

‘IT IS DEMOCRATIC CITIZENS WE ARE AFTER.’ THE POSSIBILITIES AND THE
EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF SHIRLEY H.
ENGLE

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In 1990, toward the end of his life, Shirley H. Engle somberly wrote that the picture of social studies as taught in today’s schools, “is a dismal one indeed.”¹ He continued:

Among students, there is widespread dislike and indifference to the social studies as they exist today. Students seem to see little relevance between what we are teaching in the social studies and the problems of the real world they know or think they know about. They find the subject, primarily the exposition of history, extremely resistant to learning, easily forgotten, and of no consequence in any case. The textbook is the standard fare of social studies in the schools. The goal is to reduce the text to memory. Students complain of the excessive memory load imposed by the social studies. Further, today’s social studies...resists the study of problems either within disciplines or related problems in the society at large. It avoids any controversial topic, past or present. It tests for memory of facts but seldom assesses the ability of citizens to use information in thinking about pressing historical and public issues.²

For almost five decades during his professional life, Engle was deeply concerned about the philosophical views that made up social studies education, as well as ways those views were being practiced in the classrooms. In particular, he criticized the philosophical views of two contemporary educators, Edgar Wesley and Jerome Bruner. Wesley believed that social studies was merely a simplified way to organize and teach efficiency in transmitting the body of desired knowledge, concepts and generalizations that make up the various social sciences disciplines presented in elementary and secondary school curricula. Teaching would include primarily teacher-directed use of textbooks, audio-visual aids (e.g., maps, pictures, diagrams, graphs, charts), and well organized lectures.³ Bruner, on the other hand, posited that the curriculum should imitate real life social science laboratories, allowing students to become miniature social scientists involved in academic inquiry projects as outlined in problem-oriented units found in progressive textbooks, student manuals, and pamphlets. The number of academic units would be limited by the amount of problem-oriented information and the time needed for students to “discover” desired knowledge and inquiry skills.⁴

Engle viewed both social studies traditions as nothing more than bodies of predigested and organized knowledge, differing only in the ways the knowledge appeared to be presented—either by teachers transmitting to students or by students discovering with teacher guidance.⁵ He believed both approaches carefully controlled students at almost every instructional point to promote efficiency in transmitting prescribed values of authority and obedience, along with desired knowledge and skills.⁶ Engle also condemned the instructional activities used in both approaches as a “sorry arsenal” of “ground-covering fetish” practices: “bankrupt,” “manipulative,” “unconscionable,” “feeble and nearly useless” in promoting a superficial coverage of “correct” answers and “competitive grading” that in turn shortchanged and ignored the actual citizenship experiences of youth.⁷

Engle argued that social studies needed more pedagogic imagination and vision, moving away from and dismantling such archaic practices. A redefinition of social studies, an updated curriculum, and new and more effective approaches to instruction were the bases of Engle’s program for social studies

reform. Engle defined the teaching of social studies as a powerful and necessary tool in the development of an informed, critically conscious, and socially responsible citizenry active in the construction of a just, equitable, and democratic society.⁸ His approach to building curriculum linked teachings in school to the social reality of the community, envisioning a critical role for students to investigate, analyze, and resolve society's serious social problems.⁹ He intended to generate a curriculum to move beyond an encyclopedic approach to the organization of knowledge. To develop the necessary knowledge base, skills, and experiences for his progressive social curriculum, he included locating, gathering, analyzing, and using information from a myriad of sources, including real life situations related to problems and concerns of students. Equally important, Engle offered a set of innovative suggestions for problem-based inquiry, encouraging students to pursue any problem as they studied and resolved social questions, problems, and issues-large and small.¹⁰

A Suggested Framework of Engle's Curriculum/Instructional Social Studies Project

Although Shirley Engle was best known for his 1960 article in *Social Education*, "Decision Making: The Heart of Social Studies Instruction," and for his 1988 book with Anna Ochoa-Becker, *Education For Democratic Citizenship: Decision Making In The Social Studies*, during the span of time from 1947 to 1990, he developed his progressive pedagogic notions of democracy, civic participation, and public responsibility as he established a curriculum framework for action and as he mapped out the key strategies that connected his social studies project.¹¹ What follows is a discussion of the central components of Shirley H. Engle's social studies framework, based on a collection of his writings.

Each of the components that make up Engle's social studies framework is described, in terms of Engle's personal beliefs, meanings, and experiences related to social studies curriculum and instruction, as evidenced in his writings. From these writings, salient patterns have emerged as specific components have been identified and developed. Within each component, themes are identified, with common patterns and examples representing specific tasks and practices. These patterns and examples may prove useful in orienting practical educational actions to improve the human condition in more democratic and participatory ways. The following components that make up the critical building blocks of Engle's alternative framework for the social studies will be discussed: (1) educational aims, (2) courses of study, (3) the teaching-learning process, and (4) the evaluation process.

*Educational Aims*¹²

The social studies, according to Engle, should be concerned with preparing democratic citizens to make socially responsible decisions, by giving students the opportunity to confront persistent problems found in society.

The goal of social studies is to develop and prepare the democratic citizen. Social studies instruction must be couched within the framework of the citizen. For Engle, the citizen is concerned about public and private matters of social concern as well as about the social well-being and development of human society. Such a citizen has sound and socially responsible beliefs and convictions, believes in her/his own independent and political efficacy in determining the course of society and the quality of her/his own life, and uses a process of intelligent decision making to test beliefs and convictions against opposing facts and values. Therefore, social studies classrooms need to become democratic, instructional laboratories in order for students to develop, cultivate, practice, and implement the characteristics of a good citizen.

A characteristic of intelligent and socially responsible behavior is concern for others and for all humanity. Intelligent and socially responsible behavior requires that students develop and maintain concern for the dignity of the human condition: becoming aware, tolerant, and appreciative of human diversity; realizing the complexity of human relations; and respecting the rights of individuals. Intelligent and socially responsible behavior is associated with a democratic activist philosophy that "embraces both mindful conformity and mindful non-conformity." Classrooms should be places that embrace such beliefs as "the democratic ideal of participation and fair play," while also encouraging students to address

injustices and search for a “social good.”¹³ “The ideal end is a mindful and socially responsible activism. Mindful change for the improved quality of all our lives is the only reasonable goal.”¹⁴

The pedagogical outcomes of intelligent and socially responsible behaviors include a belief that students have a duty to be actively engaged in political and social activities, but also have “the capacity to participate in the continual reconstruction and improvement of society.”¹⁵

The application of a questioning intellect and independence of mind in making socially responsible decisions involves the proficient use of social criticism. Social criticism, as defined by Engle, means giving attention to a specific issue that requires one to select among facts, interpretations, values, and acts; engaging independently in the process of critical questioning and reflecting in an attempt to make sense of the issue both in the past and in the present; and ultimately making a “tentative” decision to find a socially responsible solution. Pedagogically, social criticism is the practice and training in the skill of making intelligent and socially responsible decisions at three levels: (1) carefully collecting pertinent facts, based on evidence; (2) identifying the beliefs and values operating in a given situation; and (3) synthesizing all available information, facts, principles, and values in making a decision to resolve the situation. For social problem solving to take place, students must learn to gather pertinent data from the social sciences and other sources, such as the language arts and sciences, and to decide what the data mean. They practice how to apply pertinent data as proof in the verification of factual claims. They also learn as they apply information to social problems the importance of nurturing a critical and tentative attitude toward knowledge.

The curriculum model also provides a conceptual framework emphasizing the importance of identifying and analyzing conflicting value systems held by various groups, including the students, as these value systems affect the social problem. Identification of value systems has students recognize that they and others have a frame of reference—a set of beliefs about what the world is morally like, can be like, and should be like. This frame of reference is an important determinant of behavior in resolving any social problem. As they develop their abilities to rationally consider value claims and to make reasoned value judgments, students need to recognize, learn, and practice their “right to harbor doubt about beliefs” and their capacity to think independently “in spite of the beliefs and institutions imposed upon them by the status quo.”¹⁶ And foremost, practicing social criticism allows students to develop a discipline or disposition as they make intelligent and responsible social judgments in accord with “valid principles of critical thinking” and with the study of conflicting beliefs and values.

Students should have the opportunity to study and understand thoroughly the important and persistent problems that confront the American people. A social problem exists when there are multiple ways to provide people with what to believe, how to behave, or what courses of action to follow for a given issue or problem. A democratic classroom culture in which “teachers and students [are] free to inquire, discuss openly, follow any lead, pursue any problem wherever [the] pursuit may take them” is designed around a curriculum centered in persistent social problems.¹⁷ “The [classroom] becomes more that of deliberated criticism and reconstruction of society than that of transmission.”¹⁸ This genuine uncertainty between alternative solutions (or no immediate solution in sight) allows students to make their own history, executing real solutions to real problems. The curriculum of persistent social problems includes problems both in and outside the classroom, important questions and problems which arise naturally from the life of the student, and important questions confronting society (e.g., poverty, pollution, crime, war, justice).

Engle assumed that the study of real social problems in the classroom and in the corresponding community, as well as immersion in the process for studying problems, would encourage students to stay interested and informed about a number of social problems throughout their lives.

*Courses of Study*¹⁹

Engle had definite notions on how the content of social studies courses should be selected. Social studies courses should study persistent social problems, gathering data from the social sciences—including students’ experiences and points-of-view—and should emphasize the process of decision making.

Social studies courses should revolve around the study and resolution of persistent social problems. The cornerstone of the social studies curriculum ought to be the investigation of persistent social problems (i.e., current controversial issues) that confront society and need to be resolved for the good of society. In developing such a curriculum, Engle suggests the following organizing principles:

(1) Units...may be developed around current controversial problems.

(2) Units...may be developed around the basic needs for the satisfaction of which all cultures strive and around which all controversy has raged. Such units might be entitled: How shall we feed, shelter, and clothe the people of the world? How shall we conserve and fully use the human and natural resources of the world? How shall we provide for the spiritual and aesthetic needs of the people of the world? How shall we provide for education and for the improvement of living throughout the world? How shall we organize for group living and personal security? Each of these titles implies an unfinished task and several possible courses of action based on differences in points of view....

(3) Units...may be developed around the study of particular cultures. Since the purpose of the culturally based units is to develop insight, the content would be concerned not so much with events as with a people's beliefs and with the way in which they lived and met their basic needs....

(4) Units...may be developed around the great and persisting issues that have confronted mankind throughout the ages. Some of these might be individual freedom and security, the establishment of law and justice, the rights of labor, the relationship between the races of men, civil rights, the form of governments, the relationship between the governing and the governed, and the control of the world's resources and populating of its lands. Each of these issues could be the core for the development of a unit which would not only focus attention on a controversial question in the present but would afford a rich opportunity to consult the experience of the race in dealing with these issues and to study and evaluate the rationalizations by which men have defended courses of action with respect to these problems.²⁰

Students gather and use factual evidence from the social sciences and other sources. The curriculum involves relatively large quantities of information from a variety of sources, which students study in depth to examine the particular issue or problem. Sources include the social science disciplines: the humanities, the philosophies and religions, the language arts, the sciences, and the performing arts. Next, instruction focuses on utilizing the information: locating, gathering, organizing, and identifying from large quantities of factual material a relatively small number of basic ideas, concepts, themes, and generalizations that are relevant to the problem at hand. The identified data serve to clarify and justify students' positions, act as evidence in making decisions, and contribute to the resolution of social problems. Also, data learned out of the necessity to make intellectual decisions are more easily learned and less quickly forgotten than facts in isolation.

Student' experiences and points-of-view are also useful sources for curriculum development. Working from the lives and preoccupations of students themselves, students can be encouraged to open up about their feelings, share their experiences, and provide any knowledge that they might have about the problem. If social studies education is to be effective for students, it must start with concrete reference to their realms of life, rather than with abstracted notions. Drawing on students' collective experiences as sources of knowledge helps students see connections between their own life experiences and the problem, thus giving a personal quality and ownership to the problem, usually leading working together as a class to analyze the varied dimensions and relations of a problem that may lead to a possible solution.

Students must learn the importance of studying belief systems and values as they make decisions. If the teaching of social studies is to "contribute to the development of intelligent and socially responsible group behavior, it must be dominated throughout by a consciousness of human values and by the use of these values in making social judgments."²¹ Value judging, or the studying of values, leads to identifying, investigating, and analyzing the values, beliefs, or positions that people have about what is going on around them. The study of values provides learning structures that are not completely susceptible to factual or scientific inquiry. To consider ways of feeling or believing, discussion and questioning are the best procedures to use. The following procedure can be useful in trying to come to some course of action:

1) the recognition and definition of social problems, in terms of broad human goals of living and in terms of cultural biases which block achievement of these goals; 2) the casting about for possible alternative courses of action and the grounding of these courses of action in the beliefs and values which render them support, 3) the pondering of these values and beliefs as to their validity in terms of the facts, the historical reasons for their existence, and as to their consistency with other and higher values; and 4) reaching a decision as to the course of action to be followed, and carrying out the course of action.²²

In the process of making value judgments, students learn (sometimes with much difficulty) to validate, modify, or change their values in light of those held by other students or other people, or by institutions and society in general.

Engle provides two additional learning experiences that encourage students to study and make effective value judgments about various values and belief systems: the valuing question strategy and the value's belief/analysis strategy. The valuing question strategy consists of the following:

a) Upon what belief or value does this proposal rest? b) How did we (I or they) come by this belief? c) Are the conditions today the same as those that brought this idea into being in the first place? Is the belief borne out by experience (our own or the experience of others?) d) Does the belief agree with the known facts? e) Is the belief consistent with higher values (i.e., democracy) to which we hold? f) What compromise could be worked out which would give each side some measure of its program, allowing at this same time for face saving, and thus free action? Does this compromise so completely violate my higher values and beliefs that I would rather fight than accept the result?²³

The value's belief-analysis strategy functions as follows:

There are three rubrics under which a belief is examined and evaluated. One, a belief is examined as to its historical origin or as to the reasons that it exists. Two, it is asked whether or not a belief is consistent with facts. And, three, it is asked whether or not the belief is an agreement with other and possibly high-order beliefs held by the same individual or by the same group of individuals.²⁴

Students need guided and critically oriented exercises in the decision-making process. The curriculum promotes the right of every student to participate, investigate, study, and make choices and errors, along with the right to receive constructive help while practicing the decision-making process. The curriculum provides learning strategies that contribute to the development of intelligent and socially responsible behavior as well as encourage and support thinking in the resolution of social problems and controversial issues. The culminating experiences of the decision-making process can run from very simple situations that merely pose questions for class consideration to very complex social problems involving questions of public policy.

The community can offer meaningful and effective experience in developing habits of good citizenship. Citizenship and problem solving must be experienced if they are to be learned. "The high school which wants to do something about the teaching of contemporary affairs must be a community-minded school."²⁵ The local community as a course of study offers rich opportunities for first-hand experience to actually involve students. The classroom becomes a community institution as students investigate problems that may be of great importance to the general welfare of the community. Adults with special expertise in the area being studied should be recruited, as well as public interest groups and citizens willing to talk and interact with students about mutual concerns.

The Teaching-Learning Process

A social studies classroom as envisioned by Engle requires focused teacher effort in terms of the teacher's role, the classroom environment, and the selection of teaching methods. Fulfilling these responsibilities creates a democratic classroom environment where the teacher models and encourages students to openly confront social problems and controversial issues present in their schools, communities, and wider society. In analyzing real problematic situations, the teaching-learning process reflects and is consistent with possible analysis of problems in society. The process further affords students the opportunity to develop courses of action to be pursued, as appropriate, thereby encouraging democracy, civic participation, and public responsibility.

*Teachers must provide opportunities to confront controversial problems, supply curricular content that reflects the reality of political and social life, and develop democratic and safe classrooms that promote independent thinking.*²⁶ To increase students' awareness of democratic ways of behaving, which include confronting contemporary social problems and becoming active in their society, social studies teachers must provide opportunities for students to study social problems and controversial issues from their class, community and wider society. The teacher must exemplify, in and out of school, active and mindful civic behavior worthy of emulation, being well informed on public matters and demonstrating intellectually and socially responsible attitudes toward controversial issues.

Curricular content must be carefully designed to help them fully weigh reasons and evidence of facts and values from a wide variety of sources, allowing students to interpret and arrive at their own conclusions. Teachers should guide students to justify a course of action on the basis of intellectually sound and morally responsible conclusions. To promote this independent thinking, teachers need to develop open and safe classrooms in which students learn to accept responsibility for their decisions and feel free to inquire openly, follow any and every lead, and pursue any problem—wherever this pursuit may take them. The teacher should both model and lead out in classroom discussions and other issue-centered activities; eventually turning the responsibilities for these activities over to the students. The teacher is responsible to establish a classroom environment where all of the variant points of view, including those that are weak and unpopular, get a fair and undistorted treatment.

*The classroom environment should be open and problem centered promoting participatory democracy, encouraging public talk (discussion) through which students develop the confidence and competence to fluently articulate their thoughts and feelings.*²⁷ Democratic behavior cannot be learned in an authoritarian school climate. The credibility of many social studies classrooms as democratic models for youth is seriously compromised by hypocrisy and inappropriate paternalistic authority: exacting obedience in terms of prescribed values and someone else's interpretation of what is correct knowledge. A democratic classroom allows students to participate in developing fair and reasonable classroom rules. In such a democratic classroom, citizenship is promoted through public discussion that actively explores and shares ideas, not in a subordinate teacher-students environment, but rather in a free and accepting atmosphere where students feel secure enough to express ideas and emotions freely, but with civility. A carefully moderated discussion gives students some control over the way they perceive and make sense of their world. When students are able to put their knowledge into words, they reflect on knowledge, act on it, and change it. Encouraging public talk helps students develop their individual and collective voice, empowering them to act and speak. Actualizing this classroom environment requires careful selection and use of appropriate teaching methods.

Teaching methods should (1) allow students to analyze real problematic situations, (2) be consistent with ways the learning takes place, and (3) lead to an established course of action—thus helping students develop a greater sense of personal, social, and civic efficacy while promoting democracy, civic participation, and public responsibility. Throughout his social studies career, Engle offered a variety of strategies and techniques to help students deal with social problems and controversial issues both in schools and in the community. These activities were developed to guide students in becoming socially responsible citizens. In 1988, many of these strategies and techniques were organized into a teaching model described in Engle and Ochoa.²⁸ The following outline by Levitt and Longstreet provides a brief description of Engle's model:²⁹

Phase 1: Classroom Environment and Teacher Preparation

The teacher provides an open, safe, and informed learning environment for the free exchange of ideas and dialogue. The teacher must be informed about the topic to be studied and have sufficient preparation to guide students successfully through the study of the topic.

Phase 2: The Start of the Class—Orientation to the Problem Area

Introduction: The teacher presents the issue to be studied and gives to students selected materials to begin the initial phase of study. These materials will suggest conflicts and controversy surrounding the contemporary or historical issue.

Phase 3: Preliminary Discussion

Identifying and Defining the Problem: Either as a whole class or in small groups, students continue to analyze the material given them, followed usually by a question/answer discussion limited to student perceptions of what the materials intend or imply. Students come to some agreement on the facts, definitions, and values perceived in the materials.

Phase 4: Discussion

Using Probing Questions: The teacher asks open-ended questions throughout the entire activity in order to trigger the reasoning processes and promote the serious thought of students, to probe their information, to arrive at their own defensible answers, and to generally guide class discussion.

Identifying Value Assumptions: In an open-ended environment, the teacher uses selected methods to help students to examine their own and others' beliefs and values about the issue in question. Students are encouraged to probe value assumptions in presented materials, to compare those values with their own, to analyze similar value conflicts, and to bring in additional materials to support varied positions and solutions.

Identifying Alternatives and Predicting Consequences: The teacher has students begin to identify possible courses of action that will resolve the issues in question and to determine the probable consequences of each. Small groups are convened to discuss and defend their positions: to provide supportive facts, evidence, and values; and to engage in productive discussion challenging the other groups' positions. Competing and alternative courses of action are presented. Students attempt to determine the consequences of the courses of action and judge whether these are consistent with the system of values implicit in the issue and/or with the values held by members of the group.

Reaching and Justifying a Decision: On the basis of the activities carried out above, the teacher has the students rank and prioritize the possible positions in terms of the values they are trying to realize. Students decide through defending and challenging discussion whether or not to accept, reject, or modify the proposed solutions to resolve the issue. If a position is accepted by the class as a whole, the decision may be made to implement the proposed position. The teacher is to help and encourage students in finding ways to implement desired action. Students have the option to take part in any action.

In choosing a method of teaching about social problems and controversial issues, the teacher must consider not only ways that learning takes place in the classroom and the community, but also purposes to be achieved in the classroom, the community, and, possibly, society and the global community, as well as the nature of the content to be taught. "In a democratic society which is dynamic and changing and which holds that individual integrity is of first importance, teaching method should be broadly characterized by thoughtfulness, reflection, and the procedures.... [B]asically problem centered and critical rather than doctrinaire and dogmatic in its orientation."³⁰

Engle also proposed an instructional strategy allowing students to make decisions to promote a valid course of action to resolve either a classroom problem or a social problem causing conflict in the community. The instructional strategy includes the following components:

- (1) Exploring the situation, casting about for insight into the problem, offering plausible hypotheses to explain the situation, suggesting courses of action as snap judgments.
- (2) Identifying the issue or defining the problem in terms of the conflicting values that operate to block the resolution of the situation.

- (3) Identifying possible courses of action and determining the probable consequences of each.
- (4) Determining what information is needed to further delimit the problem and seeking the needed facts.
- (5) Identifying the cultural values that are involved in a decision.
- (6) Evaluating each of the possible courses of action and choosing the preferred one: ...
 - (a) Upon what beliefs or values does this proposal rest? (b) How did we come by these beliefs? (c) Are the conditions today the same as those that brought these ideas into being? Are these beliefs borne out by experience? (d) Does each belief agree with the known facts? (e) Is each belief consistent with higher values (i.e., democracy) to which we hold? (f) What compromise could be worked out which would give each side some measure of its program, allowing at the same time for face-saving, and so acceptance? (g) Does this compromise so completely violate our higher values and beliefs that we would rather fight than accept the result?³¹

These components lead to an established course of action, thus helping students develop a greater sense of personal, social, and civic efficacy. Certain strategies and techniques are intended to promote the notions of democracy, civic participation, and public responsibility. Engle argues that teaching strategies and techniques are forms through which the notions of democracy, civic participation, and public responsibility can be expressed as well as practiced by students as they make decisions and solve social problems, hopefully becoming socially responsible citizens.³² Strategies and techniques can be distinguished by their use toward particular ends, some bringing out a particular knowledge, skill, or value better than others. "If the systematic and thoughtful study of a problem is to characterize method, then the use of a particular technique is to be judged by the manner in which it contributes to this process ... It must explain what the problem is and how it came about, and most important of all, it must set forth clearly the alternative ideas (or principles) which are offered to explain or resolve the problem."³³ Therefore, method should allow both the teacher and the student to analyze real social problems: not only to resolve these problems for the good of the community but also to develop and practice democratic habits. For example, the instructional technique of "discussion" can be immensely valuable clarifying a problem, in generating ideas for explaining a problem, and in testing various ideas according to facts and belief systems. Discussion may also promote democratic behavior. Therefore, method, strategy, and/or technique should be consistent with purpose and content.

*Evaluation*³⁴

Evaluation procedures, according to Engle, should assess the decision-making process: weighing how students use knowledge and support their decisions and positions; evaluating student experiences in the study of social problems; and determining how students carried out their courses of action.

Evaluation assesses student competencies in the effective use of knowledge processes. Evaluation of student competencies in various knowledge and skill behaviors should include locating and gathering information, interpreting information, taking positions, and supporting positions with evidence. Evaluation should include providing feedback to those students who might be experiencing difficulties in receiving instruction or developing skills. The outcome of the project should demonstrate how students use, organize, and integrate information and skills they have acquired through the experience. The culminating activities should reveal the degree to which students have internalized knowledge and learned to hypothesize about similar situations.

Assessment tools should evaluate authentic experiences students encounter in their study of persistent social problems and controversial issues. A variety of assessment tools could be used to evaluate student experience: self-evaluations; observations in- and out-of-class of students' academic, social, and civic behaviors; scored classroom discussions; anecdotal records; student hands-on projects, individual or small group; constructed hypothetical situations; student-teacher interviews; questionnaires; student logs;

adjudication of group skills using teacher, peer-written, and oral reports; pre- and post-instruction essay tests.

Assessment includes how students carried out their selected courses of action. The assessment includes the social effectiveness of the action. The teacher and students should determine after the action has been taken whether they feel that their contribution really made a difference and what they could do to improve their contribution. Students need to determine if other courses of action might have proved more efficient or responsive to their values. Assessment also includes students analyzing the thought processes and activities that led up to the course of action. Students need to discuss to what degree the action project and the process of the social action activity helped them to develop a sense of political effectiveness. Students' experiences and beliefs should be examined to determine political effectiveness.

Conclusion

Shirley H. Engle dedicated much of his professional life to advocating and defending an empowered emancipatory kind of social studies education. From his 17 years of classroom experiences as a high school social studies teacher, from 1928 to 1944; his 33 years as a university professor of social studies education, from 1945 to 1977; his many years of involvement in local, regional, and national social studies organizations (including holding the office of President of the National Council for the Social Studies); until his death in 1994 at the age 86, Shirley H. Engle carefully established a philosophically constructed democratic curriculum orientation—the problems approach to social education. Engle provided an alternative to the contending definitions of social studies education (e.g., traditional, discipline-centered expository instructional approaches common in social studies classrooms; curriculum fads like life adjustment, values clarification, peace education, back-to-basics) products of unimaginative social studies curriculum task forces. The central function of his citizenship curriculum was the notion of what the course of social studies ought to be and how that course of study should be taught in the schools, in general, and in social studies classrooms, in particular.

Engle's social studies curriculum model valued a democratic society of informed citizens. His rationale for social studies instruction rested on the necessity of preparing citizens to participate in democratic decision-making processes within a pluralistic society. This curriculum model presented certain crucial issues and significant problems for joint consideration and action by teachers, students, and interested members of the community. This decision-making, problem-centered instructional approach contributed to serious examination and discourse concerning contemporary political, social, and economic issues within the community of the school and within society at large. In Engle's model, the learning process grew out of life situations, problems, episodes, and incidents derived from the direct concerns and experiences of students. Students could be personally engaged with issues, seeking concrete and immediate means of examining and resolving their social contexts as participants involved in the real action and real struggles of the social problem. Participation in these activities developed a sense of social responsibility and provided a context within which students might participate in social practice throughout their lives as they experience and contemplate issues of human concern.

Engle's works lead us to conclude that his conception of a social studies curriculum grounded in a framework of an empowered and emancipatory citizenry provides an example for social studies teachers to discover and create better lives for themselves and for their students through a reflective, practical, liberating curriculum. His curriculum model, based on his personal knowledge of the classroom from his years as a social studies teacher and on his involvement in various practical curriculum projects, shows that the social studies classroom can become a place for curriculum inquiry (i.e., studying an enacted curriculum to arrive at an understanding of what curriculum is, how it functions, and what it might be). From these pedagogical experiences emerge elements of a social studies curriculum orientation that can continue to guide further curriculum reconstruction and development for the benefit of the students, the school, and the surrounding community. Social studies teachers should no longer be recipients of a pre-packaged, unimaginative, gutless curriculum. Instead, they must come to realize that they need to take responsibility and create their own classrooms, their own curriculum, and their own pedagogical learning

situations by determining a more desirable course of action for human thought, human capacity, and human activity in order to improve themselves, their students, and society. After all, "It is democratic citizens we are after."

NOTES

1. Shirley H. Engle, "The Commission Report and Citizenship Education," *Social Education* 54 (November/December 1990): 431.

2. Ibid.

3. Edgar B. Wesley and Stanley P. Wronski, *Teaching Social Studies in High Schools* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1958); Stanley P. Wronski, "Edgar Bruce Wesley (1891-1980): His Contributions to the Past, Present, and Future of the Social Studies," *Journal of Thought* 17 (Fall 1982): 55-67.

4. Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

5. Shirley H. Engle, "Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies," *Social Education* 35 (March 1971): 280-88, 344; Shirley H. Engle, "Objectives of the Social Studies," in Byron G. Massialas and Frederick R. Smith, eds., *New Challenges in the Social Studies* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1965), 1-19.

6. Engle, "Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies."

7. Shirley H. Engle, "Whatever Happened to the Social Studies?" (paper at the Lawrence Metcalf Colloquium, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind., Sept. 1986, ERIC document ED 275 611), 2; Shirley H. Engle, "Decision Making: The Heart of Social Studies Instruction," *Social Education* 24 (November 1960): 302; Engle, "Objectives of the Social Studies"; Engle, "Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies," 287; Shirley H. Engle, "A Social Studies Imperative," *Social Education* 49 (April 1985): 264; Shirley H. Engle, "Thoughts in Regard to Revision," *Social Education* 27 (April 1963): 182; Engle, "Whatever Happened to the Social Studies?" 2; Shirley H. Engle, "The Social Studies Teacher—Agent of Change (Realities of the Political System) The Ideal and the Reality," (unpublished paper, November 1971, ERIC document ED O59 929), 11.

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