CHAPTER 5

Literacy Learning Clubs in Social Studies

Heads are clustered around a computer screen. Students are eagerly scrolling through photographs that were recently discovered in the basement of a school library and scanned into the town's digital archives. It shows children sitting in a room that is remarkably unchanged from the one these children find themselves in wearing very different clothing and holding different types of books. Questions are being thrown out around the table:

"I wonder when this is?"

"Can you see the title of the book? Let's see if we can find the publication date."

"Probably the same math book we are using now [children laugh]."

The children continue to investigate, digging deeper, noticing differences across race and gender roles, using their 21st-century resources to enter the 20th-century world that seems right at their fingertips and yet is over a century away. In this moment they are historians, working with primary source documents against secondary pieces of information to craft a narrative that describes the life experience of these students nearly 100 years ago. . . .

Social studies instruction is inclusive of a broad range of disciplines. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, n.d.) offers this description:

> NCSS defines social studies as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence." Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. In essence, social studies promotes knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs. And because civic issues—such as health care, crime, and foreign policy—are multidisciplinary in nature, understanding these issues and developing resolutions to them require multidisciplinary education. These characteristics are the key defining aspects of social studies.

To this end, the NCSS advocates for considering curriculum thematically through the lens of these 10 themes:

1. Culture.
2. Time, continuity, and change.
3. People, places, and environments.
4. Individual development and identity.
5. Individuals, groups, and institutions.
6. Power, authority, and governance.
7. Production, distribution, and consumption.
8. Science, technology, and society.
9. Global connections.
10. Civic ideals and practices.

Currently, states develop their own set of standards around the framework established by the NCSS, and many social studies educators describe the arduous task of deciding what content should be included or excluded within a set of standards and curriculum. Looking through the lens of themes and then applying to these thematic studies the various disciplines within social studies offers the comprehensive avenue into student learning that the NCSS recommends. This perspective aligns with the paradigm of literacy learning clubs presented in this text, which suggests that collaborative experiences around a shared topic motivate natural inquiry and the purposeful use of discipline specific literacy to learn.

In this chapter, I step inside literacy learning clubs as a tool for learning in a social studies classroom. Literacy learning clubs offer a structure for engaging learners in core social studies content in ways that support the natural development of discipline-specific literacies and reject traditional paradigms of students as passive recipients of facts and features of a discipline. Here I look specifically at how literacy learning clubs allow the natural development of the literacy habits

necessary for success in understanding social studies content in grade 4–8 classrooms. The examples offered are designed to support elementary school teachers who are responsible for multiple subjects as well as those who are content specialists and teach multiple periods of social studies throughout the day and any range of approaches along this continuum.

Social studies is inclusive of diverse content, so while you are reading this chapter and stepping inside the classrooms within the "Voices from the Classroom" section, it is useful to consider strategies for adapting this framework to the particular social studies curriculum you are considering using the literacy learning club paradigm to investigate. Many of the examples offered in this chapter enter social studies through the lens of history and political science, not as a surface study of dates and events but as an umbrella through which these core themes recommended by the NCSS can be understood.

Study of the political and cultural structures of ancient China, for example, gives students the opportunity to develop the capacity to analyze how societal structures influence individuals. Developing this cognitive framework allows students to begin to develop the capacity to analyze the current structures surrounding their own environment. Content learning and conceptual understanding are developing because of one another. Using themes alongside skills or specific time periods, people, or places invites an integrated use of the various areas of social studies outlined by the NCSS.

Disciplinary Literacy: The Literacy Lenses of Social Scientists

In a study of the literacy habits of disciplinary experts, Shanahan, Shanahan, and Misischia (2011) surveyed historians to determine the literacy skills needed for success in their work. Their findings suggest that historians recognize the need to use multiple text types that include primary and secondary sources when examining moments in history. To effectively access this content, students need a strong understanding of the various text structures and features they are reading and writing.

These social scientists were attuned to the relationship between narrative and argument. Historians believe that, in order to arrive at an understanding of a specific time period or event, texts need to be read in relation to one another because this will allow the reader to evaluate and ultimately develop a comprehensive understanding of the time period, topic, or theme. Similarly, as writers, historians draw on these sources to create their own historical narrative and argument; in doing so, they are acutely aware that their own positions need to be documented

as they influence their findings. Shanahan et al. (2011) offer the following in their findings:

> These historians, during the focus group discussions, expressed abhorrence at the idea of instruction including only a single textbook in a high school history class because sourcing and corroboration are so central to history reading, and neither would be possible with only a single text. It was not that they were opposed to the idea of using a textbook for such classes, but only that such a textbook would have to be supplemented with other primary and secondary sources if students were to be afforded the opportunity to engage in authentic history reading. (p. 423)

So what does that look like in practice? It begins not with the text or the facts, but instead with the question or theme as outlined by the NCSS. Then multiple text types that are inclusive of specific facts are drawn together in order to understand the "big idea" (Draper, 2010; Duke, 2014; Nokes, 2010).

When learning about World War II, for example, students as young as fourth grade may read *The Diary of Ann Frank,* a narrative, alongside maps and figures of the patterns of battle, textbook analysis, and summary of the events, as well as video footage and still photographs. To get at content, students need to be able to understand how the text type they are working with positions meaning (i.e., author's argument, source, perspective). In addition, there is the implicit expectation that students will synthesize knowledge gained through these various text types to arrive at their own general understanding of the topic or theme, World War II. This is a sophisticated series of literacy moves, and in content-focused classes the danger is that we may not be offering students enough information about the text structure itself and the literacy strategies needed to work within these text types, so students are left to discover how to negotiate these moves on their own.

Shanahan (2015) took this research and mapped it on to social studies pedagogy and suggests that in social studies students must "read multiple genres, understand the language of history, and write history" (p. 12). Shanahan et al. (2011) also analyzed the discourse patterns of historians and noted that when engaging as readers and writers in social studies, understanding the discipline-specific genres is necessary:

> Coffin (1997) classified common genres of history to include (a) historical recount (to retell the events in a sequence), (b) historical account (to account for why things happened in a particular sequence), (c) historical explanation (to explain past events by examining cause and effect), and (d) historical argument (to advocate a particular interpretation). (p. 398)

This paradigm will help students analyze text structure as well as structure texts themselves.

This view of what it means to read and write like a social scientist recognizes the importance of disciplinary literacy. This is a departure from content-area literacy, which suggests that generalizable literacy skills and strategies can be mapped on to all disciplines. Instead, looking at content from a disciplinary literacy lens suggests that there are distinct patterns of what it means to successfully read and write within each discipline, and it is through those patterns that we enter instruction. We continue to explore this phenomenon in the next several chapters, which look inside mathematics and science. Understanding content-area reading and writing as *disciplinary literacy,* the unique literacy skills necessary for success within the discipline being studied, is at the heart of literacy learning clubs in social studies classes as well as in the other disciplines explored in this book (Draper, 2010; Duke, 2014; Fisher & Frey, 2015; Shanahan, 2015). Similarly, the CCSS recognize these unique skills within the standards in their call to infuse discipline-specific literacy instruction within the core content areas (see the *Common Core State Standards in Grades 6–12 Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects,* available at *www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/introduction*).

Literacy Learning Clubs in Social Studies Classrooms

Literacy Learning Clubs in Elementary Social Studies Classrooms

Social studies is often cited as the discipline that receives the least amount of instructional time in the elementary grades. The 2010 National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP) data confirm this claim, noting that 80% of fourth-grade students had teachers who reported spending approximately 61 minutes per week on social studies. This number jumps to 95% of teachers spending 3 or more hours in eighth grade (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

This time spent on social studies learning in the elementary grades has continued to diminish as high-stakes assessments in language arts and math have increased (Fitchett, Heafner, & Van Fossen, 2014). Fitchett et al. (2014) found that when social studies is integrated into the ELA, more time is devoted to the content. They note:

> Moreover, results indicate that integration of social studies content into ELA instruction is positively associated with increased time for social studies and more frequent dynamic instruction. We encourage teacher-leaders to collaborate

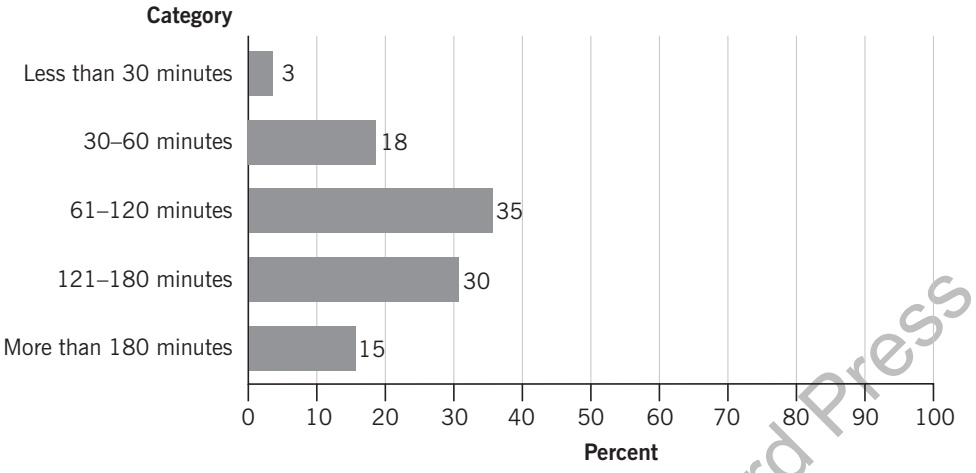

FIGURE 5.1. Classroom context: Time spent on social studies (fourth grade). As part of the 2010 NAEP civics assessment, teachers of fourth and eighth graders were asked, "About how much time in total do you spend with your class on social studies instruction in a typical week?" Possible responses were less than 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, 61 to 120 minutes, 121 to 180 minutes, and more than 180 minutes. About 80% of fourth-grade students had teachers who reported spending 61 minutes or more on social studies instruction in a typical week. From NAEP (2010).

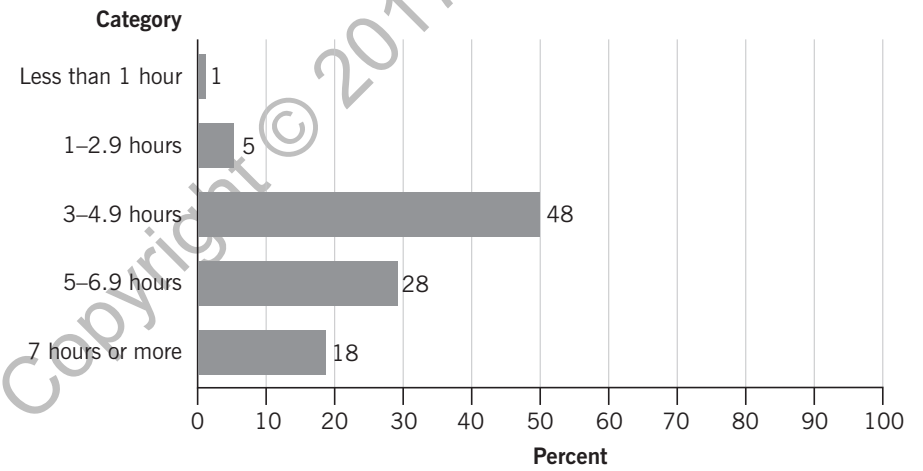

FIGURE 5.2. Classroom context: Time spent on social studies (eighth grade). As part of the 2010 civics assessment, teachers of fourth and eighth graders were asked, "About how much time in total do you spend with your class on social studies instruction in a typical week?" Possible responses were less than 1 hour, 1–2.9 hours, 3–4.9 hours, 5–6.9 hours, and 7 hours or more. About 95% of eighth-grade students had teachers who reported spending 3 hours or more on social studies instruction in a typical week. From NAEP (2010).

> and share ideas for using integration as an effective strategy for improving overall social studies instruction among grade levels. Finding curricular spaces in which social studies can share instructional time with other subjects, specifically ELA, is a practical step toward improving overall instruction. (p. 25)

These findings make sense. In many elementary classrooms, instruction in math and language arts frequently spill into the "time" reserved for social studies; as a result, time spent engaging in social studies learning is minimal. In addition, it is common practice in elementary classrooms to cycle between science and social studies. This flawed practice often begins in the preservice years when minimal time is spent on methods instruction in both science and social studies pedagogy; this sends the message that these content areas have limited value (Fitchett et al., 2014). In my own institution, we currently offer a blended-methods 3-credit-hour-course, Teaching Science, Social Studies and the Arts, to our K–6 certification candidates, while Teaching Math is its own 3-credit-hour course and Teaching Literacy is two 3-credit-hour courses. It is not enough to say that the disciplines of social studies and science are embedded within language arts and math.

Research linking disciplinary literacy and work advocated for by the NCSS suggests that the solution is more than simply infusing social studies texts into the language arts instructional period in the upper elementary self-contained classroom. Instead, we need to go beyond integration toward transformative study that allows students as young as fourth grade (and perhaps even earlier) as well as middle school students to recognize the different lenses they use to access social studies content. The literacy learning clubs paradigm that puts topic instead of text at the center of collaborative investigations suggests that students acquire social studies content when they learn the specific literacy skills needed to navigate the information providing them with tools that are not limited to the classroom. We explore this point in our "Voices from the Classroom" section later in the chapter.

Literacy Learning Clubs in Middle School Social Studies

A dramatic shift in time spent on social studies instruction occurs when students enter middle school. There is a range of content that students and teachers are expected to work with in these grades. Suddenly, students who may have had very little experience with social studies, taught by teachers who may have had insufficient preparation in the methods of social studies instruction, are expected to demonstrate expertise. It is no surprise that many of these students struggle as they make this leap. Social studies in the middle school typically receives similar time as the other content areas, and students suddenly find themselves working with

disciplinary experts who may have limited understanding of the literacy demands needed to negotiate the content.

The CSSS in ELA offer specific criteria for middle school instruction defined by the standards as grades 6–8 in history/social studies. As readers and writers of the discipline, students are expected to engage in the following in social studies:

Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3: Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5: Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9: Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (NGA & CCSSO, 2010)

These skills refer to the discipline-specific habits necessary for success in the social sciences. (Nokes, 2010; Shanahan et al., 2011; Shanahan, 2015). Essentially, students of the discipline must be able to move across the various text types specific to the social sciences that include reading multiple sources (i.e., primary and secondary sources—oral, visual, and written) centered on the same topic. This is a sophisticated type of reading that requires understanding different text structures, reading for both content as well as the underlying motive of the author, and linking these together to arrive at meaning.

The availability of many primary sources digitally offers the opportunity to broaden traditional conceptions of textbook-driven social studies instruction. Textbook-driven instruction is ineffective in both engaging students in the content and building the skills necessary for fully understanding the discipline in ways that allows students to apply the skills outside of the classroom (Fitchett et al., 2014). The rise of virtual field trips, the accessibility of virtual reality with accessible simple-to-use devices (e.g., Google cardboard), along with the digitization of many primary source documents and collections, means that studying these documents and places is often only a point and a click away. The need to read and write a variety of text types when learning social studies demonstrates the necessity to begin building these skills in the elementary grades so that students become increasingly comfortable weaving sources together to arrive at meaning and then putting together their findings using the same multiple modes of text that they negotiated when investigating the topic.

Think about the last United States election cycle. Arriving at an individual perspective required a careful sifting of information across still and moving images and spoken and printed texts, with a careful eye to the source of the information. The ability to consider text source and structure alongside the content presented is crucial for full comprehension to occur. This "life-readiness" skill must begin in the elementary grades and continue into middle school and high school, with explicit attention given to the strategies effective readers and writers adopt when working across multiple text types to comprehend and construct meaning. Literacy learning clubs offer a framework that helps students develop these skills.

For example, studying the civil rights movement involves more than simply reading a chapter in a textbook. It is possible to view original footage of demonstrations, to hear accounts from those in attendance representing a variety of positions, and to read the actual newspaper articles written at the time through public access to digital archives. Such a project requires helping students understand *how* to read these different text types with the healthy skepticism needed as well as demonstrating *where* to find the information. Working across multiple print and nonprint resources is a sophisticated literacy task that requires careful study of the form of each to weave together meaning.

The literacy learning club paradigm offers an opportunity to build these skills through authentic study because at the heart of the investigation is the chance to seek out information in ways that naturally motivate the participants to draw on these multiple resources and to arrive at their own answers. The same skills that are described in the CCSS are necessary for college, career, and life success. Learning how to navigate across various historical text types and to analyze content by also considering text structure and source is a skill that allows students to read the multiple types of streaming videos, sound bites, newspapers, and texts exploring past and current events with an understanding of the need to integrate multiple sources when arriving at an understanding and/or position of a current event as it unfolds. In Chapter 9, we examine this developing skill set as a vehicle for engaging in social justice.

Consider how these practices are enacted as we explore two teachers embarking on using literacy learning clubs in their social studies curriculum.

Literacy Learning Clubs in Practice: Voices from the Classroom

Mr. P's Fifth-Grade Classroom

Mr. P is frustrated by the increasing lack of time allotted for social studies in his fifth-grade classroom. According to the curriculum, the students are supposed to be studying early U.S. history and geography, but that has been relegated to worksheets and videos at the end of the day. While Mr. P knows that he is "covering" the information, he can see by his students' affect and assessments that they are neither engaged with nor learning the content.

With the high-stakes tests in language arts and math looming and his own assessment linked to his students' success on the test, he is anxious to encroach on language arts time but sees that perhaps using literacy learning clubs with social studies content may allow him to engage students in core literacy skills while also attending to the content. Fresh from a PLC where he and other colleagues investigated the idea of disciplinary literacy, he is eager to try out this framework to transform his students' perceptions of social studies.

Mr. P decides that the unit on the Revolutionary War is a good place to pilot this approach. Instead of beginning with the textbook and facts, he turns to the themes of the NCSS to generate questions that the class will investigate using primary and secondary sources from the Revolutionary War. These themes include:

1. Culture.
2. Time, continuity, and change.

3. People, places, and environments.
4. Individual development and identity.
5. Individuals, groups, and institutions.
6. Power, authority, and governance.
7. Production, distribution, and consumption.
8. Science, technology, and society.
9. Global connections.
10. Civic ideals and practices.

The questions include:

"Who held the power?"
"How did groups work together?"
"Who were the people and places involved?"
"What was the culture of the times like?"

These four questions challenge students to investigate both the British and American perspective and, when brought together, create a comprehensive portrait of these students' understanding of the Revolutionary War that is beyond the traditional names, dates, and often singular interpretation that a textbook author offers.

Mr. P does a quick "question talk" (not unlike a book talk) around each of these core questions and invites students to rank order those they are most interested in pursuing. Mr. P then forms groups of four to five students based on interest in beginning the class's investigation of the Revolutionary War (see the Appendix for samples of how to organize choices).

Mr. P has designated 2 weeks for the project and is drawing on 40 minutes of the 90-minute language arts block to engage in the investigation. In addition to the literacy learning clubs investigation, Mr. P engages the class in a whole-class read-aloud of *The Revolutionary War: An Interactive History Adventure (You Choose: History)* by Elizabeth Raum that has the class debating, questioning, and learning about the time period by placing themselves directly in the setting of the events. The use of narrative to engage students emotionally and cognitively is well documented (Duke, 2014; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007).

Mr. P begins each learning club session with a mini-lesson specific to the needs of the group. These include:

- How to access primary source documents electronically (e.g., *http://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/*).
- Methods for identifying point of view/perspective of a document.

- Strategies for locating information.
- Corroborating information across sources.
- Understanding core academic vocabulary specific to the study.
- Methods historians use to develop a multimodal presentation to share findings.

After each 10- to 15-minute mini-lesson, the groups meet to plan their work for the session and then assign individuals to tasks, which usually involve locating specific documents/texts that will help them uncover the answer to their questions. As they work, Mr. P's role shifts to that of facilitator as he mentors, coaches, reteaches, and observes the students develop a view of the questions specific to their group. Each session ends with the groups coming together (the focusing finish) to share findings and discoveries and reflect on the strategies used to engage with the content. The last five–ten minutes of their work, the think-aloud, allows Mr. P to continue to model expert thinking as he explicates the strategies he uses to navigate the multiple text types students are using in their investigations.

Each group has a shared Google Document that allows them to work on their own time as well as to locate and share findings and information. In the second week of the project, the groups move toward synthesizing their findings into a shared presentation and can choose from a variety of mediums to offer their response to the core question. Each group is required to use a mix of texts and visuals to share their findings with each other. There are a variety of tools at the groups' disposal, including cloud-based applications such as Animoto, Google Slides, and annotated screen casts. In classrooms that do not have access to the technological tools, the same task can be accomplished by creating a medium such as a pamphlet or a poster. Students are responsible for the content studied in the other group and end the work with an individual reflection on what they understand about all of the core questions as well as what they are left still wondering. This also becomes an opportunity to reflect on the literacy learning club experience itself, asking students to identify the specific literacy skills needed to complete the tasks outlined.

At the conclusion of the learning club, Mr. P believes the students have a strong understanding of the complexity of the Revolutionary War in ways that go beyond the traditional memorization of the time line. This is evidenced by the individual reflective papers students submit in which they provide an overview of the unit of study as well as reflect on the literacy learning club experience as a vehicle for learning the content. In doing so, the students have had the opportunity to develop a set of literacy tools and skills needed when looking across sources to arrive at meaning. Mr. P is hopeful that these skills will continue to be transferred in their study of social studies.

Ms. C's Seventh-Grade Classroom

Ms. C has been teaching seventh-grade social studies for 15 years, and her educational background includes an undergraduate major in secondary education and history. The focus of the curriculum has always been on ancient civilizations. The class has a single textbook that takes them through the ancient civilizations, including Egypt, China, and India. Typically, the class goes through each as a unit that is predominately shaped by a whole-class lecture and individual readings and responses, with the occasional supplement of a film. The students in Ms. C's class are not very enthusiastic about the class and are often heard asking the question, "When are we ever going to use any of this?" Students perform well on assessments and complete the homework, but Ms. C is not convinced that they are actually *learning* in a way that will carry with them beyond the grade they receive in the class.

Ms. C recognizes that in this approach the content does not seem relevant to students because there is no connection. With the new CCSS in discipline-specific literacy, Ms. C recognizes the need to shift some pieces of her pedagogy. Ms. C decides to pilot literacy learning clubs for one of the units of study, Ancient Egypt, in an effort to engage students and better infuse the new standards. Ms. C begins by separating out the different subtopics of the unit. These include:

- Religion
- Habitat
- Social system
- Jobs

Typically, the students read the chapter that includes a summary of each of these subtopics and answer questions, while Ms. C adds information in her lecture. Class interaction predominantly includes a question/answer recitation from the responses at the end of the chapter, and small-group collaborations occur around those questions.

For this pilot, Ms. C introduces the students to the idea of literacy learning clubs. She explains that she is going to create "expert teams" based on interest, and instead of lecturing on content will focus more on strategies used to *access* content. The students and Ms. C are all excited to try something new. The experts, she explains, will be the students themselves as they dive into their club topic.

Ms. C begins with a brief talk on each of the subtopics of Ancient Egypt. The students then break into their teams for 2 weeks and investigate the topic. At the start of each class, Ms. C introduces and models for students how to locate sources beyond the textbook. These mini-lessons include:

- Looking at the works cited at the end of the text for additional sources
- Using media center resources to supplement learning
- Considering the different text types (e.g., video of a researcher describing findings compared to the section of the textbook) in locating information
- Looking across sources to corroborate information
- Creating an interactive presentation to share with the class

Ms. C has some reservations about this approach because while the entire class will read the text, they will only become "expert" in one area. She worries that they won't retain the same information as when they move through their traditional units of study. The learning teams schedule meetings with Ms. C—meetings that she calls guided learning sessions—to review their findings and discuss their plan for presentation. This guided learning framework gives Ms. C the opportunity to clarify misconceptions and offer opportunities for additional resources.

At the conclusion of seven class sessions (45 minutes each), the students spend the remaining 3 days putting together their final presentations. The class has access to a few computers and tables for this project, but they are not typically engaged in digital tools. Each group creates a poster presentation on their topic (though in a technology-rich classroom this can easily be done digitally), and on the 10th day the class engages in a gallery walk to learn more about the unit as a whole. Their homework assignment that evening is to write a description of what they have come to learn about the core areas of Egypt and their view of using literacy learning clubs to engage in this unit of study.

The class is generally very positive, with some recommendations for more time to investigate and to learn how to gather more resources. Ms. C is just beginning and listens to what they have to say. She looks forward to continuing to move forward, building her own understanding of the disciplinary literacy habits necessary for her students' success in social studies.

These two teachers, Mr. P and Ms. C, composites of teachers who have engaged in this type of work, reflect the philosophy that literacy learning clubs are a paradigm for instruction that must be constructed according to the content in which the teacher is positioned as well as the context in which he or she works. Rather than a recipe, it is a guideline where teachers build their unit of study around the belief that learning is social, collaborative, and inquiry based. The direction this takes will be influenced by the social studies content, the resources available, and the prior experiences of both the teachers and students. In this way, the learning of all participants continuously evolves as teachers and students engage in deep reflection about ways into the content as well as the content itself. It is a deep level

of metacognition that reflects the belief that academic learning is not relegated to artificial classroom exercises and surface recall.

Summary

Social studies instruction is inclusive of a wide range of topics, such as economics, psychology, geography, and history. According to the NCSS, in K–12 education this seemingly disparate collection of content is best organized around themes. Doing so motivates students to create a cognitive lens for understanding society and culture and the many pieces that account for these shifts over time. Generally, this is contextualized within the study of history, which if done with this approach becomes as much about the content studied as it is about developing a habit of mind for analyzing these structures.

Literacy learning clubs offer a natural paradigm for engaging students in developing this cognitive framework that motivates content learning in the discipline and creates a lens for working with content outside of the classroom. This is at the heart of civics education that underscores the development of the social sciences in K–12 education. Despite an awareness of the significance of this type of learning, little time is spent on social studies education in the elementary grades. The research and standards demonstrate the need to increase instructional time for social studies. Literacy learning clubs offer one pathway in grades 4–8 for accomplishing this goal effectively and efficiently.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What role do digital tools play in literacy learning clubs in social studies instruction?
2. In what areas of the social studies curriculum do you see this framework working to support student learning?
3. What challenges need to be considered before integrating this approach into social studies instruction?

ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

- Examine the social studies curriculum you are currently asked to use. Develop a one-week (or longer, at your discretion) unit of study that invites students to use the literacy learning club paradigm to support learning. If possible, develop this unit collaboratively with a colleague so that you can support one another throughout as well as compare findings at the conclusion of the study.
- After you have engaged in this unit, consider the following:
  - What did you notice about student learning?
  - What changes will you make if you use this paradigm again?
  - How did you assess student learning?

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