

## In Context

A UNITED FRONT: THE COMMON CORE AND THE ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

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The most recent phase of curriculum reform in the era of accountability is the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which have essentially reshaped the landscape of public education. As part of the movement, English language arts, mathematics, and science have been a primary focus, while social studies, which is not part of widespread high-stakes testing, has been deemed less important through legislative policy for America's students. For elementary K-5 students, social studies education is even less accessible. Although CCSS refers to history and social studies on a peripheral level for grades K-5, the standards reflect inclusion, if not validation, and promotion of the field. The K-5 standards focus on higher level thinking skills, involving greater levels of interdisciplinary literacy, as opposed to specific social studies content (Kenna, 2013). The omission of social studies standards from K-5 CCSS superficially appears to marginalize the discipline. If CCSS existed for K-5, would social studies be considered a more relevant subject, especially if attached to a high-stakes assessment? Due to the lack of high stakes testing in social studies for elementary students, teachers may continue to focus on English language arts and mathematics. However, CCSS emphasizes skill acquisition, as opposed to factual recall (Kenna, 2013), a hallmark of best practices in social studies education. Two areas in which literacy skills and social studies align involves text complexity and the use of informational text.

In assessing the standards for social studies content, it is evident that CCSS has immediate effects on social studies instruction. Although there are no standards explicitly referencing social studies or history in grade K-5, literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects' standards do exist in grades 6-12 (NGA, 2014). The standards deviate from grade-specific content understandings but still preserve the social studies as an interdependent and self-contained discipline (Hermeling, 2013). Altoff and Golston (2012) stated, "They offer a vision of twenty-first century literacy in which the social studies classroom plays an important role in the development of certain kinds of literacy skills..." (p. 5). CCSS emphasizes an increase in interdisciplinary literacy instruction (Lee & Swan, 2013) by illustrating the importance of reading instruction while focusing on a diverse world, including knowing its history, geography, government and economic realities, through reading fluency. This pedagogical focus allows greater agency in using historical content during traditional language arts courses. For the field of social studies, the inclusion of more diversity and rigor with texts, especially primary sources, offers a renewed sense of respect and focus on historical content. The use of literacy through informational texts aligned to social studies content, along with the inquiry based nature of the standards, promotes existing historical thinking skills within social studies curriculums (Swan et al., 2015). Text complexity may in fact be the conduit into historical thinking now sanctioned by CCSS.

Reading standards for literacy in history/social studies begins in grade 6, while these standards are integrated into the K-5 reading standards. Therefore, the instructional use of informational texts is considered a component of ELA and/or social studies at elementary levels, depending on district and school initiatives. The 2016 NCSS Position Statement on teaching and learning the social studies includes a diversity in texts and use authentic documents to promote critical and reflective inquiry. The emphasis of literacy skills in CCSS has furnished a new dimension of the impact on social studies instruction. Ross et al. (2014) argue that control over content and teacher-driven assessments have been severely modified because of high-stakes testing. Some literature suggests that social studies is a means by which to teach literacy other than for pure social studies content (Au, 2013). The debate continues. What role CCSS has played and will continue to play on social studies education will be an ongoing area of research.

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Roger Smith, PhD

nessy, Pedro Kelly, or Miguel O'Rourke. Governor Zéspedes made it clear that he thought no more of these men than he did vulgar mercenaries – hired thugs who fought for their own causes under the guise of service to foreign kings. And now, one of *them* wanted to marry his daughter.

But true love is not to be denied. On June 29, 1785, just after 9:00 p.m., Doña Angela Huett, the wife of the commandant of engineers (who was away on assignment), sent for a doctor and Father Miguel O'Reilly. The clergyman ran quickly to the Huett's home, believing that there had been a serious accident or even a fatality. When he arrived, O'Reilly was ushered into a room where he found the officer O'Donovan and young Miss Zéspedes. The couple quickly joined hands in the presence of the priest and then pronounced "the precise words constituting a clandestine marriage; which words the priest could not help but hear." Regardless of the manipulations and deceptions of the circumstances, the couple not only effected a proper elopement, but they manufactured a marriage ceremony that was now witnessed, and therefore officially sanctioned by the Church. The bride's father had

St. Augustine has long been a city of romance, where *amore* has stirred the soul deeply for over 450 years. But one particular tale of the heart created such an uproar as to require a royal pardon. On June 3, 1785, Governor Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes writes to José de Gálvez, the most powerful man in Spain's American colonies, to explain a scandalous affair that rocked the colonial capital of St. Augustine. In the midst of the British evacuation of East Florida following the conclusion of the American Revolution, disrespect for the Holy Catholic Church, and therefore King Carlos III, risked professional, social, and spiritual condemnation for the Zéspedes family, as the woman involved was his own daughter.

Governor Zéspedes, a Spanish hidalgo and nobleman, was born to courtiers of the Iberian Peninsula. However, in the colonies the polish of aristocracy could fade due to distance from the pomp and circumstance of the royal courts. On this occasion, the governor was approached by a young lieutenant seeking the hand of his daughter in marriage. From Zéspedes's description of his abject refusal to allow such a ridiculous notion to occur, we may

even arranged for the young soldier to be reassigned to Havana to keep his daughter away from the impetuous Irishman, but now that was foiled, as well.

Governor Zéspedes was in angst as he wrestled with his eighteenth-century sense of wounded honor in conjunction with his devotion to a wayward child. To have the young man banished and his daughter returned home would mean to irreparably discredit her name in Spanish society. However, the honor at stake was not only that of his family, but also King Carlos III, whom he represented.

conclude that the young suitor was neither of noble birth, nor was he a man of means. He was a simple junior officer of the lowest grade, presumably using marriage to gain social heights of which he could not possibly attain on his own merits. To make matters worse, he was not even Spanish. His name was Sublieutenant Juan O'Donovan of the Hibernian Regiment – a contingent of Irish Catholics enlisted in the Spanish army with but one purpose in mind: to carry on their ancient grievance against the English/British Empire by any means possible. This explains why so many members of the Spanish army and navy during this era had names such as Rafael O'Shaugh-



Zéspedes had no choice on this night but to suspend O'Donovan from his duties, arrest him, drag his daughter home, and then write to Jose de Galvez to explain what he saw as a dereliction of his duties – both as a trusted government official and as a father. Governor Zéspedes also had the Catholic Church with which to contend. Father O'Reilly had been duped and a holy sacrament manipulated in a scandalous manner. Father Thomas Hassett, the parish priest, was also an ecclesiastical judge in such matters, meaning that the governor would not have the final say in how this was to be resolved. His daughter's fate, both socially and spiritually, was in the hands of others. After meeting with Father O'Reilly and the presbyter, Father Hassett, it was decided that the only course of action would be to lay the fate of the young couple at the mercy of the throne. But that is not to say that the representatives of the Church and State in St. Augustine could not influence the royal decision.

O'Donovan was taken from his tent and led back to the house of Doña Angela Huett, not knowing that his fate had been pre-determined. There, to his surprise, he found his bride standing with Father O'Reilly. Apparently, Father Hassett (under no small degree of pressure from Governor Zéspedes) gave permission for Father O'Reilly to wed the couple under circumstances that did not involve deceiving the Holy Church or disgracing the sacrament of marriage. Zéspedes asked to be notified the minute the marriage became official. As a father he longed to see his daughter's reputation restored and her place in the church repaired. As the governor of royal colony and a representative of the Crown, he had no choice but to distance himself from these events until matters were no longer in the hands of men.

Governor Zéspedes could now accept the young couple in his full embrace. He attempted to cover his previous actions of social pretentiousness toward the junior officer by explaining that he never stated that the couple could *never* marry, only that O'Donovan must fulfill certain requirements in order to earn the governor's favor (basically, be reborn a nobleman and a Spaniard!). However, family and church were only two of the stanchions in the Holy trilemma of sins they had committed – the state must still be appeased.

O'Donovan willingly surrendered himself back to the authorities where he was once again placed under arrest. The bride, whose name we are not told, returned to her father's house to await the official decision in the matter by none other than King Carlos III. O'Donovan was hustled off to Havana where he remained under guard. Governor Zéspedes returned to the much less stressful duties of dealing with the departing British, while running a colony with few funds. It was not until June 2, 1786 – one full year later – that word was received in St. Augustine that, by royal order of King Carlos III, Juan O'Donovan was forgiven his indiscretions and restored to his rank and position from which he had been suspended. He could now petition for transfer to St. Augustine with the help, of course, of a strong recommendation from the governor of the colony and two well-meaning clergymen.

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Carol LaVallee

Florida has a wonderful history that has impacted the United States of America in many ways. Unfortunately, this information is not really known to students in Florida schools. Fortunately, Florida Memory can address this. The wonderful resources found at Florida Memory (<https://www.floridamemory.com/>) have a way of drawing you into old Florida. The site has many primary and secondary sources that include photos, video, audio,

With continued effort from teachers and students, Florida Memory and its resources should become part of resources found in all Florida classrooms. An example of using Florida Memory in the classroom can be seen in the Florida Memory worksheet (see page 5), first presented at FLCHE Annual Conference in 2017. This lesson entails a photograph showing Company E of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry reading a newspaper (<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/29886>).

*Florida Memory and its resources should become part of resources found in all Florida classrooms.*

documents, and timelines that will enrich any learner who finds their way to the site. Florida Memory also includes lesson plans for teachers who need resources not found in textbooks. These resources reflect some of the early, indigenous people of the state, all the way to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Florida. *The mission of the Florida Memory Program is to provide free online access to select archival resources from the collections of the State Library and Archives of Florida. Florida Memory chooses materials for digitization that illuminate significant events and individuals in the state's history, and help educate Floridians and millions of other people around the world about Florida history and culture. You can learn more about the mission of Florida Memory here: <https://www.floridamemory.com/about/>.*

This photo lesson uses historical thinking to dive into its origins. First, give the students a copy of a photo showing Company E of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry reading a newspaper, not allowing the students to see the citation. Then allow students to analyze the photo on their own. Now the students receive an activity sheet, aligned with the photo, which includes questions to help students dig deeper into the analyzation of this Florida Memory piece. Finally, reveal the citation so students are able to compare their analyzation to the facts of the photo. This is just one of many uncomplicated higher-order thinking examinations that can be done with the resources found on Florida Memory. Working with the abundance of resources on Florida Memory, teachers and students will become more comfortable using Florida Memory now and in the future.



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1. Meet the document- *What is the origin & date?*
2. Observe its parts- *What do you see?*
3. Try to make sense of it- *How might someone use the document?*
4. Use it as historical evidence- *Why would it be on [www.floridamemory.com](http://www.floridamemory.com) ?*

*Company E of the 9th Infantry reading newspapers during the Spanish-American war. 1898. Black & white photoprint. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Accessed 18 Jul. 2017.< <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/29886> >.*



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# COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN WARS: PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN AP AMERICAN HISTORY

Arren Swift

## Introduction

The popularity of project-based learning (PBL) is spreading across the nation. Jane Lo has been instrumental in the development of PBL for American Government classes and she has recently challenged teachers everywhere to try rigorous project-based learning in their own classrooms (Lo, 2018).

## Purpose

John Larmer has discussed the growing presence of PBL in social studies and recently stated: “PBL is also cropping up in Advanced Placement courses” (2018). I would like to help PBL continue to crop up in Advanced Placement United States History (APUSH) classes. The project I have developed is a cost-benefit analysis of the United States Involvement in Wars. The project covers nine key concepts identified by the AP College Board, two thematic learning objectives, and utilizes all four AP reasoning skills (AP College Board, 2017). The project increases student inquiry, creativity, and prepares them for the AP exam.

## Lesson Procedure

The students will examine the financial, social, political, and moral consequences of war. They will then determine the opportunity cost of the war and speculate how funding could have been allocated and the potential effects on America. Once in groups of four, the students have a choice of covering the Cherokee-American Wars, the Seminole Wars, the Revolutionary War, the Barbary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican American War, the American Civil War, the Spanish American War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Persian Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan, and the War in Iraq. I intentionally provide a large selection of topics for the students to help cover numerous concepts and to prevent duplicate projects.

I designed this project to promote students’ inquiry of the key concepts of the APUSH curriculum through personal investigation in a way that would refine students’ reasoning skills. The students must decide if the war was beneficial to the nation financially. Financial growth is measured by examining manufacturing industries and territorial expansions effect on the GDP.

Through financial investigation of the historical period, students will become aware of the social issues. The students will examine the effects the war had on marginalized groups of people during and after combat. Political decisions will be accounted for and explained as to how they changed financial, social, or defense policies.

*...investigating, interpreting, and developing a perspective  
...is the goal of social studies instruction.*

The students should be able to look beyond the monetary value of the decisions and examine the moral issues involved with war. It is important the students realize war affects peoples’ lives in many ways. The students must explain if the war they research was an act that suppressed or liberated groups of people. How were all groups of Americans treated during the conflict? Was action taken to save lives of persecuted people? Was the action taken too late? The examination of morality adds complexity to the assignment and can lead to an insightful class discussion during student presentations.

This project will provide the students with a deeper understanding of American wars, the problems that faced America at the time, and how involvement in the war affected economic, political, social, and moral principles. Through this process, the student will be investigating, interpreting, and developing a perspective, which according to Barton and Levstik is the goal of social studies instruction (Barton & Levstik, 2015). The students can personalize their experience by selecting how they would like to present the information to the class. I encourage the students to be creative in the method they choose to communicate their findings. Many students chose to create a tri-fold poster board that includes pictures, graphs, charts, images, and text-based information. Other students have created a video documentary and staged a talk show style debate. A few students have selected a formal research paper as the means to communicate their findings. Regardless of the method students select, they present their research to the class. This experience is an essential element of a gold standard PBL assignment (Larmer, 2018).

## Conclusion

Project-based learning can offer an effective way for students to interact with the material and learn valuable skills that will transcend the classroom. With the inclusion of meaningful projects in the





curriculum, the student experience, and learning gains will be elevated (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). As educators increase the frequency of PBL as a method employed in their classrooms, it is important to identify projects that address curriculum standards.

I believe the Cost-Benefit Analysis of the United States Involvement in Wars, if conducted appropriately, can be a gold standard project-based learning assignment. This project helps my students investigate time periods of American history in great depth. The students examine multiple perspectives of events and construct an argument to support their stance. This project helped my students learn more about society and the true cost of war. Through this process, my students became more reflective and better critical thinkers. I hope these same skills are utilized when their generation is deciding if participation in future conflicts is appropriate.

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