Social Studies: Spotlight on Equity Resources

This Spotlight on Equity provides a list of considerations for the purpose of providing an equity literate and socially conscious lens to the teaching and learning of civics, economics, geography, and history, as well as to recognize the historic exclusion and marginalization of groups and communities. When grade-level appropriate, educators may use these topics to critically engage students in socially relevant social studies conversations and opportunities. Neither the enumerated considerations, nor the resources below, are a complete list, but rather a starting point on which to begin historically and socially relevant teaching and learning.

To honor the structure of the [College, Career, and Civic Life C3 Framework of Social Studies State Standards](#) and recognize the interplay between Dimension 2 (Disciplinary Concepts) and Dimensions 1, 3 and 4 (Inquiry, Resources, and Communication/Action), all considerations have been woven into Civics, Geography, Economics and History. This also recognizes that considerations cross both Dimensional and disciplinary lines, without having the added duplication of considerations. In addition, there are overarching theoretical frameworks, such as civil discourse and implicit bias, and connections to equity, media and digital literacy which should be incorporated into the teaching and learning of a culturally sustaining social studies curriculum to aide in the development of civically literate students.

Definitions, theoretical frameworks, and supplemental resources to support the teaching and learning of these considerations are provided below.

Definitions

Civic Literacy: Civic literacy is defined as individuals knowing how to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship at the local, state, national and global level while respecting the rights afforded to others, understanding governmental processes, and contributing effectively within their communities.

Equity Literacy: Equity literacy is the ability to recognize, respond, and redress even the subtlest biases, inequities, and oppressive ideologies, and to actively cultivate and sustain equitable, anti-oppressive ideologies and institutional cultures.

Digital Literacy: Digital literacy is part of media literacy (see below) and both are included in the idea of "information literacy", which is the ability to effectively find, identify, evaluate and use information. Digital literacy specifically applies to media from the Internet, smartphones, video games, and other nontraditional sources and includes both digital skills and ethical obligations.

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Media Literacy: [Media literacy](#) is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms- from print, to video, to the Internet. Media literacy can be tied to digital literacy, and also falls under the umbrella of "information literacy" (see above). It builds on an understanding of the role of media in society as well as the essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Theoretical Frameworks

Civil Discourse

[Civil Discourse in the Classroom:](#) [Learning for Justice](#) (formerly Teaching Tolerance) developed this publication to introduce educators to basic tools for teaching civil discourse. "It is not subject-specific … the tools of argumentation and discussion lend themselves to any subject in any classroom. Although it is primarily designed for young adolescents, the curriculum can be adapted for students of any age. Using these lessons, students will be able to turn their unsubstantiated opinions into reasoned arguments. They also will learn how to effectively challenge an opposing argument… with a step-by-step process for refutation. These tools lay the groundwork for productive, reasoned, and lively discussions on a variety of topics."

[Fostering Civil Discourse: A Guide for Classroom Conversations](#): [Facing History and Ourselves](#) developed this guide to prepare our students to "respond thoughtfully and respectfully together to … events by taking steps to cultivate a reflective classroom community throughout the school year. A reflective classroom community is in many ways a microcosm of democracy—a place where explicit rules and implicit norms protect everyone's right to speak; where different perspectives can be heard and valued; where members take responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group as a whole; and where each member has a stake and a voice in collective decisions."

Implicit Bias

See also resources cited in D2 History and the following Vermont Agency of Education Resources:

- [Equity Literacy Resources - Fall 2019](#)
- [Equity Literacy Resources Spring 2019](#)

[Implicit Bias:](#) [Racial Equity Tools](#) has collated an extensive list of implicit bias-related tools categorized by Research and Analysis, Organizations, Resources, and Tools and Practices. Provided are links to articles such as [Healing Otherness: Neuroscience, Bias and Messaging](#) and [Implicit Bias Insights as Preconditions to Structural Change](#), as well as videos including [Immaculate Perception](#).

Speak Truth to Power

[Conversational Leadership](#): The article, [Speak Truth to Power](#), defines the Quaker-coined phrase and includes supplemental resources and videos. The author recognizes that 'authority' does not represent the only form of power difference, as a differential can manifest by race, accent, wealth, and gender, to name a few.

[Speak Truth to Power](#): This human rights education program founded by Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights in partnership with Discovery Education, Humanity United and the Fund II Foundation, is designed to introduce students to influential human rights defenders through powerful storytelling and interactive learning. RFK Human Rights provides educators with flexible, standards-aligned digital resources, designed to educate, engage, and inspire passion and action amongst the next generation to end and prevent human rights abuses and violations around the world.

Dimension 2 -- Disciplinary Concepts

Civics

- Tribal Sovereignty
- Social Movements
- Activism
- Structural Oppression
- Cultural Genocide
- Tools of Oppression (bias, discrimination, stereotyping)
- Civil Rights
- Self-emancipation
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Education Acts of 1972 - Title IX
- Legal Structures (Black Codes, Jim Crow)
- Positive/Negative Peace
- Galtung's Conflict Triangle
- Indigenous Enslavement
- Cultural Genocide
- Housing Covenants
- Redlining

Civics Resources

[Title IX: Advancing Opportunity through Equity in Education](#): This report details the impact of Title IX as it applies to "all students and staff, male or female, in preschool through postgraduate school in regard to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that receives federal funding"; highlighted are segments on CTE, athletics, and STEM, among others.

[What is Positive Peace?](#) The Institute for Economics and Peace website allows the reader to develop an understanding of positive and negative peace and gain an understanding of the evolution of peace in the world from the 7th century to the current day.

[Indigenous Enslavement:](#) In this Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance) podcast, historian "Christina Snyder tells the story of how Europeans brought a system of slavery that significantly differed from the historical practices of enslavement among Native nations. The European concepts of bondage transformed the way Native nations interacted with each other, resulted in the enslavement and death of millions of Indigenous people, and sparked widespread resistance by Native nations" (podcast transcript included).

An Issue of Sovereignty: This National Conference of State Legislatures document explains sovereignty as it is recognized by the U.S. Constitution and includes three historic court cases dating back to 1823 recognizing tribal sovereignty. Also included are more recent laws and acts recognizing the nation-to-nation relationship between the federal government and Indian tribes.

From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter: This Scientific American article delves into social movements (Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter) and some of the theories (collective behavior, resource mobilization, political process, indigenous perspective) regarding how marginalized voices can bring about change.

Cultural Genocide: Facing History and Ourselves shares a Reading with Connection Questions from the book *Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools.*

Civil Rights Act of 1964: This PBS document lists all Titles and Sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and can be supplemented with a short clip of the signing.

Segregated by Design: This 20-minute short film, based on the book *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein, "examines the forgotten history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy."

Racial Restrictive Covenants History: Using Seattle as an example, this University of Washington article utilizes various primary source documents to allow the reader to understand the discriminatory effects of housing covenants.

Time for Justice: Tackling Race Inequalities in Health and Housing: This Brookings report reviews the reasons for the "race gap, focusing in on data showing the extent, causes, and impact of housing segregation and health inequity. It proposes concrete recommendations for the new administration to shrink the racial divide, urging strong political leadership, improved housing market mobility, innovative focus on the social determinants of health, and tools to reduce unintentional biases in health care."

Economics (see also Financial Literacy: Spotlight on Equity)

- Access to Credit
- Socio-economic Status
- Fair Lending
- Lending Disparity
- Retail and Service Desertification
- Human Rights
- Displacement (land ownership)
- Educational Inequality
- Racial Income Gap
- Wage Gaps

- Job Discrimination
- Historic Policies; Racial and Ethnic Disparities in: Health Insurance, Health Care, Inheritance, Intergenerational Transfer, Investment, Retirement Security, Wealth Accumulation
- Exploitative Labor: Enslavement, Chattel, Indenture, Human Trafficking, Convict Leasing, Migrant Labor, Immigrant Labor

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Economics Resources

[America Cannot Bear to Bring Back Indentured Servitude](): The article from *The Atlantic* discusses the vicious cycle of how indentured servitude transformed into racialized chattel slavery, and its current implications.

[Exploitation, Forced Labor and Trafficking](): Human Rights Watch (HRW) provides articles, briefs and videos focused on harmful labor practices worldwide. Also see HRW information on [Child Labor]().

[22 Million Reasons Black America Doesn't Trust Banks](): This article discusses how the rise and collapse of the Freedman's Bank during Reconstruction began a persistent pattern of Black Americas mistrust in the banking system.

[Banking While Black](): In this 45-minute webinar, a new generation of leaders discuss systemic barriers that have affected Black communities and generate ideas on how the Financial Sector can be part of the solution to inequity.

[Disparities in Minority Retirement Savings Behavior](): This detailed paper investigates the main barriers to the accumulation of retirement savings faced by minority groups in the United States, with a specific focus on the roles of financial literacy and social networks.

[FDIC Laws, Regulations, Related Acts](): This FDIC website enumerates specific non-discriminatory lending policies and practices, along with detailed examples and frequently asked questions.

[Fair Lending](): The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency provides detailed definitions of lending terminology such as Disparate Impact and Predatory Lending to protect consumers from unfair and discriminatory practices.

[How Growing Up in a Bank Desert Can Hurt Your Credit for the Rest of Your Life](): This PBS News article, focused on Native American reservations, identifies how a lack of access to brick-and-mortar banks worsens financial literacy and can lead to both banking mistrust and poor credit habits.

[Life in a Banking Desert](): This article identifies how poor and minority communities have decreased access to basic financial services, making it more difficult to acquire community-building small business loans and may cause residents to turn to more financially dangerous, high-cost options such as payday lenders and check-cashing.

[Race and Consumption: Black and White Disparities in Household Spending](): By using data from Consumer Expenditure Surveys, the authors of this article examine consumption from a structural perspective and argue that Black households face unique constraints that restrict their ability to acquire important goods and services which can lead to disparities in consumption and subsequent inequalities in well-being and the intergenerational transmission of social advantage.

[Systemic Inequality](): This Center for American Progress article discusses how structural racism has perpetuated the Black-White wealth gap and calls for broad and persistent policy action to address this inequity.

[The History of Lending Discrimination](): This detailed article discusses how the discriminatory redlining practices of the 1930s have had residual effects, such as higher interest rates and lower loan approval rates, within minority communities.

[The Secret Bias Hidden in Mortgage-Approval Algorithms](): This article from The Markup, supplemented with charts and graphs, identifies how people of color are denied mortgages at significantly higher rates than White people, even when factors which lenders say would explain disparities are taken into account.

[5 Financial Factors Impacting the LGBTQ+ Community](): This article highlights the challenges that the LGBTQ+ community faces regarding healthcare, housing and family planning.

[Adding Insult to Injury: Racial Disparity in an Era of Increasing Income Inequality](): The United States Census Bureau examines income inequality and mobility across racial and ethnic groups in the United States identifying a "rigid income structure, with mainly Whites and Asians confined to the top and Blacks, American Indians, and Hispanics confined to the bottom."

[Ethnic and Racial Minorities & Socioeconomic Status](): The American Psychological Association discusses the relationship between Socioeconomic status (SES), race and ethnicity and considers how "SES encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class."

Geography

- Mercator Projection
- Ecological Fallacy
- Contested Territories
- Community Segregation
- Fair Housing Act
- Clean Air Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Executive Order 12898
- Environmental Injustice
- Climate Change
- Urban/Suburban Sprawl
- Green Space
- Transnational Environmental Inequality
- Climate Injustice
- Resource Exploitation
- Negative by-product Production
- E-waste
- Toxic Waste

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Geography Resources

[Role of the Environmental Protection Agency in Environmental Justice](#): This Congressional research Service document explains Executive Order 12898, signed by President Clinton, and highlights how this executive order "directs each executive department, EPA, and certain other agencies to 'make achieving environmental justice part of its mission'."

[Public Green Spaces: Racism, Heat and Barriers to Access](#): This article begins with the destruction of Seneca Village to develop Central Park and looks at how systemic racism played a part in the barriers to green space for low-income communities and communities of color in New York City.

[The Great Real Estate Reset](#): In this Brookings Institute essay, supplemented with charts and graphs, the reader learns how persistent residential and community segregation has led to sustained racial and economic injustice.

[About EJ 2020](#): The EJ 2020 Action Agenda (EJ 2020), was the EPA's strategic plan for advancing environmental justice from the years 2016-2020, by focusing its attention on environmental and public health issues and challenges confronting the nation's minority, low-income, tribal and indigenous populations.

[Environmental Justice Factsheet](#): The University of Michigan's Center for Sustainable Studies produced this factsheet with a lens on climate, food, energy, and the built environment.

[Environmental Inequalities](#): This white paper discusses how the cause of environmental inequality is *not*, at its core, an environmental issue, but rather caused by social and political issues. Environmental inequality "is rooted in our discourses, structures, and political and economic institutions, and it is intertwined with the other inequalities that permeate our daily lives."

[The Global Injustice of the Climate Crisis](#): Reports show that the countries that are least responsible for causing climate change are the ones suffering most from its effects, especially regarding food insecurity and nutrient deficiencies.

[The Environmental Injustice of Electronic Waste](#): This brief article from the Center for Health, Environment and Justice shares data regarding the amount of e-waste produced in the United States, and the differing costs to recycle, as compared to other countries in the world. The article links to a complementary EPA article entitled [Cleaning Up Electronic Waste (E-Waste)](#).

[This Interactive Map Shows How 'Wrong' Other Maps Are](#): This Washington Post article allows the reader to experiment with the distortions presented by the Mercator map, and visualize how areas of the world are mis-represented.

[Lying with Maps](#): This chapter in *Mapping, Society, and Technology* introduces guiding questions to consider in regard to 'lying maps'. Questions include: Who made this map and why? What is included and what is excluded from the map? What is the source of the data on this map? Which modification strategies are at work in this map? What is the effect?

History

- Subjugation
- Expansionism
- Colonialism
- Periodization
- Historiography
- Implicit bias
- Counter-narratives
- Inclusivity
- Marginalized voices
- Structural racism
- Confirmation Bias

- Subordination
- Disempowerment
- Religious Bigotry
- Ethnocentrism
- Racism
- Classism
- Ableism
- Sexism
- Heterosexism

History Resources

[The Danger of a Single Story](#) Ted Talk: "Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding."

[Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials](#): This framework was developed for Washington educators in 2009 to allow instructional content to be evaluated for bias using five dimensions: gender/sex, multicultural, persons with disabilities, socio-economic status and family. While the lens of this framework is bias evaluation, it also emphasizes the importance of both respect and appreciation of differences and similarities.

[Why Do We Prefer Things that We are Familiar With?](#) This Decision Lab article explains how the *mere exposure effect* describes our tendency to develop preferences for things simply because we are familiar with them and avoid things that are new or unknown.

[Justice and Colonialism](#): This paper examines the relationship between justice and colonialism. It defines colonialism, including political domination, land taking, cultural imposition and economic exploitation; examines the kind of injustice that colonialism involved; and discusses the possibility of corrective justice.

[Writing on History: Historiography](#)*:* Queens College, City University of New York has provided the reader with thoughtful questions to ask when learning about history, such as "does the historian's *own* perspective, impacted as it undoubtedly is by gender, age, national and ideological affiliation, etc., contribute to an "agenda" that the historian's work is playing into, unwittingly or consciously?", so that the learner can be aware of bias.

[The Problem with History Class](#): The dangers of a single perspective are discussed in this *Atlantic* article, as the author opines how "most students learn history as a set narrative—a process that reinforces the mistaken idea that the past can be synthesized into a single,

standardized chronicle of several hundred pages. This teaching pretends that there is a uniform collective story, which is akin to saying everyone remembers events the same."

The 1619 Project: "The 1619 Project is an ongoing initiative from *The New York Times Magazine* that … aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative."
Untangling Disinformation: This NPR podcast series examines how widespread the problem of disinformation is, and efforts to overcome it.

Historical Thinking Concepts: The Historical Thinking Project shares several short concept narratives, including Ethical Dimensions in History, Cause and Consequence, and Historical Perspectives, to help develop historically literate students.

Using Historical Empathy to Help Students Process the World Today: Facing History and Ourselves shares this blog with considerations to assist students with "the process of understanding people in the past by contextualizing their actions."

The "Other Side" of the Story: Designing Multiple Perspective Inquiries: The National Council for the Social Studies shared this power point, developed for a 2018 workshop, to aide teachers in understanding why it is important to have multiple perspectives in social studies instruction and how to integrate diverse voices into the curriculum.

Two States. Eight textbooks. Two American Stories: This *New York Times* article describes how "American history textbooks can differ across the country in ways that are shaded by partisan politics."