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Roseville, MN 55112  
January 15, 2004 (revised, 1/24/04)

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**Solicited Review of the "MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN SOCIAL STUDIES, SECOND DRAFT, DECEMBER 19, 2003"**

(<http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/059712.pdf> - the second draft)

(<http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/059705.pdf> - summary of changes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft)

I thank Commissioner Cheri Yecke for inviting me to review the Minnesota History and Social Studies Standards. Her willingness to take the standards drafts to the people of Minnesota and make their views and those of the external reviewers available is a model of participatory democracy that other states would do well to emulate. I am recommending the revision of the Social Studies Scope and Sequence to allow more world history, the restructuring of the historical eras into recognizable and manageable units, the correction of historical errors and the removal of remaining behavioral goals.

**What Good Standards Should Be and Not Be: Advice that Guided This Review**

**"The standards must be clear, concise, objective, measurable and grade-level appropriate. .... they must be consistent with the constitutions of the United States and the state of Minnesota' [Section 3, subdivision 2 (5)].**

**"The legislature also gave direction regarding the tests that will be associated with the standards. These tests must 'measure students' academic knowledge and skills and not students' values, attitudes and beliefs' [Section 8, subdivision 1a(2.b)]."**

- Commissioner Cheri Yecke, July 2003.

**"Instead of being grouped in clumps (K-3, 6-8, 9-12) [like the Profiles], good standards are organized grade by grade. They indicate clearly what students are to learn and when they are to learn it. ... They are rigorous in content, ... and jargon-free, ... and carefully sequenced."**

- Katherine A. Kersten, Winter 2002-2003.

**"[T]he school has again but one way, and that is, first and last, to teach them to read, write and count. And if the school fails to do that, and tries beyond that to do something for which a school is not adapted, it not only fails in its own function, but it fails in all other attempted functions. Because no school as such can organize industry, or settle the matter of wages and income, can found homes or furnish parents, can establish justice or make a civilized world."**

- W.E.B. DuBois, address to Georgia State Teachers Convention, 1935

**"[In Civics Education], the quest for truth is quickly subordinated to civic uplift when teachers see their role as fostering certain civic dispositions in their students."**

- James B. Murphy (Dartmouth College), "The Tug of War," [EducationNext](#), Fall 2003,

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### I. Introductory Comments and Outline of This Review

This is my third review of Minnesota "Social Studies" standards. I reviewed the "Profiles of Learning" (POLs) in 2000 for the Council for Basic Education and Achieve, Inc. In October 2003, I reviewed the first draft of "Minnesota Draft History and Social Studies Standards," describing them as "**on target and fundamentally sound**, because they are centered on core subject area content, making them understandable to teachers and non-teachers alike." If the history (U.S., world, Minnesota) and government/civics standards are strengthened as recommended, not only will all students benefit, but the partisanship will also be lessened. Except for the scope & sequence, I did not closely review the economics or geography standards.

### II. What To Look For in Good Subject Area Standards

(from the review of the first draft)

**Good subject area standards** describe and delineate a broad outline of the core subject-area content knowledge that students are required to master, i.e. know, at designated grade levels. They are objectively described and delineated in language that is clear and free of partisan bias.

1. Standards are **objective** when they are free from overt, implied or intentionally disguised partisan or ideological bias, slant or perspective. Standards that are objective **allow perspectives and opinions**, both contemporary and present-day, but **do not prescribe** "correct" perspectives, viewpoints or interpretations.

Historical perspectives, e.g. Hamilton's and Jefferson's opposing views on the constitutionality of the proposal to charter a Bank of the U.S., are part of the historical record, "open" for teachers and students to examine and debate. There is no "correct" opinion as to who was "right." Interpretations are only as valid as the supporting evidence. That is how the study of history enlightens; when turned

to "politically correct" or "patriotically correct" ends; however, history is abused and its power to enlighten diminished. Furthermore, standards that prescribe perspectives, opinions, behaviors or goals unrelated to mastery of knowledge cannot be fairly tested by a common set of assessments.

2. **Content standards and supporting benchmarks must broadly describe what a student is expected to know, i.e. what knowledge is subject to being tested.**
  - a. History content standards should be organized as a **chronological sequence of broadly described historical eras and major events and significant individuals. Chronological organization must be obvious.**

The logic of history is chronology since events are defined according to **when** they happened. **Cause and effect is a chronological relationship between two or more events over time** and is the core concept of history. This relationship is at the heart of all legal codes, business transactions, the scientific method, and most moral codes and religious outlooks. It's at the core of the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is the core concept underlying personal responsibility, because it links actions to consequences. The study of history is the study of countless acts and actions of individuals, peoples and nations and the resulting consequences, both intended and unintended.

- b. K-12 standards in all subjects should be organized in their traditional disciplines.

The traditional subjects and subject-area disciplines developed their unique logical patterns of organization and self-correction over long periods of time, in some cases centuries, as the most efficient ways to organize, present and maintain the integrity of their respective bodies of knowledge.

There is also an important cognitive reason for this: the memory organizes information in clusters, each with its own inherent and practical logic.

- c. The present draft limits chronology in both world and U.S. history to 10 epochs or eras. Within those long time spans, events in both the benchmarks and the "Examples" are randomly listed. More importantly, there should be, but there isn't, a clear chronological sequence of major events.
3. **A content standards document (history, geography, government & civics, economics) lists the sequence of subject area content SEPARATELY from "essential skills," e.g. "historical thinking skills," specific to that subject area. It also provides an example or template explaining how to combine the two together in a lesson plan or teaching unit (see pp. 36-39, below).** For that reason, in a history and social studies standards document, "historical thinking skills" should be listed separately from the content standards.

To lessen this confusion, a single common prompt statement should be found at the top of every page, directly under the heading "Benchmark" and followed by knowledge statements:

// **BENCHMARKS** //

"STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF:"  
(This is a prompt statement; it only introduces the content to be learned.)

1. THE MAJOR EVENTS LEADING TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR, FROM THE COMPROMISE OF 1850 TO THE VOTE OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE FOLLOWING THE ELECTION OF 1860."

Thus, each historical event or cluster of events that students are expected to know is listed **without** the admixture of **how** they will demonstrate that knowledge, etc. Examples or models of the efficient way to combine historical events with skills will be found in the state curriculum guide or it will leave that decision to the school district or teacher (see example, pp. 36-39, below). Similarly, the standards do not mandate how students' knowledge of a particular event must be demonstrated for assessment purposes.

4. **Standards are not a curriculum**; therefore, they don't have to list every detail within each standard that students are expected to know.

5. **Standards presume that teachers have the content knowledge to teach their assigned subjects.**

When teachers have limited or no background in their subject areas, their dependence on textbooks and school or school system curricula is far greater. The commissioner should consider appointing a task force to review the validity of licensure requirements. Most state licensure requirements are excessive and have no relationship to student achievement. An excellent study of this problem was conducted by the Baltimore, Maryland, Abell Foundation. It found that most of the studies purporting to demonstrate a link between teacher licensure standards and teacher effectiveness were "flawed, sloppy, aged, and sometimes academically dishonest... The same limited research is quoted repeatedly, with frequent mistakes in interpretation; and one cannot help but conclude that the research was not actually read (or not read carefully)" (Walsh, 13; [www.abell.org/pubsitems/ed\\_cert\\_1101.pdf](http://www.abell.org/pubsitems/ed_cert_1101.pdf)).

6. **Standards presume teacher professionalism, i.e. that teachers will not use their authority to promote their own views instead of an objective presentation of subject material.**

Teacher professionalism is hampered, when teachers are forced to teach to standards that implicitly or openly require teachers to encourage criticism of historical institutions or individuals - or mandates that these historical institutions or individuals must be idolized.

Teacher professionalism, especially in history, government, and literature classes requires that teachers distinguish between teaching the events and explaining the differing ways that historians interpret the events. I addressed this challenge in a

short essay that examined teachers' ethical responsibilities to their students as the U.S. responded to the 9/11 attacks and went to war in Iraq (Martel, <http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/publication/publication.cfm?id=316#835>).

An important improvement of this and the first draft over the POLs is the absence of a mandate to teach "diverse or multiple perspectives," which required the teaching of group stereotypes. This draft, however, still mandates the promotion of patriotic beliefs and behaviors in places; they should be removed. As stated above, perspectives and any number of interpretations are not prohibited from examination and discussion; they cannot be mandated.

### III. The Second Draft: Improvements and Weaknesses (continuing and new)

A. **Improvements** in the second draft include a reduction in the number of standards and benchmarks, correction or removal of many historically inaccurate, politicized and/or confusing statements, addition of an "Examples" column for suggested events or individuals and removing much of the ideological and behavioral focus from the "Government and Citizenship" standards.

#### B. **Weaknesses of Problems in the Second Draft**

Although behavioral goals and abstract themes no longer define the standards as they did the POLs, their lingering presence contributed to the sharp disagreements around the first draft and, thereby, limits this draft's potential to guide the development of coherent subject area curricula and improve student achievement. The problems include:

1. An impractical format and confusing jargon;
2. Traditional subjects combined into a single "social studies" framework;
3. A significant number of historical inaccuracies and behavioral mandates, which take 11 pages of this review;
4. Excessive attention to geography at the expense of world history;
5. A recommendation that high schools in local districts have flexibility in the amount of time devoted to each social studies subject, i.e. not be bound by the present mandatory course credits/semesters;
6. **Contributionism:** The imbalanced emphasis on individuals over events. Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson used this term to describe the emphasis on individuals historically omitted or excluded from the study of history. The lists that were drawn up on the 8-page summary of changes constrain the study of history to an overemphasis on "contributors".

It also acts as a form of  **censorship**, because the whole point of listing "contributors" is to list their positive accomplishments, since negative actions are not "contributions." When, however, the focus is on events, and individuals are brought into the events, their roles can be more objectively studied.

This problem is given *de facto* notice in the "References in Social Studies Standards," (the 8-page list summary of changes from the first draft), which lists Native Americans, Women in History and, perhaps the saddest caricature of all, Democrats and Republicans.

The saddest thing is that there is this list, which is simply a list of names. Almost as sad are the historical errors in this list! Whoever put it together got it wrong, because they were looking for labels, literally looking for beans to count - with no attention paid to the history, the real history that gave life, depth and meaning to them.

Both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were elected as Democratic-Republicans, opposed by the dying Federalist Party. The party of Jefferson and Madison, i.e. the factions that constituted its base of support, is the precursor of the Democratic Party of Andrew Jackson, which is the organizational precursor of the modern Democratic Party.

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 out of the break-up of the Whig Party and the Northern wing of the Democratic Party following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. It traces its beginning to two political clubs that started in Michigan and Wisconsin. The name "Republican" was chosen, because of a conscious design to link the new Republican Party to the Jeffersonian ideals of an "Empire of Liberty" and an "Agrarian Republic" of land-owning, yeoman farmers. In its policies and stances on issues, it was a successor to the Federalist-Whig [and Free Soil] Party policies.

So, where is it proper to place Jefferson and Madison?

Here again, the list betrays a two-dimensional formalism. For reasons of historical or organizational continuity and positions on a number of issues, both Jefferson and Madison belong quite clearly in the line of succession that led to today's Democratic Party. But, it is also clear that the new Republican Party of the 1850's could justifiably claim to be in the Jeffersonian tradition.

Given the two lists, it is probably most accurate to place them somewhere in the middle; better yet, get rid of the lists and focus on the real history. Where to place Jefferson and Madison is a great discussion topic - if students are allowed to learn the facts of their public lives - and even a good topic for a research paper or project.

7. Reduction of required subject-area content knowledge in grades K-3 on the basis of undocumented theories of child development and the relationship between factual knowledge and skilled use of that knowledge;
8. Mandating personal views over factual knowledge;
9. Leaving gaps in U.S. History and World History;
10. **Requiring only one semester of World History required in grades 9-12; At a time when the U.S. has taken a more active role in the world and Americans are debating the nature and scope of future international involvement, all students should have the opportunity to truly study world history. I recommend two years in grades 7-12, including at least one full semester on the history of the west. This has been, but should not be, an area of contention. If it is taught as HISTORY "with warts and all," but the goal of UNDERSTANDING the historical background of the U.S. and its disproportionate effect on the rest of the world during the past 500 years, this should not be so controversial.**

Katherine Kersten, who writes about politics and education for the StarTribune, described one of the weaknesses of the POL's: "**Under the [former] Profiles [of Learning], Minnesota students theoretically can complete high school without studying world history at all**" (Kersten, 44).

**The study of world history & grounding in the history of Western Civilization are can be seen in "The Justice and the Klansman: A Plea for World History," my title for Prof. Ed Smith's anecdote, on pp. 39-40.** By allocating a full two years to the study of world history, it is then possible to give adequate attention to other major world regions. The world history standards and benchmarks world history benchmarks are, indeed, overstuffed with facts, but the solution is to give it more time, not to remove more history or permit local jurisdictions to amalgamate it into a formless "social studies."

11. Places Minnesota history and local history with world history (grades 4 & 6), when they logically dovetail with, i.e. are part of, U.S. history;

C. Political, Religious and Ideological Characterizations: The Obstacle to Content Centered Standards and Broad Acceptance.

Many of the public comments posted to the Department of Education's website used the terms "conservative" or "liberal" to emphasize their criticisms of parts of the [first] draft of the history and social studies standards. Occasionally stronger characterizations were employed as pejoratives. Such characterizations offer little of value in writing and evaluating standards and educational policies. They stigmatize and stereotype and create artificial barriers between people who share a

common interest in effective schools and educational programs based on a well-documented history of success. That is the legacy of the POLs and serves only to divide and confuse.

When standards and curricula for history courses are centered on a chronological core of historical events with sufficient allowance for local school AND INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS' special expertise and interest, controversy is reduced. When the focus is centered on behavior or on what standards writers believe or hope will interest or motivate the students and teachers, the potential for conflict increases.

#### IV. Second Draft Problems: Format, Terms, Strands, "Social Studies"

##### A. Confusing Terms and Format: Forcing Subject-Area Standards for History into an Artificial Format

###### 1. Confusing Terms or Jargon vs. "everyday English"

**"Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent."**

- George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (1946)  
(<http://eserver.org/langs/politics-english-language.txt>).

Instructions and guides are reader-friendly when they are clearly written and employ "everyday English." Jargon creates the false illusion of esoteric expertise, when none exists, but has the effect of silencing potential critics, in this case parents and teachers, who may wonder what happened to straight-forward historical chronology. When used to justify a questionable policy, it is documentation by obfuscation. Two examples from the format of the standards draft are "strand" and "sub-strand."

<u>Everyday English</u>	vs	<u>Social Studies Jargon</u>
Subject		"Strand"
Historical Era		"Sub-Strand"

Neither the format nor the terms are those used by historians to organize the presentation of historical events. This is immediately obvious, when one sees that the U.S. History Courses for grades 3, 5, 7 & 9-12 (and similarly for World History and Minnesota History) have "strand" or subdivision labeled "U.S. History," which is one of five "strands" listed under U.S. History.

2. Why is U.S. History divided into five "strands," one of which is called "U.S. History"?

The reason has nothing to do with efficient organization of standards or the way history teachers organize their lesson plans. It comes from an attempt to force history (U.S., world, state/Minnesota), geography, government & civics, economics, and essential skills into artificial divisions of a broader, all-encompassing super-subject called "social studies."

Is "**social studies ... a content rich subject area**"?

("Perception Versus Reality," item #4; "Final Draft Academic Standards in Science and History/Social Studies," December 19, 2003; <http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/059705.pdf>).

"**Social studies**" is not a content area; rather, it is an umbrella term for several traditional subject areas that, for the sake of administrative convenience at the K-12 level, are organizationally grouped into a single department, in the same way that foreign languages are grouped into a foreign language department or the sciences into a science department.

The content of "social studies" is recognizable as history content, geography content, government/civics content, etc. Each of these subjects has a unique logical structure. By attempting to force history (U.S., World, Minnesota), geography, government & citizenship and economics into one format with a single set of "essential skills" compromises their integrity. More importantly, it unnecessarily complicates the establishment of reader-friendly and user-friendly subject-area standards, curricula and lesson planning. This was the process behind the creation of the Minnesota Profiles of Learning, which reduced traditional subject areas to "social studies" themes and strands.

Although the current second draft is qualitatively far superior to the POL's, the attempt to force these subjects into a single "social studies" mold compromises the learning potential of each. As explained previously, this is partially obscured by the use of authoritative-sounding jargon.

3. The Development of National Standards did not include "Social Studies"

In the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" of 1992, the U.S. Congress provided funding for the development of K-12 subject-area standards for **discipline-based subjects** in the **field of social studies**: history, geography, economics and government/civics. "Social studies" was not included for the obvious reason that it is not a discipline.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), although a participant in the development of history standards as one of the seven professional organizations that organized focus groups, initiated a "social studies" standards project,

publishing *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/>) in 1994.

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), together with NCSS, produced the almost identical *Program Standards for the Initial Preparation of Teachers of the Social Studies* (<http://www.ncate.org/>) in 1997. For a closer examination of the difficulties posed by these standards, see "Can 'Social Studies' Prepare History Teachers" by this reviewer in "AHA Perspectives," the monthly newsletter of the American Historical Association, <http://www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/1999/9910/9910VIE.CFM>.

B. The K-3 Standards and the Need for Early Core Knowledge: Is It Too Early For Children to Learn That History is Called History and That Geography is Called Geography?

In the 8-page summary of changes incorporated into the second draft (<http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/059705.pdf>), which I will refer to as "Summary Report," it states,

"In grades K-3, students and teachers will find standards and benchmarks, in all of the strands as students are introduced to social studies. Starting in fourth grade, the committee organized the standards and benchmarks with more concentration on individual subject areas ..."

1. K-3 History Units Should Be Structured Around Clear Historical Chronologies

Although the individual subject areas in K - 3 are identified, the benchmarks need to be more specifically organized around the traditional subjects. In particular, history topics need to be organized around chronology, which should have an inherent structural presence in addition to being explicitly taught. This is especially the case for disadvantaged children who don't enjoy the advantage of learning this at home.

2. K-3 History Units Should Have More Historical Content

By the same token, there must be a greater emphasis on subject area content. This is where disadvantaged children (defined as children who enter school without the pre-literate or early literate skills that "advantaged" children have from being read to; having access to books, trips to the library & museums, etc.) must receive maximum content-rich instruction in these subject areas so they can build subject-specific vocabulary and the foundational clusters of content knowledge they will need for more advanced knowledge in grades 4 and up.

The importance of this cannot be overstated, because this is where the learning/achievement gap that limits disadvantaged, disproportionately minority

children starts. By the time instruction in actual subjects starts in grade 3 or 4, the gap continues to widen.

As the schools lay the foundational reading/decoding skills (phonics) in K and 1, the schools must also start building or expanding subject area knowledge. (For a recent discussion of this problem, see "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap" by Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley in The American Educator, (Spring 2003), publication of the American Federation of Teachers, [http://www.aft.org/american\\_educator/spring2003/catastrophe.html](http://www.aft.org/american_educator/spring2003/catastrophe.html). The researchers discovered that, by age 3, a child of professional parents had heard 30 million more words than a child on welfare. The former child had a vocabulary and a number of different words per hour that were roughly twice the number of the child on welfare.

An article by E.D. Hirsch in the same issue reviews the research that explains the importance of vocabulary words and domain (subject matter) knowledge, "Reading Comprehension Requires Knowledge - of Words and the World: Scientific Insights into the Fourth Grade Slump and Stagnant Reading Comprehension" by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. [http://www.aft.org/american\\_educator/spring2003/AE\\_SPRNG.pdf](http://www.aft.org/american_educator/spring2003/AE_SPRNG.pdf)).

C. Should Local Schools Be Allowed to Decide How Much U.S. History, Geography, Government & Citizenship, World History and Economics to Require of Students in Fulfillment of their 3.5 Social Studies Graduation Requirement in grades 9-12?

1. The Present Requirements and the Proposals:

The present requirement calls for:

1.0 U.S. History	1.0 Geography	0.5 World History (!)
0.5 Government and Citizenship	0.5 Economics	

As stated in Item #2 of the 8-page summary and on page 30 of the Second Draft:

"The Commissioner's proposed language would change this requirement to 'three and one half credits in social studies, encompassing at least U.S. History, Geography, Government and Citizenship, World History and Economics.'"

That would be a serious mistake. **At the high school level, this would be tantamount to a return to the POLs' amalgamated or "integrated" (see next) "social studies" classes.** The purpose of such a change is spelled out very clearly on page 30 of the second draft. The negative consequences of this should not be missed or minimized:

"Note: Should the above recommendation be accepted, schools would have more flexibility and, for example, could **meet the graduation requirements with integrated courses** (such as geography, economics, government and civics standards being integrated into a two-year study of U.S. History)."

In other words, in the name of "interdisciplinary study," some courses will be folded into others. The objection to clearly defined subjects is not given. The likely consequences are watered-down courses, most likely U.S. & world history.

2. "Interdisciplinary Study" or "Interdisciplinary Learning"  
The term for this melting pot or salad bowl of subjects is "interdisciplinary study." It always sounds good on paper and is usually supported by evocative, seemingly intellectually rigorous slogans: "thinking outside the box," "breaking the mold," "shifting paradigms," etc.

They are, however, usually failures, because

- a. Each of these traditional subject areas has its own structure as a discipline. This is especially true of history, government/civics (from political science) and economics. It is also true of geography. Inevitably, one format takes over and the rest have to be forced into it - exactly as this standards document demonstrates. The compromises damage the integrity of some or all of the component courses/subjects.
- b. Government/civics, economics and geography as subjects or disciplines are not the same as a history unit focused on political history or economic history or territorial (geographic) history.
- c. It requires teachers to simultaneously juggle and integrate several distinct frameworks.
- d. The question must be posed: why do some school districts feel the need to alter traditional courses?  
Each of these subjects/disciplines is a distinct discipline at the college level.

The Profiles of Learning promoted "interdisciplinary learning." I addressed that in my review 2000 Achieve/CBE review by quoting from Howard Gardner.

First, I prefaced the issue:

"Since the blurring and shifting of disciplinary boundaries in the POL resembles aspects of interdisciplinary learning, that teaching strategy should be addressed. Although teachers should make interdisciplinary connections whenever possible, it is not justified as a standards driving philosophy. Subject areas and their parent disciplines have evolved, in some cases over centuries, and continue to be the most efficient way to learn their core knowledge and concepts. Attempts to impose interdisciplinary or pan-disciplinary standards on K-12 students ignore the hard fact that for most people, interdisciplinary learning only becomes possible after having established a base of knowledge in both disciplines.

"This point is addressed in considerable depth in an article by Harvard University educational psychologists Howard Gardner and Veronica Boix-Mansilla:

"Current debates around the organization of pre-collegiate curriculum have directed considerable criticism at the dominant role assumed by subject matter or disciplines. Criticisms have ranged from a call for interdisciplinary or theme-based curricula to an emphasis on 'ways of knowing,' or 'learning styles' as organizing units that replace disciplinary knowledge.

"In this article, while acknowledging the merit of some of the critique, we propose a positive view of disciplinary knowledge. We claim that, over the years, knowledgeable human beings working in specific domains have developed concepts, methods, and perspectives as means of better understanding the physical, biological, and social worlds around us. We find students' access to these disciplinary tools to be an indispensable ingredient of quality education. Shorn of disciplines we become intellectual barbarians." (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 198).

The authors then comment on classroom experiences that are advertised as interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary:

"[I]t is crucial to note that interdisciplinary work can be carried out legitimately *only* after the individual has become at least somewhat conversant in the relevant disciplines. Much of what is termed interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary work in the early grades is actually pre-disciplinary work – drawing chiefly on common sense." (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 208)

I would strongly urge the shortening of the Grade 9-12 Geography requirement to 0.5 credits and the lengthening of the World History requirement to at least 1.0 credit. With this country's long-standing role as a major force in the world arena, it is unacceptable for students to leave high school with only one semester of world history in grades 9-12. Geography is not an adequate replacement for World History, because Geography is not centered on chronology, i.e. on the concept of cause and effect, actions and consequences.

- D. "The Standards are not Developmentally Appropriate."  
 ("Perception Versus Reality," item #3, the 8-page summary of changes on the website: <http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/059705.pdf>).

The following comments are made in #3:

"Many people were very concerned about the rigor of the standards, especially in the early grades. This criticism was voiced at every public hearing with many people citing the following social studies benchmarks:

- "First graders knowing 'how migration and colonization influenced American history.'

- "Third graders 'comparing and contrasting characteristics of ancient cultures such as Persia, China, India with Greece.'
- "Fourth graders studying the 'ideas of John Locke.'"

Comment: Why That Objection is Invalid

1. The "developmentally appropriate" objection is really a continuation of the K-3 objections listed above.
2. "Developmentally appropriate" is an evocative, very scientific sounding phrase that is invoked around the country to block phonics/decoding/phonemic awareness reading instruction, content-centered instruction in the early grades, and the early building of foundational knowledge in arithmetic.

It is without scientific or research support. If legislators or members of the public are unsure about this, they should require those who use such expressions to provide them with scientifically conducted studies (double blind studies with controlled variables, not anecdotes) to support those claims.

3. If the examples given above are analyzed, the "developmentally appropriate" objection quickly dissolves. The First Grade benchmark listed above reads: "Students will know how migration and colonization affected American history."

The standard is poorly written. As written, it presumes that a child knows several individual or combined concepts:

- a. The concepts of "migration" and "colonization"
- b. The concept of "affected" (to affect);
- c. The concept of "American history."
- d. The combined concept of "affected American history."

If we break them down, as any good early childhood teacher does, it turns out to be within the learning potential of a First Grader.

- a. "Affected" (to affect) is the only concept that is fairly concrete in meaning and can be fairly quickly learned.
- b. "Migration" or "colonization," is ambiguous abstractions; they are broad generalizations of many specific historical events.  
There's no specificity of when, where, or who. In that sense, they are not "developmentally appropriate," but is there any adult who could answer that question without "when, where and who" being specified?
- c. "American history"  
What is the "what" of "American history" that was "affected" that a First Grader can be expected to know? In the case of the Pilgrims, that "what" is almost all of American history, for what has not been, to some degree "affected" by the Pilgrims' "migration"?

Can a First Grade child (lets call this hypothetical Minnesotan Michael) learn

About the migration of the Pilgrims in 1620? Can he learn that

- i. Their arrival in 1620 marked one of the beginnings of what we call "American history"?
- ii. The Pilgrims settled near the native Indians, were aided by a local Indian named Squanto who spoke English and that soon more English Pilgrims and, then, Puritans came over, because they wanted to practice their religion as they chose to, etc.?

The answer to each question is an unequivocal, "YES!"

The reason everyone reading this can answer, "YES!" is because, as implied above, the foundation of required knowledge, i.e. historical knowledge or "facts," was built up, concrete "fact" by concrete "fact." Each sequenced component, "migration," "colonization," "colony," that period in "American history," etc. must first be learned before a complex question can be answered.

But even then, the complex, end-of-Pilgrim unit question must be written in concrete terms, not in broad, ambiguous and abstract language. For example:

Rewritten Standard for Grade 1:

"The student will know:"

"The reasons why the Pilgrims left England and established the Plymouth colony in 1620.

It must be broken down into its year or date span and its physical location in "American history." Once those concepts have been learned, or, indeed, **as they are being learned**, the child is developing connections, seeing patterns of similarity and dissimilarity, all of which will lead to that information being stored in some memory location.

Odds are that little Michael already knows one of the first things that the Pilgrims brought that "affected American history": freedom of religion. He might already understand that the reason he and his friends go to different churches/temples is related to the Pilgrims' "migration" in 1620. Once he knows that, he can learn the difference between the Pilgrims (Separatists) and Puritans.

- d. Thus, the concrete building blocks of that knowledge are very, very "developmentally appropriate."  
What was not "developmentally appropriate" was a question that was
  - i. Vague;
  - ii. Required him to know a few concrete "facts" that he was not allowed to learn, because learning "a list of facts" is strongly discouraged.
- e. The alleged and undocumented opinion that all instruction must center on the teaching of "Critical Thinking Skills" or "Higher Order Thinking Skills" is the excuse for denying students the early opportunity to learn the historical and geographical facts they need in order to think critically about their world.

In most states, early childhood teachers simply have not had the opportunity to discover the enthusiasm that well-designed history units can bring to their classes. As a result, children are trapped in "expanding environments" units. The second draft does move in the direction of historical content, but it is too little.

I would suggest contacting Elaine Wrisley Reed, Director of the National Council for History Education ([nche@nche.net](mailto:nche@nche.net); 220-835-1776). She is a former elementary history teacher. NCHE has developed suggested K-4 scopes and sequences. There is also the work of Kieran Egan, who has done research in early childhood history education.

- E. What's "Higher Order" About "Higher Order Thinking Skills"? (Objection #4 in the 8-page web-site summary: The standards "do not promote higher order or critical thinking skills.")

(The entire section is listed, so that its full significance can be examined)

1. **"4. The standards are simply lists of facts for memorization and do not promote higher order or critical thinking skills.**

"Because of the overwhelming number of benchmarks in the first draft, many teachers understandably viewed it as a list of facts to memorize. With a high volume of standards in each subject, **teachers would not have time to develop critical thinking skills with their students.** By substantially reducing the number of standards and benchmarks, the committee made the final draft more manageable, allowing teachers the time in the classroom to work on **higher level thinking skills** with the content provided.

"The committee also made significant changes to the expectations in the standards and benchmarks, adding **higher order thinking skills such as analyze, explain, examine, evaluate, and compare and contrast.**

"The most significant addition to the final draft standards in social studies was a **new strand on Essential Skills** that has been added throughout the document. Since social studies is a content rich subject area, the Essential Skills standards will be useful for teachers and students as they apply what they have learned using **inquiry and historical research skills.**"

(<http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/059705.pdf>).

2. Comment On: "**Simply Lists of Facts for Memorization**"

That sentence contains two separate but linked statements, each of which contains an unstated and implied premise that is rhetorically presented as if based on evidence:

- "**Simply lists of facts for memorization**";
- "**Lists of facts ... do not promote higher order or critical thinking skills.**"  
(Each of these assertions will be separately addressed)

- a. Note that "facts" are negatively termed "lists of facts" and disparaged by the dismissive word, "simply";
- b. "Memorization," which appears nowhere in the standards first draft, is thrown in because, it is implied, everyone is expected to know how terrible "memorization" of "lists of facts" is;
- c. It is so terrible that, who would think to argue the validity of that statement? Since I am familiar with the world of education and the debates that occur within it, I will call upon another hypothetical Minnesotan, a local expert on the issue of "memorization" of "lists of facts." He happens to be hockey fan and, since intense love of hockey starts early in life in Minnesota and, despite rumors to the contrary, is not a genetic trait, but learned knowledge, I will pose some real questions to this hypothetical 7 year old, whom I shall call Nick:

- i. Who are the starters for the Wild and who has the most goals?
- ii. What position does Andy Brunette play and what's his number?

Odds are that he and his friends have memorized many "lists of facts" about teams, players, etc. in the NHL. That's an age when children, depending on their interests among other factors, start accumulating knowledge, including "lists of facts" that they have, in fact, memorized.

- d. The phrase "lists of facts" for "memorization" implies that the names of people removed from the first standards draft were random. In fact, the names on the K-3 standards document were names of people who had something in common or who would be studied as part of a larger unit. Memory researchers have long known that the memory stores information in clusters or chunks that have a logical relationship to other bits and bytes of knowledge. Most important of all, the more clusters of knowledge one has and the more that is stored in each cluster; the easier it is to acquire more knowledge. Again, the failure of schools to work at building subject area knowledge in the early grades contributes to the growing achievement gap.

3. Objection #4 in 8-page report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Part:

**"4. The standards ...do not promote higher order or critical thinking skills."**

- a. Comment on the statements regarding "higher order thinking skills":
  - i. It is pedagogically without foundation to oppose "higher order thinking skills" to "facts," i.e. subject-area content, and to memorization.

There seems to be little understanding that historical "facts" are almost always taught in patterns, the most important example of which is chronology. That means that they are not random "lists of facts." When historical facts are presented in an inherently logical pattern that ties them together, e.g. students reading a biographical excerpt from the life of George Washington or Frederick Douglass, they are learning an array of skills, such as the challenge of making difficult decisions with many unforeseen consequences:

- The evolution of Douglass' views of his status as a slave and reaching the decision to escape;
- The evolution of Washington's view's of Virginia's colonial status or his response to the "Newburgh revolt."

- ii. Whether a student reads this information in a book or hears this information in a lecture, his or her mind is being challenged to **examine, evaluate, compare and contrast** the options and possibilities GW and FD faced, all of which are forms of **analytical thinking**. If the teacher then leads a discussion, such as the following one, look at all of the skills that are learned and mental connections that being formed.

The teacher asks students to:

- List the options each faced;
- List the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing each option;
- Suggest why he made that decision - and support it with evidence;
- List the consequences of the decision in two columns: positive & negative;
- Take notes during the classroom discussion;
- Write an essay with a thesis statement, "What were the consequences of GW's decision to support independence?"

Note how all of these analytical skills are addressed developed. They are all skills that must be taught and they can be effectively taught using well-written accounts of historical events and biographies, but they are not hurdles. They do require what this document is hesitant to allow, students to have access to the historical eras, patterns and events, exposure to maps and globes, and familiarity with the structure of their state and national governments.

- iii. These are the common practices any well-prepared teacher. These apparently routine activities are, in fact, leading children and students through an entire array of skills that enable them to be the critical consumers of information that we value. This little example points to the value of history: each historical event is the result of many decisions, conflicts, compromises, trials, challenges and even the horrible results of wars - out of which, both good and bad consequences flow.

Instruction, even in the upper grades, begins with concrete information, not abstractions. That's why well-written, and age-appropriate biographies and historical fiction are good instructional materials.

To disparage that process as "memorization" of a "list of facts" is to betray a profound misunderstanding of learning, cognition and the power of history, geography and all subjects to engage and enlighten students.

b. What a Removed Benchmark Reveals

The following benchmark was removed from Grade 1 (first draft) to Grade 2 (second draft) Geography:

"Students will be able to locate and name the continents and oceans on a map of the world and on a globe."

Yet, in Grade 2 Geography, two other benchmarks require children to

- Recognize the outline shapes of countries and locate cultures and civilizations studied in history"; and
- "Locate and describe places about which they read."

Comment on the Removed Benchmark

- I. If children had been able to learn about the continents and oceans in First Grade, they would be better prepared to "recognize the outline shapes of countries ..." in Second Grade;
- ii. What are the complex "higher order thinking skills" that must be taught with these basic geography facts that requires the postponement of that knowledge?
- iii. As in the previous example, the concepts of "continents" and "oceans" are linked facts, facts that exist in a pattern or cognitively, a chunk or cluster [or byte] of knowledge, a building block for future knowledge.
- iv. In fact, many children will enter Grade 1 already knowing about continents and oceans - and dinosaurs and whales, etc. But those who don't, the disadvantaged, are shackled to a policy of low expectations. Although all suffer from intellectual growth denied, a disproportionate percentage will be minority students.

4. What Does the Counterposition of "Critical Thinking Skills" against "Lists of Facts for Memorization" mean?

Misinformation About "Critical Thinking Skills" - by E.D. Hirsch

- a. The misuse of the term "critical thinking skills" is effectively described by E.D. Hirsch, founder of the CORE Knowledge Schools:

*"Critical-thinking skills": A phrase that implies an ability to analyze ideas and solve problems while taking a sufficiently independent, "critical" stance toward authority to think things out for one's self. It is an admirable educational goal for citizens of a democracy, and one that has been advocated in the United States since Jefferson. The ability to think critically is a goal*

*that is likely to be accepted by all American educational theorists. But it is a goal that can easily be oversimplified and sloganized. In the progressive tradition that currently dominates our schools, "critical thinking" has come to imply a counterpoise to the teaching of "mere facts," in which, according to the dominant caricature, sheep-like students passively absorb facts from textbooks or lecture-style classrooms. Critical thinking, by contrast, is associated with active, discovery learning and with the autonomous, independent cast of mind that is desirable for the citizens of a democracy. Conceived in this progressive tradition, critical thinking belongs to the formalistic tool conception of education, which assumes that a critical habit of thought, coupled with an ability to read for the main idea and an ability to look things up, is the chief component of critical-thinking skills. This tool conception, however, is an incorrect model of real world critical thinking. Independent-mindedness is always predicated on relevant knowledge: one cannot think critically unless one has a lot of relevant knowledge about the issue at hand. Critical thinking is not merely giving one's opinion. To oppose "critical thinking" and "mere facts" is a profound empirical mistake. Common sense and cognitive psychology alike support the Jeffersonian view that critical thinking always depends upon factual knowledge.*

*E. D. Hirsch, Jr., "The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them"*  
(New York: Doubleday, 1996) &

<http://www.illinoisloop.org/thinking.html>

- b. Memory: On the subject of memory, see "Inflexible Knowledge: the First Step to Expertise" by Daniel Willingham (Daniel T. Willingham is associate professor of cognitive psychology and neuroscience at the University of Virginia and author of *Cognition: The Thinking Animal*. His research focuses on the role of consciousness in learning)  
[http://www.aft.org/american\\_educator/winter2002/CogSci.html](http://www.aft.org/american_educator/winter2002/CogSci.html)
5. Each of the following verbs was added into the second draft to prompt "higher order thinking skills": "**analyze, explain, examine, evaluate, and compare and contrast**" (from 8-page letter, objection # 4). Subject area benchmarks were reduced and/or moved to higher grades in order to accommodate them. Do these verbs automatically prompt "critical thinking skills"?

In order to determine whether they actually prompt "higher order thinking skills," they require closer examination:

- a. "**Examine**" - how is that different from or more "higher order" than "read", "read carefully," "look at", "observe"; is something more implied?
- b. "**Compare and contrast**" - this analytical pair has been a staple of history instruction for decades. It is frequently one of the four choice essays in the Advanced Placement U.S. History examination. It appears quite a few times in the standards draft, but often in a problematic form (see below).

- c. "**Analyze**" - It has been added to many benchmarks in the second draft, but usually in problematic form. Often, whatever it is that needs to be "analyzed" is either unspecified or too vague to be a guide for teachers or developers of assessments. Here is an example, one of many:

Grade 6, World History, p. 19:

Substrand: Emergence of a Global Age, 1450-1650 A.D.

Standard: "The student will demonstrate knowledge of non-European civilizations of the world after 1500 A.D.":

Benchmark: "Students will describe the location and development of various empires of the world, and **analyze** their contributions."

Problem: The empires are not specified by time period, name or location; which ones? All? They should be named. There should also be a set of categories (political, economic, social, religious, etc.) for analyzing

Simply sticking the word "**analyze**" into a benchmark statement does not transform a benchmark into prompt for a higher level of cognitive activity. In fact, it creates an impossible activity, because it doesn't describe the full range of knowledge that a child must master in order to successfully achieve the skill.

An example of the poor use of the term "**analyze**" is in Grade 4 World History, second draft (p. 9):

Standard: "The student will demonstrate knowledge of interactions Between among Eurasian civilizations."

Benchmark: "Students will **examine and analyze** interactions and Regional trade patterns among Europe, East Asia and the Middle East."

a. Comment

- I. What "interactions" are to be analyzed?
- ii. What time period? What geographical region?
- iii. The Benchmarks column offers no specificity
- iv. The Examples column lists "Marco Polo, silk road, Mongols, Gengis (sic) Khan and Prince Henry of Portugal";
- v. Does "among" mean within each region, between each region or both?
- vi. This is how "analyze" is employed in many of the benchmarks, i.e. without any attempt to specify what or when.

6. The very next Benchmark on page 9, under the same "Sub-strand" ("Era"), but another standard:

Standard: "Students will demonstrate knowledge of the civilizations of the Americas."

Benchmark: "Students will compare and contrast major features of the Aztec and Incan civilizations."

The Examples column lists:

"Mathematics, astronomy, transportation, art, architecture, agriculture"

Comment:

The Examples column is only supposed to "compliment (sic) the benchmarks [which]... are not considered foundational," i.e. required.

While those are the obvious features to compare, they create some difficulties:

- Mathematics and astronomy - the Aztec and Inca were not noted for mathematics or astronomy; rather, it was the Maya, but their decline occurred around 750 CE/AD;
- Why not include the concept of empire building? Both were empires; "Inca" refers to the ruler who was considered a deity; the Aztec, a successor empire that displaced the Toltec and Tula in the early 1400's offers a pre-Columbian example of conquest imperial expansion. Fourth Graders know a lot about empires from video games and movies. The process of conquest by which these empires were built offers an interesting topic for comparison and contrast with the Spanish conquests of the early 1500s. And, these pre-Columbian empires also had "warts."

7. Will the Application of "Inquiry Skills" Benefit Students?

The addition of "[e]ssential Skills standards will be useful for teachers and students as they apply what they have learned using **inquiry and historical research skills.**" (8-page summary, Change #4)

Inquiry or discovery learning is based on a widespread educational theory, according to which children will learn if they are actively engaged in the process of discovery, much like a historian doing research or a scientist conducting experiments. In reality, that's a misconception since neither of these activities takes place the historian or scientist has acquired a great deal of expertise - that is the meaning of the saying, "before accumulating a consider

Elementary science teacher and professor of education Kathleen Roth observed 5th grade science classes using the inquiry method to teach science process skills. The particular unit was on photosynthesis. The article appeared in the Winter 1989 issue of the "American Educator." The inquiry units she observed took a great deal of time, far longer than direct instruction, thus taking away time from other science units. Little direct content information was given the children, since they were to emulate the scientific process through which they would "discover" the content and gain conceptual understanding of the scientific principles.

The results of these carefully planned and scripted units were rather dismal. Students became bored, despite the hands-on focus and many of the students never learned the key concepts that were the goals of the inquiry unit.

From her observations, she concluded,

"I identified students whose naive theories went unchallenged and unchanged despite weeks of process-focused instruction. These students did not view the process of science as helping them better understand their world..."

"Practicing process skills in isolation of conceptual development does not help students understand how science processes are useful in understanding the world. Instruction that involves students in using their own theories in ways that are personally meaningful and consistent with scientific explanations provides a powerful alternative to process-focused instruction. To make such changes, students need to do difficult cognitive work that includes the use of science processes (predicting, hypothesizing, observing, inferring). Students do not, however, practice these processes in isolation and the goal is not for them to be better observers or predictors. Instead, these processes are used in the service of developing better explanations of natural phenomena." (Roth 1989, 46).

8. How Should Historical Content Be Combined With "Essential Skills" or "Critical Thinking Skills"

Confusion over this issue results in standards that are a confusing mix of globally broad, centuries-long generalizations ("Students will describe the location and development of various empires of the world, and analyze their contributions." 1450-1650; Grade 6, p. 19) next to others that are highly specific ("Students will describe the issues that Minnesotans faced during World War I and how they responded to them," 1917-1918 in Grade 6, p. 17).

Standards and Benchmarks and supporting Examples must be written as "knowledge statements."

9. The **unevenness of expectations of students' capacity to learn** in the Draft is apparent. On the one hand, the standards consider it too difficult for a First Grader to learn the names of the oceans and continents; yet, by Grade 3, they are expected to "locate on a map the major world countries, and states and major cities of the United States" and "major river systems and mountain ranges on continents studied" (page 8). And, by Grade 4, they are expected to "analyze interactions" across all of Eurasia over a 500 time span (page 9) without having learned anything about the societies in which or between which those interactions occurred.

**10. CONCLUSION: The Real Role of "Higher Order Thinking Skills" in The Standards Draft**

I am not contesting the idea that skills can be plotted on a hierarchy of complexity and depth of analysis, though that is often oversimplified.

I am concluding that the "higher order thinking" skill prompt verbs have not created what its advocates claim, a document that will form a foundation for subject-area curricula that will produce graduates able to employ more

sophisticated "critical thinking skills." It does achieve its goal of demeaning history and the role of memory.

In the early grades, where it is most critical, the Draft denies disadvantaged children the subject area content needed to expand existing domains of knowledge and lay the foundations for newer ones (assuming that reading instruction in K and 1 is guided by the research of the NICHD National Reading Panel).

#### V. Examination of Standards and Benchmarks

The standards and benchmarks have a lot of problems.

To make the review of the errors easier to spot, I will use the following abbreviations, which will be at the head of each page:

**HE** - Historical Error: In some way, the historical information contained or implied is inaccurate.

**PD** - Personal Doctrine: Ideological, Partisan or Religious Belief

**Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague: An overly broad generalization does not allow for a specific assessment to be made.

**BE** - Behavioral Expectation

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies; Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

Category of Problem:

**HE** - Historical Error:                    **BE** - Behavioral Expectation  
**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Grade Level and Subject: **KINDERGARTEN & GR 1; INTRO TO SOC ST**

PAGE	CATEGORY	PROBLEMATIC	CORRECTION/COMMENT
<u>ROW</u>	<u>OF PROBLEM</u>	<u>STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</u>	
1 - 4	<b>BE</b>	"Character Traits of a good citizen"	<i>Subject area standards should only address academic expectations; attempting to define "character traits" is inappropriate, because it is not the province of the school. Schools have codes of behavior and decorum that all teachers and staff should teach, model and enforce.</i>
1- 5	<b>PD</b>	"Privileges of being a human being"	<i><b>DELETE:</b> This is belief statement of Personal Doctrine. The U.S. Constitution guarantees <b>rights</b> to all citizens [and, with little exception, to all other residents]. It does not grant "privileges."</i>
2 - 2	<b>Gen</b>	"Give examples of their civilization and highlights of their cultures"	<i>Too vague: The civilizations and the "highlights" to be learned must be specified. The term "culture" must always be defined, since it has many usages. "Civilizations" typically consisted of many "cultures."</i>
2 -4	<b>PD</b> <b>BE</b>	"Define what it means to be a citizen in terms of loyalty, membership and self-government"	<i><b>DELETE:</b> How is loyalty defined? The standard implies that there is a "right" and a "wrong" answer. Does the Minnesota State Constitution define loyalty? The U.S. Constitution doesn't.</i>
2 - 5	<b>HE</b>	"...Identify the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as America's founding documents that outline rights and duties."	<i>The Declaration is only symbolically a founding document, since it proclaimed independence. It has no legal status and establishes no rights or duties.</i>

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies; Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

Category of Problem:

**HE** - Historical Error:                    **BE** - Behavioral Expectation  
**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Suggested changes will be in **bold**.

Grade Level and Subject: **Grade 1 & 2; Intro to Social Studies**

PAGE	CATEGORY	PROBLEMATIC	CORRECTION/COMMENT
ROW	OF PROBLEM	STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS	

3 - 1	<b>BE</b>	<p>"...identify and describe how Americans show respect for national symbols, songs and events"</p> <p><i><b>DELETE:</b> The fact is that many Americans don't do what the benchmark says they do; therefore, it is asking a child to lie. That is one problem with behavior statements.</i></p> <p><i>In a sense, what unites Americans is the idea that we can all disagree about the symbols, songs and events we show respect for.</i></p> <p><i><b>REPLACE WITH:</b> "...identify significant national symbols, songs and historical events and explain how they came to be significant."</i></p> <p><i>That is now a history statement and it is neutral. This distinction should be understood. It allows the same items to be taught, but as objective knowledge. It does not put the teacher in a position of having to promote a point of view.</i></p>	
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Grade 2:

4 - 4	<b>Gen</b>	<p>"... explain how citizens and statesmen ... have made difference in other people's lives."</p> <p><i>Too vague. Each of these individuals played significant roles in U.S. history; students should learn what those roles were.</i></p> <p><i>More importantly: This list is exactly the "list of facts" that were criticized. It appears that "lists of facts" are acceptable to those who objected, if they are heroic and adulatory. It is more important for students to learn the history - and how these individuals' accomplishments fit into the historical context.</i></p>	
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4 - 5	<b>HE</b>	<p>"Decl of Ind ... sets forth guiding principles for the government of our nation and declares that individuals have rights ..."</p> <p><i>Will curriculum documents make clear to all teachers that the "guiding principles of the Decl of Ind are only <b>symbolic guiding principles</b>? If not, this should be deleted.</i></p> <p><b>Add to item #2 "the division of powers"</b></p>	
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6 - 2	<b>HE</b>	<p>"Indian Nations"</p> <p><i>When describing historical groups, they should be referred to as tribes or societies. "Nation" is a recent term not in use 200 years ago.</i></p>	
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(grade 3)

7 - 1	<b>BE</b>	<p>"character traits"                <b>DELETE</b></p>	
7 - 1	<b>HE</b> <b>&amp; BE</b>	<p>"statesman as a civic leader ... true to the principles and practices of the Decl of Ind."</p> <p><i><b>Delete:</b> That is a personal opinion. What are the "practices of the Decl of Ind and Constitution"?</i></p>	

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies;  
Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

Category of Problem:

**HE** - Historical Error:                    **BE** - Behavioral Expectation  
**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Grade Level and Subject: **Grade 3; Intro to Social Studies**

PAGE	CATEGORY	PROBLEMATIC	CORRECTION/COMMENT
ROW	OF PROBLEM	STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS	
7 - 1	<b>BE</b> <b>HE</b>	"character traits of GW & AL ... in order to understand why each has been so widely respected over time."	<i>Delete: There is so much history that can be taught about GW &amp; AL, the challenges each faced, etc. That is how children learn the lessons of the past and learn how to evaluate important historical figures like these two. It is historically inaccurate, because their historical significance is based on their actual performance in the face of the challenges they face, not on "character traits."</i> <i>The entire Government and Citizenship standards for grades K-3 need to be replaced. These items should be rewritten by someone familiar with the history of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Piety is a personal matter and a behavior, not to be forced on children. It violates the legislature's prohibition against tests that measure "students' values, attitudes and beliefs." Any child penalized for not meeting that requirement or refusing to would have legal grounds for a lawsuit.</i>
7 - 3		<b>ADD to Songs:</b> "We Shall Overcome" and "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing"(sometimes called the "Negro National Anthem") by James Weldon Johnson. Both are songs of uplift and determination from different eras of African-Americans' struggle for civil equality. I have taught them to classes of immigrant students who studied their history, discussed parallels to their own experiences and sang them with enthusiasm.	
8 - 6	<b>HE, Gen</b>	"major African cultures including Kush and Ghana" "explain the importance of trade and learning within the African kingdoms and analyze their impact." <i>Ancient Ghana was an empire, then a state; Kush was a kingdom or a civilization, according to historians. It had its own form of writing as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, but not Ghana. But what is known of "learning" in either? What form of "impact" is meant?</i>	
GRADE 5			
11 - 3	<b>Confusing</b>	"Students will know why the U.S. developed the Constitution." <i>It is more important for students to know the debates and compromises that led to the final document.</i>	
12 - 2	<b>HE</b>	"debate over slavery, including human rights" <i>"human rights" is a late 20<sup>th</sup> Century term; There should be a reference to the Second Great Awakening and the impact it had on reform movements, including abolitionism.</i>	
12 - 3	<b>HE</b>	"roles of significant figures of the Civil War Era ... including ... HBStowe, H Tubman" <i>They were not significant figures in that era; Stowe was before the war; Tubman mainly before the war; her work as a spy, etc. was remarkable, but not significant.</i>	

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies; Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

Category of Problem:

**HE** - Historical Error:                    **BE** - Behavioral Expectation  
**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Suggested changes will be in **bold**.

Grade Level and Subject: Grade 5; U.S. History

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u> <u>OF PROBLEM</u>	<u>PROBLEMATIC</u> <u>STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</u>	<u>CORRECTION/COMMENT</u>
12 - 3	<b>Inaccurate</b>	"... analyze the effects of the war from the perspectives of union & confed soldiers and civilians, including free blacks, slaves and women." <i>I used the term "inaccurate" to draw attention to the problem with this type of question:</i> <i>1. The "perspectives" of people from different walks of life are valid, but offer a very limited picture of the larger events. This becomes a problem when it takes the place of an overview that gives meaning and significance to events.</i>	
Grade 5			
13 - 1	<b>HE</b>	"students will understand ... the founders' sense of duty and honor - and how this sense of personal sacrifice was shared by all the patriots." <i>Whoever wrote this could never have been in the military or read any military history. Soldiers fight for many reasons, only some of them. As written, this is inaccurate and it is irresponsible to compel students to lie.</i>	
13 - 1	<b>HE</b>	"Students will understand key principles in the Decl ... with emphasis on human equality and natural rights, and national sovereignty." <i>The Declaration of Ind was primarily a document aimed at unifying colonists against GB, convincing potential allies (France, Spain, Holland) that this was a complete break with GB, and seeking to divide the opposition in GB. It was first and foremost a propaganda document that fulfilled a specific need - to justify the cause and gain support.</i> <i>The principle of "equality" is equally important, especially because its words, which many memorized (!!) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, became an ideal that stood in contradiction to inequality and could be invoked by Frederick Douglass and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to dramatize the injustice of slavery &amp; women's inequality. Even Ho Chi Minh invoked them in Viet Nam's declaration of independence from France in 1946!</i>	
13-2	<b>HE</b>	Standard: "Const forms a national government guided by the Declaration's principles." <b>Incorrect:</b> <i>It was guided only in small part by the Decl. Does the writer know why Patrick Henry said that he thought he "smelled a rat?"</i>	
13 - 3	<b>HE</b>	Standard: "...the Civil War re-formed a national government guided by the Declaration's principles." <i>The government was not "re-formed". The result of the war was the abolition of slavery. But that was soon followed by Jim Crow segregation and legal denial of equality.</i>	
14 -5	<b>Unclear</b>	"2. price of a good is determined y the interrelationship between production and consumption." <i>This is called "supply and demand"; why not use those terms?</i>	

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies;  
Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

Category of Problem:

**HE** - Historical Error:                    **BE** - Behavioral Expectation  
**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Grade Level and Subject: Grade 6; Minnesota History & World History

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PROBLEMATIC</u>	<u>CORRECTION/COMMENT</u>
<u>ROW</u>	<u>OF PROBLEM</u>	<u>STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</u>	
16 - 1	<b>Jargon</b>	"Minnesota's political, cultural, and physical landscapes." <i>Employ "everyday English"</i>	
16 - 2	<b>HE</b>	"... different perspectives on the causes and effects of the Dakota War of 1862." <i>It is important that the documented history of the events be the core of this unit. If there are divergent "perspectives" on what happened, i.e. the established events, that should be clearly distinguished from more subjective "perspectives" on why the events occurred, who was to blame, etc.</i>	
17 - 2	<b>Add</b>	The following events should be considered for inclusion: in #2: - the Farm Holiday Association - the 1934 Minneapolis Coal Truckers' Strike, which was a factor in the founding of the CIO. in #3: - the internment of WW II Conscientious Objectors in Sandstone Prison	
18-1	<b>BE</b>	#3 "share their understanding of what it means to be a Minnesotan" <i>What will be the rubrics for evaluating this?</i>	
19 - 7	<b>HE</b>	"effects of imperialism on colonial cultures of the 18 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 20 <sup>th</sup> Centuries" <i>As generally employed "imperialism" refers to 19<sup>th</sup> &amp; early 20<sup>th</sup> C. colonialism. "Societies" is preferable to "cultures," since most colonial societies had many different "cultures."</i>	
19	<b>HE</b>	THIS APPLIES TO ALL EXAMPLES AND MANY BENCHMARKS THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT: <i>All examples should be listed in <b>chronological order</b></i>	

**THE WORLD HISTORY ERAS (SUB-STRANDS) ARE TOO LONG; THIS IS A CONSEQUENCE OF ALLOWING TOOLITTLE TIME IN THE SCOPE & SEQUENCE FOR WORLD HISTORY**

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies; Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

Category of Problem:

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**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:  
 Suggested changes will be in **bold**.

Grade Level and Subject: Grade 7; US History

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PROBLEMATIC STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</u>	<u>CORRECTION/COMMENT</u>
22-1	<b>ADD</b>	Plessy v Ferguson, 1896	
22-2,3	<b>HE</b>	"World Wars"	<i>This standard only goes to the 1930s; Wars shd be War.</i>
22-2	<b>VAGUE</b>	"Forces shaping the modern US"	<i>This is too vague; this period is usually and more accurately termed, "US Expansion Abroad" or "Path of Empire" and "America on the World Stage" by Bailey &amp; Kennedy</i>
22 - 2	<b>HE</b>	"colonization of the Philippines"	<i>More accurate: "annexation"; yes, it was a colony; but not truly "colonized" No mention of the Minnesota 13<sup>th</sup> Volunteers, who served in the war that ensued, 1899-1901.</i>
22-2	<b>Vague</b>	"contributions of the early civil rights movement..."	<i>This highlights the limitations of "contributions" as a way of understanding historical events: To describe the work and achievements of BTW &amp; WEB DuBois as "contributions" trivializes what they faced and what they were able to accomplish. It reduces them to a names of "contributors" on a random list of facts. What students should learn is how each of them proposed different solutions to the barrier of segregation and, after Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), the lack of response from the Supreme Court. Justice Harlan's dissent should be read, the only former slave owner on the bench.</i>
	<b>ADD</b>		<i>Marcus Garvey should be added. He offered a third alternative, "racial pride" to Northern urban dwellers, one of the sources of Black nationalism, Nation of Islam, Malcolm X, etc. When it is clear that the purpose of history instruction is TO INFORM AND HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THE SOURCES OF THE PRESENT, and that the teaching of history is distorted when it is used to preach some vision of patriotism, on the one hand, or a soapbox to promote dissent, no teacher should have any difficulty teaching about Garvey or any other controversial figure or event in American or world history.</i>
22-3	<b>Vague</b>	"US neutrality and delayed entry and involvement in WWI"	<i>It is preferable to describe the outbreak of WWI, the U.S. response, the diplomacy, etc. "delayed entry" implies inevitability, which is fine for students to consider, but is never a known factor.</i>
	<b>HE</b>	"Lusitania" -	<i>As listed, it is implied that the sinking of the Lusitania was a cause of the US entry into WWI. That is incorrect. More important is Germany's breaking of the Sussex Pledge, which isn't listed.</i>

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

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Category of Problem:

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**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Suggested changes will be in **bold**.

Grade Level and Subject: Grade 7; US History

PAGE	CATEGORY	PROBLEMATIC	CORRECTION/COMMENT
<u>ROW</u>	<u>OF PROBLEM</u>	<u>STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</u>	
23 - 1	<b>HE</b>	"Battle for Midway"; "Tuskegee Airmen" <i>small point: usually referred to as the "Battle off Midway"; "Tuskegee Airmen" fit into both home front (fight against discrimination; the fight to be able to fight - Eisenhower gave the go ahead for them to serve); and also their notable accomplishments on the battlefield.</i>	
	<b>ADD</b>	Double V campaign and A. Philip Randolph and the March on Washington Movement	
25 - 3	<b>Vague HE</b>	"students will articulate a clear thesis statement that explains the historical relevance of their research topic." <i>A thesis statement is a position statement, equivalent to a hypothesis, arguing for a particular interpretation of historical events. Example: "The Tet Offensive in 1968 was a turning point in the Viet Nam War that led the U.S. to reduce and ultimately withdraw its military forces." Like a hypothesis, its accuracy depends upon the adequacy of supporting evidence..</i>	
		"document research in the form of a bibliography" <i>It should read: "annotated bibliography" or "annotated source list"</i>	
26-1	<b>HE, Vague</b>	"13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> Amendments altered the powers of state and federal governments" <i>In reference to the Reconstruction Period, the 14<sup>th</sup> &amp; 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments were important; the 14<sup>th</sup>'s role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in limiting state power is probably what was meant. It should be rewritten for clarity.</i>	
Grade 8, Geography			
29 -2	<b>BE</b>	"people's perception of regions" & "regions important for unifying society" <i>this is unclear, what is the performance expectation, ie. the objective evidence of learning that can be assessed?</i>	
32 - 2	<b>HE</b>	"judicial review in analyzing the Constitution" <i>judicial review refers to <u>interpreting</u> the U.S. Const., not "analyzing" it.</i>	
32 - 2	<b>HE</b>	"key debates in the Const Convention, comparing and contrasting arguments of Federalists and Antifederalists" <i>Their arguments developed after the Convention, not during it.</i>	
32-2	<b>HE</b>	"first political parties in America ... including Jefferson, Hamilton, John Adams and Andrew Jackson" <i>Jackson is not part of the "first party system" nor is he a direct contemporary of the others. He is responsible for the development of the "2<sup>nd</sup> party system"</i>	



## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

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Category of Problem:

**HE** - Historical Error:                    **BE** - Behavioral Expectation  
**PD** - Personal Doctrine:                **Gen** - Generalization Too Broad or Vague:

Grade Level and Subject: Grade 9-12; US History

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PROBLEMATIC</u>	<u>CORRECTION/COMMENT</u>
<u>ROW</u>	<u>OF PROBLEM</u>	<u>STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</u>	
35- 3	<b>HE</b>	again: the Lusitania is mentioned, but not the Sussex Pledge, the resumption of Ger submarine warfare	
36-3	<b>ADD</b>	In the discussion of World War II, it is important to mention the key roles of the Soviet and Great Britain in defeating Germany.	
37 - 1	<b>ADD</b>	(as recommended for Grade 7) the double V campaign; the March on Washington Mvt & A Philip Randolph, formation of CORE, opening of jobs in factories for women and African-Americans.	
37 - 2	<b>ADD</b>	Truman's desegregation of the military formation of the National Security Council	
38 - 2	<b>Vague</b>	"reaffirmation of Indian sovereignty" <i>This requires clarification: It is a reference to the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1974. The draft makes several references to "sovereignty" and "nations"; it must make clear that this is limited sovereignty.</i>	
39 - 2	<b>HE</b>	Standard: "African civilizations" - then, under Examples: "ocean going trade" <i>Delete: There is no substantiated evidence of sea voyages from Africa in pre-modern times. These claims have been examined by a number of researchers in African history and found wanting. ( See Ortiz de Montellano et al., 1997, 2 references).</i>	
41 - 4	<b>HE</b>	Under examples: "matrilineal descent" in reference to African kingdoms <i>This must be made more specific to the actual society so described. Some African societies trace descent through the mother, but some are patrilineal.</i>	
46 -3	<b>HE</b>	"students will analyze how Middle Eastern <b>protectorate</b> states achieved independence from England and France in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century" <i>They were not protectorates; they were <b>mandates</b>, technically under League of Nations authority.</i>	
47- 1-3	Vague	This is an important skills section. Most of the skills listed are important. The most important improvement to be made is to reorganize the skills into logical categories that describe the actual sequence of doing research, from topic selection to final draft.	
47 - 3	<b>HE</b>	"students will learn how historians present their work in multiple formats..." <i>This is misleading: historians present their work initially in written form, supported by citations of annotated sources. They or sometimes others may also present their work in other formats.</i>	
47-3	<b>Change</b>	"2. students will select a presentation format to ...communicate their ideas." <i>CHANGE TO: "With the advice and approval of the teacher, the student will select a format for presenting historical (or other specific subject) research" Not just "communicate their ideas."</i>	

## REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS, BENCHMARKS AND EXAMPLES

Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the "Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies; Second Draft: December 19, 2003"

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Grade Level and Subject: Grade 9-12; US History

PAGE ROW	CATEGORY OF PROBLEM	PROBLEMATIC STANDARD, BENCHMARK OR EXAMPLE/ <i>UNDERNEATH IN ITALICS</i>	<i>CORRECTION/COMMENT</i>
48 - 1	ADD	Another influence on the Constitution was the colonial experience with elected colonial legislatures - and the frequent conflicts between them and the royal governors.	
48-1	<b>HE</b> ?	"pursuit of happiness (property)" = pursuit of happiness included the right to own property (which included slaves!), but the idea expressed a much wider sense of opportunity and the chance to better oneself.	
49-1	<b>HE</b>	"2. Students will analyze features of the U.S. Constitution .... its status as highest law ... local self-government, and the sovereignty of American Indian Nations." and on p. 50 (Govt & Cit): "Students will explain the sovereignty of American Indian Nations as stated by the United States Constitution."	<p>- <i>the Const is usually termed the "basic" or "fundamental" law of the land;</i>  - <i>"local self-government" is confusing - it should specify states govt; if this is a reference to municipal "self-government" in Minnesota, it should be clarified..</i>  - <i>"the Const says nothing about "the sovereignty of American Indian Nations" Article I, Section 8, which lists the powers of Congress, reads:</i>  <i>"To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;"</i>  <i>It is very clear that "and with the Indian tribes" is not an appositive or example of "foreign nations," but an additional and separate category.</i></p>
49 - 1	<b>Vague</b>	"5. Students will explain the Founders' view of constitutional government as articulated in the Federalist papers." <i>The reference should be to Hamilton, Madison &amp; Jay, not "the Founders," which implies that they alone were the "founders". Also, it's important to avoid pietistic terms, when more appropriate ones are available.</i>	
	<b>HE</b>	"the NW Ordinance provided for the creation of new states." <i>The NW Ordinance was adopted under the Articles of Confederation and established an important <b>precedent</b> - which should be noted- but the provision for the admission of new states is in Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution.</i> <b>ADD:</b> The concept of <b>precedent</b> is important to add (establishment of the Cabinet, the self-imposed two-term limit, foreign policy based on neutrality toward European conflicts, etc.)	
49-1	<b>HE</b>	Examples: "Federalism, including the doctrine of designated powers..." <i>The term is "delegated" powers.</i>	
50 - 2	<b>HE &amp; PD</b>	Examples: "strict constructionism vs. judicial activism" The traditional opposite term to "strict constructionism" is "loose constructionism" It is a neutral and descriptive term; whereas, "judicial activism" is a politicized one.	

## VI. My Previous Reviews of the First Draft and the Profiles of Learning (2000)

### A. From **Solicited Review of the First Draft**, September 4, 2003:

1. I wrote the following in my review of the first draft:

"The draft history standards posted on September 4, 2003 **are on target and fundamentally sound**, because they are centered on core subject area content, making them understandable to teachers and non-teachers alike. Behavioral goals and abstract themes are no longer the core of the standards as they were in the POL's."

This observation reflects the comparison to the POL's. In the present review of the second draft, I am noting that the types of structural confusion that defined the POL's were present in the first draft and remain in the second draft.

2. The following is an excerpt from my review of the Government and Citizenship standards in the first draft (emphasis in original):

**"The Government and Citizenship Draft Standards, evaluated on pp. 18-23, are embarrassing, poorly written, misinformed and factionally motivated. They should be discarded and replaced. The Department of Education should find writers who understand the historical role and meaning of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the how it has evolved over time. This section of the draft social studies standards was more and more shocking as I read on. It is an ideological and behavioral document, just like the POLs."**

As a result of the revisions in the second draft, the ideological and behavioral wording referred to above was significantly lessened, but is still present, especially in the Government & Citizenship standards, primarily around two topics: The Declaration of Independence and the effort to instill patriotism.

In my review of the first draft, I quoted from an article in the Fall 2003 issue of "EducationNext" by Dartmouth professor of government James B. Murphy. His cautionary advice against attempting to create "citizenship standards" should be carefully considered by those who feel that their vision of civic responsibility is inadequately represented.

"Civics Education: The "Tug of War" by James B. Murphy

"A fierce debate over civic education in America's public schools has erupted in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Broadly speaking, liberal approaches to civic education have emphasized the need to resist jingoism and to explore why America induces such hatred in certain parts of the world. By contrast, conservative responses to 9/11 have emphasized our national virtues and the need to defend them in times of danger. Conservatives tend to caricature liberal civics lessons as the toleration of the intolerable, while liberals often criticize conservative civics lessons as a knee-jerk brand

of patriotism. ... My view, briefly stated, is that the attempt to inculcate civic values in our schools is at best ineffective and often undermines the intrinsic moral purpose of schooling' (Murphy, 70).

"According to two studies he cites, 'civics courses have some small effect on students' knowledge but virtually none on attitudes' (Murphy, 72).

"He concludes, '[E]ven if we could all agree about the proper civic virtues, the very attempt to inculcate them undermines the integrity of the academic curriculum. The quest for truth is quickly subordinated to civic uplift when teachers see their role as fostering certain civic dispositions in their students'" (Murphy, 72) (<http://www.educationnext.org/20034/70.html>).

B. Excerpt from My Review of the Profiles of Learning (POLs), April 2000.

In April 2000, I was one of approximately 20 educators contracted by the Council for Basic Education and Achieve, Inc. to review the social studies "Learning Areas" of the Minnesota POLs. I was shocked at the way the traditional subject areas of history (U.S. and world), geography, government/civics and economics had been dissolved into two unrecognizable "Learning Areas" termed "Inquiry" and "Peoples and Culture."

In my "Summary of Findings," I wrote:

"The Minnesota Profiles of Learning are fatally flawed for the following reasons:

- They are **structurally confusing**, since the ten Learning Areas don't correspond to traditional and current divisions of the subject areas.
- they are **uneven and incomplete**, in that important historical thinking and analytical skills are omitted, while others receive excessive attention.
- (given the state curriculum ban) they **don't offer model subject area content scopes and sequences** ...;
- they are **unscientific**. The POL are guided by a philosophy of human cognitive growth and development known as "constructivism." Despite the claims of "constructivist" theorists, controlled studies do not demonstrate its greater effectiveness; rather, research finds it inferior to "direct instruction."
- Constructivism and the POLs are **anti-scientific** in that they promote an epistemology or means of understanding the world that gives greater weight to subjective or impressionistic views than to empirical evidence. They assign greater authority to subjective classifications of knowledge than to substantive or tangible content by:
  - assigning greater value to students' opinions, impressions, social skills, and social views than to subject matter content and relevant analytical skills;
  - demeaning the accumulated knowledge of history, social studies, mathematics and the physical sciences by placing greater importance on "inquiry" or "discovery" skills;

- fostering the illusion that inherently subjective process standards, abstracted from substantive bodies of knowledge, can be assessed by any fair and quantifiable set of objective standards;
- elevating arbitrary and subjective classifications of humanity, e.g. "race" and gender, to the level of predictive traits, e.g. "Diverse Perspectives."
- the POLs (and constructivism) are **ideological**, in that they place greater value on social, behavioral and psychological attitudes than on acquiring knowledge."

## VII. How to Combine Content Standards With Skills Standards

### How to Combine Content Knowledge Benchmarks With Skills Benchmarks

(How the **format** of the "National Standards for History" combines historical content knowledge, termed "historical understandings," with "historical thinking skills").

#### A. Caveat: the National History Standards

There was a great deal of public controversy over the National History Standards, when they were released in 1995. The axis of disagreement centered on lists of names of historical figures (who was in and who was out and what that signified) and criticism vs. praise of U.S. policies, institutions and individuals.

It is cited here, because it offers a reader-friendly format **model format**. As a member of the ASCD focus group (one of seven groups that met periodically from 1992 to 1994 to review drafts and recommend changes), this reviewer helped design the **format or template** for combining from two separate lists **historical content** and **historical thinking skills** (i.e. "essential skills") and combining them in a lesson plan format.

#### B. What is the Problem With the **Format** of the Second Draft of the Minnesota History & Social Studies Standards That Requires Fixing?

Most of the benchmarks are written with prompt verbs that describe very specific ways that the historical [or geographical, government/citizenship or economic] knowledge is to be demonstrated and, therefore, evaluated by the teacher. For example:

From Grade 7, U.S. History; page 22, Row 2:

#1. "Students will **know and understand** the reasons for the Spanish American War and its resulting impact."

Also from Grade 7, U.S. History; page 22; Row 3:

#2. "Students will **explain** Wilson's 14 Points and the failure of post-war internationalism, and **analyze** the rise of United States' isolationism."

The first example states that the student should **know and understand** the historical information. Since it is a benchmark, it is implied that what is known and understood is subject to being evaluated, i.e. tested.

The second example states two very specific - and different - ways that the student is to demonstrate his or her knowledge of the historical information. The student is called upon to **explain** Wilson's 14 Points, but is expected to **analyze** (although "analyze" is never defined in the standards document, it is understood to mean a deeper understanding and explanation than one expects from **to explain**) the rise of U.S. isolationism.

If the wording in the standards document is intended to mean what these words commonly mean, then the fact that some historical information must be **explained** or **analyzed**, must mean that historical information that students are called upon to **know and understand** do not need to be **explained** or **analyzed**. In fact, it means that a teacher cannot call upon a student to **explain, list, describe, provide examples, demonstrate, classify, compare & contrast, analyze, etc.** any historical information that is listed after **know and understand, examine, recognize that, learn how, etc.**

It also means that a teacher cannot ask a student to **describe** historical information, if the benchmark states that the student must **compare and contrast** information. In other words, it means that whenever a teacher anywhere in Minnesota, whether in Roseville or Forest Lake, in Onamia or Grand Marais, in Little Canada or Lake Wobegon, teaches the unit on Wilson's 14 Points, all of the students are required to **explain** them, not **list** them or **analyze** them. It is doubtful that this is the intention.

### C. The Solution

The solution is to list all of the required **historical content information** after one common "knowledge prompt." The point of the standards document is to list, describe and delimit the bodies of historical, geographical, etc. knowledge that students must know. How that knowledge will be presented (lecture, library research, internet research, museum visit, video, guest speaker, etc.) is left to the school district, school or individual teacher. Likewise, the evaluation or assessment of a student's attainment of that knowledge will be described on another document, perhaps at the local school district level. By the same token, the development of future statewide assessments should not be restricted to assessing only that knowledge which clearly calls upon the student to do more than **know and understand**.

A good "knowledge-prompt" at the head of each benchmark column is:  
**"The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of:"**

Each benchmark will be written as a completion of the prompt clause, e.g.  
**"The political, economic and social events between 1763 and 1776 that led to the decision the declare independence."**

Curriculum documents will list the different ways that students will be expected to demonstrate that knowledge.

The same is true of skills or "historical thinking skills." The skills that students are expected to master should be listed in a separate part of the standards document. The local district curriculum director or local school or individual teacher decides how to combine each mandated skill with a given history unit.

D. The Solution: How To Merge Required Historical Content Knowledge With Historical Thinking Skills ("Essential Skills") in a Curriculum Document or Lesson Plan.

1. Within Era 3 ("Revolution and the New Nation, 1754-1820; the National Standards for U.S. History list 10 eras), there are three chronologically sequenced subdivisions, called "Standards". For example:

"Students should understand (this same descriptor precedes each standard; that keeps the focus on the content that is to be learned without tying it to a skill or an activity [that comes later])

Standard 1: **"The causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory."**

Notice that the "standard":

- a. describes a time period, "causes of the American Revolution";
- b. describes historical content: "ideas," "interests" that led to a specific set of events called "forging the revolutionary movement" and events ("reasons") the led to another event, "American victory."
- c. allows for flexibility on the part of the teacher and the student: there can be different emphases on which "causes" and which "reasons" were most important.
- d. is written in "knowledge" language and does not list an activity, such as "analyze," "list," "compare," etc.

2. HOW EACH "STANDARD" IS DIVIDED INTO SMALLER, CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCES CALLED "COMPONENT STANDARDS" (**In the Minnesota draft, this is the equivalent to benchmarks, i.e. descriptions of knowledge that must be mastered**)

Within "Standard 1" (above), there are three **component standards**, labeled 1A, 1B, 1C. For example, 1A:

**"Standard 1A:** The student understands the causes of the American Revolution."

Notice again, that the **component standard** describes a defined time period, defined historical content (a sequence of events), is flexible, and is written in "knowledge language," not in "activity" or "performance" language.

3. HOW EACH "COMPONENT STANDARD" IS FOLLOWED BY EXAMPLES THAT COMBINE:

- a. **Historical Content Knowledge;**
- b. **Historical Thinking Skills;**
- c. **Activity Language, Beginning with the Phrase, "Therefore the student is able to."**

For example:

**Figure 1:** "Therefore, the student is able to"

5-12	Reconstruct the chronology of the critical events leading to the outbreak of armed conflict between the American colonies and England. [Establish temporal order]
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Figure 1 shows how the following elements of good historical standards are combined into an activity:

1. historical content: "critical events leading to the outbreak of armed conflict between the American colonies and England"
2. historical thinking skills: "...chronology of the critical events leading to..."
3. language denoting a lesson plan activity: "Reconstruct the chronology..."
4. a single common phrase describing the expectation: "Therefore, the student is able to..."  
The standards document does not tie a knowledge standard into a specific teaching method or pedagogy, nor does it describe how the student is to demonstrate that he or she "is able to ..."  
That is left to the school district curriculum supervisor or individual school principal or department chair or the individual teacher.

### VIII. "The Justice and the Klansman" - A Plea for the Study of World History.

**This is what students miss when they are denied the full opportunity to learn from their global world heritage.**

THE LOWERING OF HIGHER EDUCATION (excerpt)

By Edward C. Smith (June 28, 2003)

(Director of American Studies, The American University, Washington, D.C. Prof. Smith is largely responsible for the first statue of Abraham Lincoln in Virginia! It is located at Tredegar Historical Park on the James River. It is where Lincoln landed on his brief visit to Richmond following its capitulation on April 4, 1865. The statue depicts AL seated next to his son. It is one of the designs being considered by the U.S. Mint for a new design of the penny in 2009.

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(<http://www.washingtontimes.com/commentary/20030628-094917-9160r.htm>)

"On a recent visit to Arlington National Cemetery, I took a group of my students to the gravesite of Supreme Court Justice, Hugo Black. Before coming to Washington, Black had been a member of the Alabama Ku Klux Klan. While serving in the United States Senate, Black evolved into a passionate lover of the Western "classics," which introduced him to the universality of the human condition and thereby effectively liberated him from the psychic enslavement of racist narrow-mindedness. Thus, he grew so much in learning and stature that he was rightfully proud to administer the oath of office to Thurgood Marshall twice: when Marshall became U.S. solicitor general in 1965 and when he became the first African-American associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967. Marshall and Black are buried very near each other close to the President Kennedy gravesite. Indeed, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the president's assassination.

"When, in 1954, Justice Black joined the 9-0 Brown vs. Board of Education ruling — knowing full well it would ignite a firestorm of social revolution — the vast majority of his fellow Southerners were so disgusted with him that they labeled Black a "traitor to his heritage." The following year in 1955, the Montgomery Bus boycott began and two years later President Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock, Ark., to integrate Central High School. The revolution had indeed begun.

"In its essence, reading is a profound act of humility. It is an admission an author possibly knows more about a subject than we do and has offered us the opportunity to quietly "listen" — at our own pace — to his thoughts and draw from his well of wisdom.

"Also, reading exposes us to points of view that are well-presented and can be completely at variance with our own opinions. This confrontation with ideological opposition (which is rarely seen on politically correct campuses) can contribute immensely to the growing experience. For example, Justice Black was transformed by his readings of the Bible, Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Tolstoy, and many others, all of whom were writers he could never have met in person but did meet on paper. And their presence in his life remained fruitful and lasting. They became his chosen extended family of "ancestors" by adoption and they were always nearby residing on his shelves."

### **IX. Scopes and Sequences: First Draft; Second Draft**

A The First Draft (September 4, 2003) lists three U.S. and world history sequences, and one Minnesota sequence:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>US History</u>	<u>Minn. History</u>	<u>World History</u>
K-2	people & events mostly pre-CivWar	people & events (mostly pre-CW)	holidays, skills early civilizations
	<u>Era: Time Period</u>		<u>Era: Time Period</u>
3	1: preCol-1607 2: 1607-1763		1: prehist - 1000BC 2: 1000 BC - 500 AD
4	3: 1763-1791		3: 500 - 1000 AD
5	3: 1801-1861 4: 1850-1870s		4: 1000 - 1500 AD
6		Native Ams Explorers	2: 1000 BC - 500 AD 3: 500 - 1000 AD 4: 1000 - 1500 AD
7	3: 1775-1860 4: 1850-1870s	settlers pre-CW Civil War	
8	5: 1880-1900 6: 1896-1929 7: 1929-1945 8: 1945-1980 9: 1989-present	1880-1900 1900-1968 1968-2000 2000-present	
9-12	Eras 1-9		Eras 1-8

- B. The Second Draft (December 19, 2003) lists U.S. and world history sequences, and one Minnesota sequence:

Grade	US History	Minn. History	World History	Skills
K-2	people & events mostly pre-Civ War		people & events early civilizations	chronology chronology
3	<u>Era: Time Period</u> 1: preCol-1607		<u>Era: Time Period</u> people; civilizations	<u>TimeLine-1650</u> chronology of
4	2: 1607-1780s 3: 1763-1791 4: 1801-1861		1: PreHist -1000BC 2: 1000 BC - 500 AD 3: 500 - 1000 AD 4: 1000 - 1500 AD	persons, events, concepts of each era studied
5	5: 1850-1870s			chronology of persons, events, concepts; use hist- orical resources
6		1: PreContact-1650 2: 1600-1810 3: 1810-1860 4: 1860-1864 5: 1864-1914 6: 1914-1945 7: 1945-present	5: 1450-1650 6: 1640-1920	evaluate historical resources
7	6: 1877-1916 7: 1900-1930s 8: 1930s-1945 9: 1945-1980 10: 1980-present			research skills; thesis; primary vs secondary sources; mult causa- tion/perspectives; citation; plagiarism
8		( only geography in grade 8 )		
	<u>Grade 9-12 US History</u>	<u>Grade 9-12 World History I</u>	<u>Grade 9-12 World History II</u>	
	1: prehist-1607	1: PreHist - 1000 BC	6: 1450-1600 (West Civ) (Global Age)	
	2: 1607-1780s	2: 1000 BC - 500 AD (West Civ)	7: 1640-1920 (Global) (West Civ)	
	3: 1781- mid 1800's	3: 1500 BC - 700 AD (World Civ)	8: 1914-1945 (West Civ)	
	4: 1850s-1870s	4: 400 - 1000 AD (Western Civ) (& World Civ)	9: 1945-present (West Civ) (Global)	
	5: 1877-1916	5: 1000-1500 AD (Reg'n'l Interact) (" - West Civ)		
	6: 1900-1930s			
	7: 1930s-1945			
	8: 1945-1968			
	9: 1968-present			

## X. SOURCES CONSULTED

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Roth describes a 5<sup>th</sup> grade science class that employed "inquiry" or "discovery learning."
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[Jeanne.hall@education.state.mn.us](mailto:Jeanne.hall@education.state.mn.us)

## XI. Reviewer's Background

I have been a high school social studies teacher in the Washington, D.C. Public Schools since 1969. At present, I teach two sections of Advanced Placement U.S. History, two sections of World History and one section of African Studies. I write a monthly column on local educational issues on an educational watchdog site, [www.dcpswatch.com](http://www.dcpswatch.com).

I presently serve on a DC Public Schools Task Force to develop procedures to ensure the integrity of student academic records. It was established in response to my discovery that the academic records of many students contained improperly altered grades and course credits and that large numbers of students who had not completed graduation requirements were certified for graduation (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A18814-2002Jun8?language=printer>).

### SHORT LIST OF STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM RELATED ACTIVITIES

curriculum co-writer, 1994-97 DCPS; Dept of Education grant	Development of draft history standards for DCPS
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The College Board/ETS 1993-1996; 2002-2003	AP U.S. History essay reader/consultant
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#### **National and Local History & Social Studies Standards**

focus group member, 1992-1994	ASCD Focus Group on National History Standards to review the three drafts. I helped develop the grid template to link the differentiated historical content standards with skills standards.
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committee member, 1998-2000(-?) (project never completed)	CCSSO INTASC Social Studies Committee: Developing certification standards for new social studies teachers
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state standards reviewer April 2000	reviewed the Minnesota "Profiles of Learning" for the Council for Basic Education & Achieve; see <a href="http://www.achieve.org">www.achieve.org</a> (executive summary).
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state standards reviewer March 2001	reviewed the proposed Texas Education Agency's proposed TAAS II assessment base for social studies courses in grades 8, 10, 11 for Achieve, Inc.
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#### **Articles**

##### **A. The Portland, Oregon "African-American Baseline Essays"**

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"Should Curricula Focus on Students' Ethnic or Racial Group?" "No. Keep the Common Core of Values" in American Teacher, March 1991.

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“The Egyptian Illusion: Fatal Flaws in One Popular Afrocentric Text” in “Outlook” in The Washington Post, February 20, 1994.

“What’s Wrong With the Portland Baseline Essays?” in Miller, John (ed.) Alternatives to Afrocentrism, Washington, D.C.: Center for Equal Opportunity, 1996, pp. 37-42.

### **B. The Vietnam War and 9/11**

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"An Attack Upon the World" in September 11: What Our Children Need To Know, Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, September 2002; [www.edexcellence.net/Sept11/September11.pdf](http://www.edexcellence.net/Sept11/September11.pdf)

"Teaching Controversial Current Events" in Terrorists, Despots and Democracy: What Our Children Need To Know, Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, August 2003; <http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/publication/publication.cfm?id=316#835>).

### **C. History Standards**

“How One Focus Group Evaluated National History Standards” in OAH Council of Chairs Newsletter (Organization of American Historians), August 1995.