

Problems of Democracy Textbooks of the 1920s: How Well Did They Meet the Mark?

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Abstract

In 1916, a new social studies course, *Problems of Democracy*, was introduced in the US to provide an integrated social sciences approach and to develop informed. This paper examines the extent to which textbooks published for this curriculum reflect the goals of and discourse surrounding the course. Findings signify variations in the substance of these texts which ultimately indicates a disparity as to whether the purposes of the course were truly being met.

Introduction

In 1916, the Committee on Social Studies released a report recommending the reorganization of the secondary social studies curriculum in the United States. The committee—composed of professors, teachers, superintendents, and members of the US Bureau of Education—had been meeting intermittently for three years, developing preliminary reports, and conferring with representatives from organizations, such as the American Historical Association and the American Political Science Association, to determine their recommendations. In their introduction, the committee stated that the goal of the social studies is to train the individual as a member of society, with the purpose of cultivating good citizenship, and that this should be done through the development of “an appreciation of the nature and laws of social life, a sense of the responsibility of the individual as a member of social groups, and the intelligence and the will to participate effectively in the promotion of the social well-being” (Dunn, 1916, 9).

The committee’s recommendations consisted of a general outline for grades seven through twelve which included a new course for grade twelve entitled “Problems of democracy—social, economic, and political” (12). The *Problems of Democracy* (PoD) course—having several other titles such as *Social Problems* and *Problems of American Democracy*—began to spread across the country. By 1926, twelve states had a PoD course (Brown 1926); by 1928, it was being offered in 890 high schools in 38 states and in 12,000 high schools across the country by 1934 (Alilunas 1964). By the mid-1920s, PoD was being offered in more schools than medieval, world, and English history (Singleton 1980).

Several textbooks were published during this first decade of the course’s existence. This paper examines these textbooks to determine the extent to which they mirrored the purposes of the course as outlined in the 1916 report as well as the discourse that emerged regarding the course. In addition, this paper examines the ways in which the course and curricular materials may have reflected civic education ideals that are still prevalent today. In conducting this analysis, it is apparent that, while the authors of these texts

aligned the purposes of their works with the aims expressed in the 1916 report, the contents of the textbooks demonstrate a level of variance in substance that suggests some of the texts not holding up to the means they articulate as their goals.

The Dawn of a New Course: The 1916 Committee Report

The 1916 committee report referred to the PoD course as “the only feasible way... to satisfy in reasonable measure the demands of the several social sciences” (Dunn 1916, 53). Instead of having a separate course for each of these various social sciences areas—sociology, economics, and political science—secondary schools would be able to cover the concepts of these fields through one course. The report stated that the culminating course would have the purpose of providing “a more definite, comprehensive, and deeper knowledge of some of the vital problems of social life, and thus of securing a more intelligent and active citizenship” (52).

In terms of what problems should be studied, the committee suggested potential change from year to year as they should be selected based on their immediate interest to the class and importance to society. The report provides several examples such as cost of living and immigration. For the field of political science, the committee suggested a study of the “legislative methods of Congress and of State legislatures,” the “lack of uniformity in State legislation and its results,” and the “weakness of county government” (55). For sociology, the report notes problems related to “the social mind” and suggests the course “should afford opportunity for some consideration of such vital social institutions as the family and the church” (55). It was the committee’s judgment that history should not be the sole study of the secondary curriculum as it “has too little direct contribution to more intelligent participation in social life to justify a more continuous appearance” in the curriculum (Cox 1922, 131).

The restructuring of the secondary social studies curriculum came at a time when American educators were reacting to problems brought on by industrialization and immigration and hoping to build in the next generation of citizens a desire to serve the common good (Evans 1989). World War I led educators to recognizing the importance of developing democratic citizenship and the study of modern problems as an avenue for doing so (Alilunas 1964). This restructuring also served to bridge the gap between the longtime tradition of history education and the push for inclusion of other social science disciplines. Reconstructionists and progressive educators of the time saw the need for the social sciences to have a place within the social studies curriculum (Singleton 1980) and felt this should be done by shifting the focus from a transfer of

information about the structure and function of government to a development of informed citizens with skills and information for understanding social problems and affecting social reform (Makler 2004). This was a clear attempt to move away from the disciplinary orientation, focused on socialization into discipline specific ways of thinking, to the progressive orientation which focuses instead on the application of knowledge to real-world problems (Fallace 2017).

Perceptions of the Problems of Democracy Course

At the inception of the PoD course, educators shared perspectives regarding the purpose and design of the course which reflected the purposes outlined by the 1916 report. Hughes (1924) felt the course should broaden students' sympathy of human needs and interpret the world in which they live. Finney (1924) believed that the purpose should be to explain the fundamental social institutions so that young people may understand more clearly how they may contribute to the general welfare of society. Dawson (1923) argued that the public secondary school had "no right, from a social standpoint, to send young men and women into the world lacking specific training in the problems of American democracy—the problems whose solutions will soon be in their hands" (407).

Perceptions regarding flaws in the course also found their way into the overall discourse. Although Finney (1924) supported the course's existence, he noted that the course should not focus on the ills of society as doing so "has a certain morbid effect on the minds of young persons" (527). Opponents of the issue-centered approach saw the course as too general and unorganized, resulting in a hodgepodge of topics (Evans 1989). Arguments regarding the overlap with American history and civics courses also permeated the conversation with some suggesting that the course should be eliminated or combined with existing history or civics courses. Some who acknowledged this overlap still saw the

separate course as desirable as it would allow for more in-depth study of the problems to which students were introduced in their history and civics courses (Dahl 1925, 1928; Floyd 1932).

Many of the teachers who found themselves teaching this new course in the early years had no formal training outside of the field of history (Ammarell 1932); were given no clear directions or training as to how to achieve the goals set by the new curriculum (Davenport 1939; Singleton 1975); and were hesitant to adopt new means of organization (Evans 1989). The need for more structure and support may have been alleviated as textbooks began to be published and utilized at the beginning of the 1920s. Although teacher journals, such as *Historical Outlook*, feature articles highlighting teacher's approaches to the course, these instances are sparse and are not generalizable evidence for what teachers and students were studying. 57% of teachers reported using the textbooks and their ancillary materials in their classroom practice (Davenport 1939). While these texts may not fully capture what was occurring in PoD classrooms, they can provide a glimpse into how teachers, especially those who did not feel prepared to tackle the various social science fields, attempted to meet the goals of the official curriculum.

The Textbooks: How Well Did They Meet the Mark?

Four textbooks (see table 1) were analyzed to determine the extent to which they met the intended purposes of the course as outlined by the 1916 report and reflected the discourse surrounding the course. As one of the major purposes was to develop an informed citizenry, this paper also explores what ideas regarding citizenship education may have been reflected in these materials. All four of these texts were published within the first decade of the course's development and were reported as being used in PoD courses across the country (Brooks 1937; Floyd 1932).

Table 1
Textbook Information

Title	Author(s)	Publication
<i>Problems of American Democracy: Political, Economic, Social</i>	Henry Reed Burch Fellow in Economics, University of Pennsylvania, Head of Department of History and Commerce, West Philadelphia High School for Boys	1922 The Macmillan Company
	S. Howard Patterson Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania	
<i>Everyday Problems of American Democracy</i>	John T. Greenan Department of Social Sciences, East Orange High School, East Orange, New Jersey	1924 Houghton Mifflin Company
	Albert B. Meredith	

Commissioner of Education for Connecticut		
<i>Problems of American Democracy</i>	Ray Osgood Hughes Peabody High School, Pittsburgh/	1922 Allyn and Bacon
<i>Problems in American Democracy</i>	Thames Ross Williamson Assistant Professor of Economics and Sociology, Smith College	1922 D. C. Heath & Co.

In analyzing these texts, all forewords, prefaces, and other introductory sections as well as the table of contents were examined. Several problems addressed in all four texts were chosen for further analysis. The sections covering these problems were examined, with special attention given to section headings and subheadings, images included, and ancillary materials, such as questions for review or discussion as well as ideas for extensions of the text study.

From this analysis, several commonalities and differences became apparent regarding the purposes, content, and intended pedagogical approaches of these works. Although there are some differences in formatting, the four texts all clearly acknowledge the intended purposes of the PoD course. Major differences are apparent across the texts, as the materials differ greatly in their content coverage, ancillary materials, and intended pedagogical approaches. This signifies a variation in the kind of learning that would have been occurring in classrooms based on the text used and ultimately indicates a disparity as to whether the purposes of the course were truly being met. The remainder of this section highlights these aspects with examples from the texts.

Purposes: Citizenship and Integrated Study at the Core

Three of the four texts explicitly refer to the purpose of developing an informed citizenry and how the directed study of problems would help achieve such a purpose. In his foreword, Hughes (1922) asserts that good citizenship calls for an understanding of the great problems our democracy faces. He states that the good citizen “does not expect to be an expert at solving every problem; but he at least may know that certain important problems exist and he may establish sound principles on which to base his thinking with reference to them” (iii). Moreover, he acknowledges that this forming of sound principles would establish the “basis of fair and intelligent opinion” and that “there cannot be in the making of good citizens any undertaking more important than this” (iv). Williamson (1922) notes that it is an obligation of the school to prepare students to grapple with these problems intelligently and that, if the school fails to do so, the student “can only partially fulfill the obligations of citizenship” (viii). Greenan and Meredith (1924) address this in a preface to teachers, stating that training in dealing with these problems will “make of the pupil a more active and intelligent citizen” (viii). In a preface to students, which they have titled “A

Word to Young Citizens,” the authors emphasize to their young readers the importance of solving problems to assist in the greatness of the nation, and that studying these problems will better prepare them to assume the responsibilities of citizenship (xii). These utterances demonstrate the authors’ attempts to hold true to the purpose of developing good citizenship as outlined by the 1916 committee report.

In their introductory sections, Burch and Patterson (1922) do not explicitly mention citizenship, citizenry, or citizen nor associate any values in terms of what long-term goals exist in having students study this text. However, the authors seem to focus their intent on the integrated study of the social sciences. They state their text is an attempt to “acquaint the student with the bold outlines of the political, economic, and social development of American institutions” with the goal to stress “certain fundamental characteristics of our own civilization” while also preserving a “proper balance” between the political, economic, and social factors of American life (vii).

As the course was introduced to incorporate the various social science fields, the authors were attempting to make it known that their works would serve as an embodiment of this blended study. In fact, the first line of Burch and Patterson’s preface pays homage to the “gradual crystallization of educational thought” that had developed in favor of a general study of the social sciences of which their “book owes its origin” (vii). Hughes notes that government exists to help solve social and economic problems. Williamson asserts that his work answered the increasing demand for practical training for those who “soon must grapple with the economic, social, and political problems of our own time” (vii). Greenan and Meredith state that the purpose of their text is to overcome the difficulty that has existed due to the lack of an appropriate text for teaching these problems. The authors provide reasoning to support why their texts should be considered necessary, suiting the needs of a growing movement that had not yet been equipped with the materials needed to achieve its goals.

Organization: An Attempt to Reflect Purposes

The authors seem to have organized their texts with the purpose of an integrated study in mind, addressing the various fields of social sciences and the particular economic, social, and political aspects of the problems they cover. However, in their organizational decisions, there is variance

in terms of how this integrated study is achieved. Some of the texts have the explored problems separated into distinct sections of the particular social science fields while others have blurred the lines, with problems explored via the lenses of the social sciences fields more holistically. For example, the Williamson text is organized into five distinct parts that indicate the separation of the different social science fields: Foundations of American Democracy, American Economic Problems, American Social Problems, American Political Problems, and the Mechanism of Government. The Greenan and Meredith text follows a similar format, with a separate section for political, social, and economic problems.

Burch and Patterson state that their selected topics have been treated as “unified problems discussed from the standpoint of general social development, rather than subdivided into a series of separate, air-tight compartments” for the different social science areas (vii). The authors acknowledge that this text was created directly for this course, as they had also published what they refer to as companion books entitled *American Economic Life* and *American Social Problems*. They state that this volume serves as a combined treatment of the three elements to “meet the needs of those institutions in which opportunity is lacking for a detailed treatment of the social sciences individually” (vii). The book has forty chapters that examine a variety of topics, including: the evolution of the state; problems of the city; the American race problem; problems of organized labor; and the problem of poverty. While this clearly demonstrates that the text includes coverage of problems through various social science lenses, the lack of section headings could leave the reader—whether a student in a class or a novice teacher unsure of what to do for this course—without an understanding as to how these problems relate or have larger consequences.

Hughes’s text is the most complex and detailed in its organization, with sections based on overarching themes, such as Foundations; Making America Intelligent; Elevating American Standards; and Making America Prosperous. Within each section falls several subsections and then chapters that outline more specific topics. For example, under Making America Prosperous, the authors have subsections such as: Cooperating in Production; Distributing the Returns Fairly; Promoting the Public Good through Business; Safeguarding the Workers; and Using Wisely the Gifts of Nature. Each of the subsections are even further parsed out into chapters that are more specific in their focus. Although the section focuses on economic problems, there is a clear consideration and inclusion of the social, political, and even environmental issues related to the economic pursuit of prosperity. This more woven approach allows for a more blended study, potentially instilling in students that these social sciences fields are not mutually exclusive, that issues can be interrogated with knowledge from the various social sciences, and—possibly most importantly—that these lenses must all be considered for such problems to be solved.

The organization within chapters also reflects the authors’ intentions. Hughes notes that topics are presented first by stating conditions related to the problem, then discussing the reasons for these conditions, and lastly by deciding what ought to be done about them. Williamson employs a causal relationship both to the substance of the problems as well as to the order of his text. He notes that each problem discussion begins with the essential nature of the problem, then focuses on the fundamental principles which affect its solution. Burch and Patterson do not explicitly explain their organizational decisions, but their text follows suit with this format, with each of their chapters being broken into smaller sections of text. Greenan and Meredith employ a different organization to their content. Each of their chapters center on a particular problem. For each of these stated problems, a single question is asked and serves as the focus of the chapter. For example, under “Taxation and Distribution of Wealth,” the authors ask, “Should the government prevent great extreme of wealth and poverty by means of income and inheritance taxes?” (xvii). The inclusion of these guiding questions seems to frame the problems in a specific context with a particular goal in mind: finding a solution.

Content: An Issue of Scope and Sequence

The texts cover many of the same topics, including crime; race; immigration; production; industry; taxation; labor; the family; religion; socialism; conservation; the structure of the government; rural life; preventing disease; and community planning. However, the extent to which the texts spend on each topic varies. Greenan and Meredith’s text allots roughly ten to fifteen pages for each problem discussed. Burch and Patterson allot an average of ten pages for each chapter. Hughes spends roughly 40 pages on a section entitled “promoting right relations among men.” In this section, he covers the prevention of crime, the treatment of the foreigner, and relations between races. Williamson, on the other hand, gives roughly 20 pages to the same topics and simplifies them. He notes in his foreword that his text aims to supply the basic facts and fundamental principles needed to discuss the included problems; this is evident not only in the length of sections but also the nature of the text itself. The subsections are short, with roughly a paragraph or two for each subheading, and many of the review questions are meant for recall of the facts provided. Another goal outlined by the restructuring of the secondary social studies curriculum was to move away from a focus solely on facts and details of a historical nature; however, the brief coverage of topics for some of these texts indicates a continued focus on facts and not an in-depth exploration of the issues covered.

The ways in which the authors situate and discuss issues is also quite different. Hughes’s coverage of crime falls within the section entitled “Promoting right relations among men.” Within this section, he covers the topics of “Restraining Wrong-Doers,” “The Treatment of the Foreigner,” and “The Color Line.” Within these subsections,

he includes coverage of such topics as “Why People Do Wrong,” “Why the Foreigner Comes,” and “Why is there a Negro Problem?” Williamson’s section which could be considered the coverage of race relations is simply called “The Negro” and is roughly 20 pages in length. Burch and Patterson have similar headings to that of Hughes, with chapters entitled, “Americans—Old and New,” “The American Race Problem,” and “The Problem of Crime.” However, in the latter, their focus in the section entitled “Causes of crime” associates particular racial groups with crime, creating a biased interpretation. This is even apparent in the questions they include in this section, such as “What racial groups are conspicuous?” (477). While this language is representative of the societal context of the time, as perceptions and treatment of immigrants in the U.S. during the 1920s was quite negative, the biased nature of the text demonstrates a lack of objective coverage of societal problems and the push of particular ideologies. Hughes’s text acknowledges the ideologies that established such racial issues in America, yet presents this as the problem, not the cause; the section following that entitled “Why is there a Negro Problem?” is entitled “The Black Man’s Progress.” Depending on which text a student may be given, the way in which they may view the issues of immigration and race would be quite different and therefore problematic.

In terms of the order of topics, Williamson outlines the decision to begin with a brief historical background of American democracy before moving into a survey of the economic life of the nation as this “constitutes the fundamental basis of our problems” (vii). He then states certain problems—such as industrial relations, health in industry, and immigration—are next considered as they come from bad economic situations. This then leads into economic and social functions of government to determine what makes government effective. Williamson ends his brief outline by stating that the mechanism of government is placed last because knowledge of the framework of government “is valuable only after the citizen knows something of the needs which that mechanism must be made to fill” (viii). Hughes argues that the PoD course “will then not be mere repetition, but will lead to the possession of a wider outlook upon the problems” (iv). It seems the authors were aware of the criticism that the course may be seen as overlapping with history and civics courses, and therefore made a point to draw attention to how their works would expand on or differentiate from that of the other social studies courses.

However, there is clear evidence that the overlap with history and civics content is present, and more so in some texts than others. Williamson is the most demonstrative of this fault, as almost two hundred of the five hundred pages of his textbook is allotted to sections discussing the foundations of democracy and mechanisms of government. Williamson’s text does not focus as much on providing current information as it does historical content for discussion of problems. For example, within the discussion of crime and correction, Williamson covers the history behind law and

justice, tracing the principles of the Magna Carta and spread of ideas to America via the English colonists. Burch and Patterson’s text also seems to focus on a historical progression, with sections covering topics such as the evolution of the state; the organization of the political machinery; and the growth of cities. These sections not only fail to counter the criticism of the course’s overlap but also fail to incorporate the integrated approach desired by the adoption of the course.

Pedagogical Approach: Different Degrees of Learning

All four texts include particular resources for each section or chapter. These include review and/or discussion questions; supplemental, reference, or required readings; and research questions and topics for further study. As the course was meant to provide students opportunities to study these problems in-depth, it makes sense for there to be ancillary materials included for both teacher and student use. This also indicates the pedagogical approach expected to be taken: students will engage in exploration of a problem, be able to demonstrate their understanding by answering questions, and potentially explore problems further via independent study and/or extension activities. However, the substance of these ancillary materials illustrates the kind of learning being provided for students and the pedagogical approaches suggested for teachers.

Two of the texts follow what would be considered a more traditional approach; this is apparent in both their structure and the ancillary materials. Both the Burch and Patterson text and the Williamson text provide brief textual sections followed by questions meant for recall of the information provided. For example, the questions included in Williamson’s section on crime and correction include: “What is a crime? Summarize the remedies of crime. What is the function of the probation system?” (203). While these are questions related to the problem at hand, they do not ask the student to extend outside of the textual information provided in the section of the textbook. Burch and Patterson’s section on crime included similar questions intended for recall purposes. Moreover, the questions provided for additional required readings also are of a recall nature, including: “What are the first steps in a criminal action? What is an indictment?” (204). These questions do not allow for the students to consider the purposes behind the correction system nor they do require the students to truly evaluate the nature of a problem nor determine potential remedies. Burch and Patterson’s text includes some questions that ask students to examine causal relationships, such as “Show how defects in government and political corruption increase crime” (477). However, as exhibited in the Williamson text as well, the number of questions that serve the purposes of recall and definition strongly outweighs that of questions for deeper exploration, evaluation, or discussion.

The structures of the other two texts indicate the potential for more intricate and purposeful study. Greenan and Meredith utilize a case method approach of teaching in

their text format by focusing each chapter on a particular issue and centering it around a question for exploration. These focus questions are deliberative in nature, usually phrased in a way that indicates students could take a side in their response; most questions begin with terms such as “should,” “shall,” or “can.” Following the posed question, each chapter includes background information and separate sections providing support for the opposing stances for the question. Some of the guiding questions are more direct in their purpose. For example, for the chapter entitled “City Government,” the question is “Is the commission plan the best form of government for all American cities?” (40). For a chapter entitled, “The Liquor Question,” the guiding question is, “Shall we modify our prohibition laws so as to legalize the sale of light wines and beer?” (249).

Not only are these questions written in a way that indicates a goal of taking a stance, they are also clearly indicative of relevant policy issues of the time; several chapters discuss specific policies and organizations. For example, the chapter on transportation asks students to consider the adoption of the Plumb plan of government ownership of interstate railroads. Other questions employ more of an ethical or moral approach to societal issues. This is evident in chapters such as that entitled “Political Parties and Elections” where the focus question is “Do political parties result in more harm than good?” and “The Importance of the Family and the Church,” with the question, “Is the American family life more wholesome than at any previous time in the history of our country?” While these guiding questions can be answered with a yes or no response, the content of the chapters is meant to arouse particular support for whichever answer students choose. This is indicative of a learning objective whereby students arrive at informed opinions, which directly mirrors that of the 1916 report’s goal of developing an informed citizenry.

At first glance, the Hughes text seems to indicate a more traditional approach in line with that of Burch and Patterson and Williamson. However, the layout he employs demonstrates a more complex approach and one more in line with that of Greenan and Meredith. While the chapters include a more traditional structure of informative text under various subheadings, Hughes has embedded the review and discussion questions into the text, breaking up the sections of informative text. Moreover, many of the questions directly acknowledge the reader in their phrasing. These structural decisions create a more conversational tone and elicit the reader’s stances on issues, which aligns Hughes’s text more with the approach of Greenan and Meredith. Not only does the embedded nature of the questions indicate the potential for this more conversational approach, the questions themselves also point to the potential for discussion and deliberation. For example, the section discussing immigration includes questions such as: “Should we expect the immigrant to give as much to America as America gives him? Would you advise sending back to Europe all aliens still unnaturalized after being in this country ten years? Are

immigration laws likely to form a party issue here? Should they?” (133-135). A teacher utilizing this text even in direct instruction would be poised to stop and ask the questions to the class, allowing for students’ opinions to be expressed and, potentially, for a more in-depth discussion or even deliberation to occur.

Examining a Problem: Analyzing Content for Adequate Substance

To more fully examine the substance of these texts, their coverage of the topic of education was analyzed. The following aspects were considered in this analysis:

- 1) To what extent does the text provide an in-depth and integrated exploration of the problem?
- 2) What do the ancillary questions require of the students? Are they asking students to simply recite information from the text or use the information for applicable and evaluative means?

Hughes’s examines education within a section entitled “Making America Intelligent,” which houses the subsections, “Providing education through public support” and “Promoting education through private enterprise.” Under these umbrella topics are even more specific aspects for the discussion of the problem, including: “What is education,” “Why we need public schools,” “How schools are supported,” and “Are private schools desirable?” Although it seems helpful to have the sections so clearly broken down, each aspect of the subsections is given roughly two pages of coverage. While at first this may seem like inadequate coverage, Hughes seems to meet his intentions of providing a wider overview of the problem over an in-depth historical study. The section also includes a variety of sources such as images and charts to be included in the study. One such image is a chart from Oakland School district, demonstrating the national spending put towards education versus other things, such as “sundaes, sodas, and Drinking Fountain Delights,” lotions and other cosmetic products. The chart also expresses that Oakland schools use less than two-fifths of the city’s taxes. The caption included by Hughes states, “How One City Appealed for Public Support for its Schools. The facts given in this appeal are worth careful consideration” (37).

Concluding a section entitled, “What Shall We Teach?”, Hughes asks the following questions: “Should a commercial student take only commercial subjects? Is there any cultural value in typewriting and shorthand? What particular values are offered by the various subjects usually available in the high school?” (43). For discussion of public versus private schools, Hughes includes the question, “What kinds of people would probably provide for their children’s education if there were no public schools?” (26). Coverage of state school systems is followed by the questions, “What do you think of the idea of having the same textbook in all the schools of a state? Is there any advantage in having the states control the granting of teachers’ certificates?” (31). The

conclusion of the section has the following questions: “Can you think of other educational factors than those mentioned in this chapter? Has a person the moral right to neglect any reasonable opportunity for self-employment?” (67). Prior to the list of special studies and reference readings for further study, the section ends with a notice in bold font:

There are few cases of really excusable ignorance in the United States. If a person honestly yearns for learning and enlightenment, he has many opportunities to obtain it. If America is not made intelligent, it will be the fault of her citizens themselves. (67)

The topics covered in Hughes’s text reflect an integration of economic, social, and political study and are supported with questions that require application and evaluation of real-world substance rather than simply recall. Questions of moral or ethical nature are present in Hughes’s text as well, as evidenced by questions like, “Does one have a *right* to be ignorant if he wishes? Who are worse, the ignorant or the prejudiced? Will an intelligent democracy make mistakes? (24). There seems to be an implicit message being communicated regarding the importance of education and both the structure and substance of the text allows for students to examine an array of issues revolving education.

Greenan and Meredith’s chapter on education centers on the following question: “Shall we establish a National Department of Education with a secretary a member of the President’s cabinet?” (xv). The chapter begins with a section entitled “The Importance of Education” which includes topics such as the aims of public education, the necessity of public education, raising school funds, and federal appropriations for education. The remainder of this section highlights evidence, offering specific statistical data as well as possible solutions, to support the opposing sides of the problem stated in the focus question. The review questions posed for the section include: “To what extent does education determine the future earning capacity of an individual? Prove that a poor educational system in one state is a menace to the whole nation. Where is the money obtained to support education? Give five arguments for and five against the Towner-Sterling Bill” (110).

While the structure of the Greenan and Meredith text allows for students to examine a particular question related to the problem—utilizing the case method they expressed as their focus in their introduction—the review questions seem to serve a variety of purposes. Some of the questions are more recall-oriented while others are evaluative. Nonetheless, the chapter presents modern information related to education with the hopes that students can determine an answer to the outlined focus question. Moreover, the subtopics and discussion around the question require the student to consider social, economic, and political evidence to support their reasoning, helping to build an integrated approach to answering the problem at hand.

Williamson’s section on education includes subtopics such as: the meaning of education, development of education in the United States, financing the schools, and education and social progress. While at first glance, these topics seem to align with those of the previous two texts; however, the extent to which the topics cover modern issues, statistical data, and depth of questions is scant. The questions in this section include: “Trace briefly the development of education in this country. What problem arises in connection with financing the schools? Discuss the purpose of vocational education” (264). These questions can be answered by study and recitation of the textual information.

Burch and Patterson follow a similar mold, focusing on topics such as the development of the national school systems, which provides a thorough coverage of the history of the development in Europe and the United States as well as the scientific movement, the development of vocational training and industrial education. The section lacks statistical information, modern examples, or sources for deeper study. The “Questions for Discussion” section at the conclusion of the chapter includes questions like, “Discuss education in colonial America” and “Discuss the industrial education and the continuation schools of Germany” (557-558). The topics and the questions that follow do not require the students to evaluate their own educational systems nor consider modern problems associated with education.

Discussion

The four texts analyzed in this study exhibited some similarities that are imperative to note. The authors of these texts used explicit language that reflected the purposes outlined in the 1916 report, organized their texts to address the various social sciences, and covered what could be considered the issues or problems that were reflective of and reflected in society at the time of their publication. However, the variances noted in this analysis regarding the substance and approaches of these texts are critical and provide a different picture. The kind of learning that was occurring in a PoD classroom, and the extent to which the goals of the 1916 report were being met, may have greatly depended on and differed by what textbook the teacher may have been using.

The texts written by Hughes and Greenan and Meredith seem to adequately provide students with information that connects to the social science fields, ask questions that will illuminate the problems related to the topics at hand, and employ pedagogical approaches that allow for more in-depth exploration, discussion, and even deliberation. However, the texts written by Williamson and Burch and Patterson provide more straightforward, traditional approaches to the study of included problems and ask students questions that mostly focus on recalling information and defining terms. These texts also fall in line with some of the major critiques of the course, as they have overt overlaps with history and civics content.

Another important consideration that is illuminated from these findings is what kind of citizen was being

developed via the texts examined. The textbooks can be considered as falling in various places along Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) typology of the three types of citizens: the personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented citizen. While the textbooks were published roughly 80 years prior to the development of this typology, the approach to citizenship education present mostly aligns with developing personally responsible and participatory citizens. The Greenan and Meredith text, with questions of moral and ethical nature, could be seen as teetering into developing the justice-oriented citizen. The Hughes text is the most progressive in this realm, not only by including moral and ethical questions but also by touching on topics that could be considered justice-oriented, such as having students examine inequities in societal systems.

These latter two texts also could be considered falling closer along the lines of what Parker (2001) refers to as enlightened political engagement. His typology of curricular approaches to democratic citizenship education extends from transmission to participatory and from non-critical to critical. The Williamson and Burch and Patterson texts fall closer on the spectrum to transmission while Greenan and Meredith and Hughes could be considered more participatory and critical. If the goal of the PoD course was to prepare future citizens who will tackle the problems of tomorrow, it could be argued that the goal was not fully met, as the development of different kinds of citizens, with different approaches for tackling said problems, was the outcome.

While the textbooks discussed in this paper all claimed to meet the needs of the course—by illuminating the problems related to social, economic, and political aspects of life, for the sake of preparing informed citizens who would be the members of society solving them in the future—the texts varied in scope, sequence, and substance. The findings of this analysis are not only revealing of the potential learning that occurred over a century ago but also the importance of aligning curricular goals and materials. The bridge between the perspectives of those with revisionist ideas for education and the materials created for practical use is one that must be better aligned in future innovations in education. The necessities of viewing curricular materials with a critical lens and ensuring they are meeting the intended goals of the curriculum are vital

Conclusion

While the PoD course was one built out of determined needs for US society, value-laden with democratic and reconstructionist ideals, the reality of what was happening in classrooms may have not mirrored such. Three interrelated factors seemed to directly affect the course during this early period: 1) philosophical differences regarding the purpose and place of the course; 2) a lack of standardization; and 3) a lack of teacher training (Singleton 1975). The variance in substance of the curricular materials reflects the lack of standardization and should also be

considered a potential factor of the course's success. While the course remained in schools into the 1970s, the number of students taking the course dwindled (Singleton 1975). The difficulties the course faced during its inception may have contributed to its disappearance as it struggled to determine its identity, place, and structure throughout its existence.

The purposes outlined by the 1916 report of the Committee of Social Studies should not be ignored, as they still ring true today. History continues to be the overarching focus of social studies secondary curriculum in the United States. The focus on transfer of information continues to be a prevalent issue. A curriculum that employs a more integrated social studies approach, places discussion and deliberation at its center, and focuses on the preparation of an informed citizenry continues to be advocated for by social studies scholars today. However, for these goals to be reached, any new curricular materials must be crafted intentionally to reflect such goals, and with explicit ideas for implementation to assist those who are teaching such content. Only then will they have the means needed to successfully meet the purposes and goals of such an approach

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