likely, scenario of formal inclusion of social studies at the elementary level—which isn't necessarily effective anyways (Heafner, 2018), there are ways to bring thoughtful social studies into the classroom, regardless of the specific context and its challenges—Texas or another U.S. state. Brugar and Whitlock (2020) have provided examples of how teachers can craft lessons that integrate social studies into different subjects and how teachers can use informal classroom time to teach students about social studies. The ethics—the thoughtfulness—of social studies can even be made present during non-instructional time.

One way to implement social studies topics in kindergarten through third grade can be during informal class time such as snack time. Brugar and Whitlock (2020) observed how a teacher was able to cover a range of topics regarding social studies during informal class time: "students explored the world map, engaged in discussions about civil disobedience as it related to Martin Luther King Jr.

Day, watched YouTube clips about other cultures, and sang songs and learned words in other languages" (p. 11). In the context of older elementary students (e.g., fourth through sixth grade), the teacher can utilize students' reading skills when teaching social studies. For instance, a 5th-grade teacher, Natasha, "introduced this story by defining historical fiction and brought in historical information (e.g., WWII occurred in the twentieth century), geographic reminders (e.g., Arizona is west of Oklahoma), and cultural commentary (e.g., Navajo language is beautiful)" (Brugar & Whitlock, 2020, p. 9). By integrating multiple subjects or using informal class time can enable teachers to still be able to balance their time and cover all subjects.

Based on a study by Young (2005) "active, application-oriented experience, delivered by enthusiastic faculty members who provide high personal interaction, along with supportive feedback, clear goals and expectations emphasizing learning over grades will increase intrinsic motivation and the use of self-regulated learning strategies" (p. 36). Another idea to keep in mind when planning is to use a variety of primary and secondary resources in the classroom to maintain excitement and interest. As educators, we provide engaging opportunities to learn math and science by providing hands-on materials, so why should we not do that in our social studies lesson? Better yet, if these engaging activities involve interdisciplinary ethical contemplations of taken-for-granted assumptions (den Heyer, 2009), then the spirit and thoughtfulness of social studies can live in any subject area. Hopefully, together teachers, teacher educators, and the public at large can push for thoughtful elementary social studies.

Concluding Thoughts

A lack of social studies in elementary schools in the United States can perpetuate evil in the form of thoughtlessness. The case of Alberta demonstrates that social studies as a thoughtful and specific course is feasible in elementary classrooms, but beyond that educators need to be thoughtful about how they are engaging with social studies content, skills, and dispositions. U.S. research in the Midwest and South (e.g., Brugar & Whitlock, 2020) reveals that social studies integration into other parts of the day can happen, but its effectiveness is likely limited unless that integration is healthy and explicit.

It is clear that social studies in elementary classrooms is a key element of what can make schooling educational in a civic sense, preferably as a multidisciplinary course to provide a strong invitation toward thoughtfulness. The lack of emphasis on social studies in elementary schools in Texas (and also other areas in the United States) results, in part, from the focus on math and reading due to teaching to state tests. This situation leads to students being denied the opportunity to think critically about the world and their role in it, and so beyond the classroom advocacy for reduced testing is much needed. Social studies skills are integral to a person's civic and personal development, and so as authors we hope this article is supports teachers, administrators, and policymakers as they are considering thoughtful elementary social studies education as a societal priority.

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