

*Do Girls Have Access to
Education around the World?*

mll
middle level learning

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The Global Challenge of Equal Access for Girls to an Education: An Investigation Using Inquiry

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This article describes a practical way to teach middle or high school students about human rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). The lesson focuses specifically on girls' right to receive an education, and how challenges are being overcome in five countries: Guatemala, India, Malawi, Liberia, and Ethiopia. It employs five inquiry stations in the classroom, each providing background information about educational and social challenges in a country and how the UN CRC is being realized there. Students answer supporting questions at each station, and in conclusion, discuss how these examples from around the globe inform our understanding of the ways that education for girls can be improved today.

When considering the lives of girls as they mature into young women, topics such as the onset of menstruation, child marriage, and violence against women, will arise. Consider the maturity and prior knowledge of the students as you select which parts of this lesson to use. Have they completed a course on human sexuality and development? Visit any website yourself before recommending it for student viewing. Consider which nations to use as the focus of the various study stations. The fifth station in this lesson (Ethiopia) is optional and can be excluded due to the mature content of the related issues.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

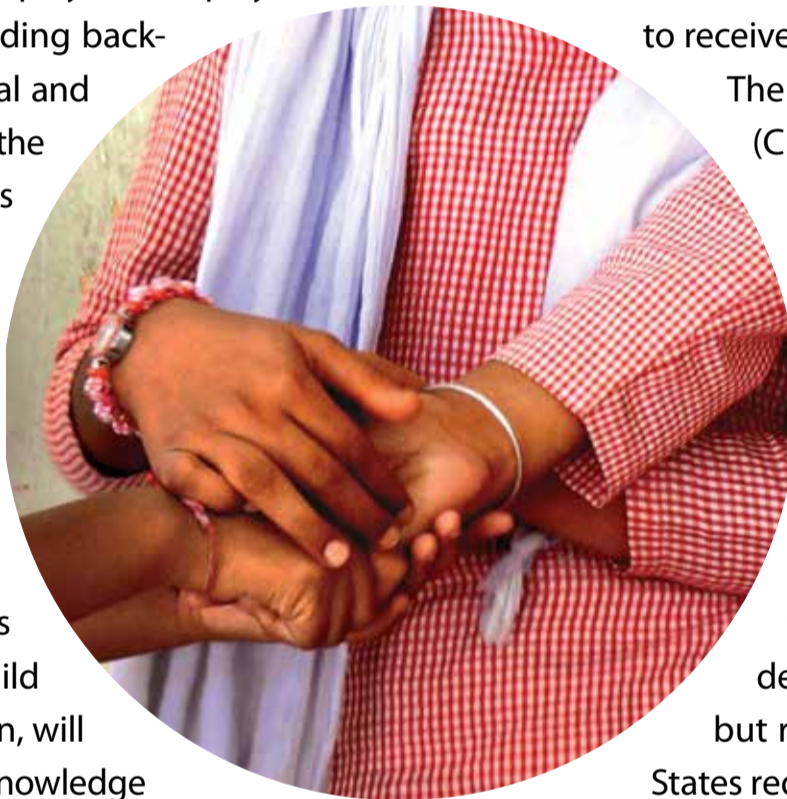
In 1989, the CRC became part of international law when 190 members of the United Nations (UN) voted to approve it.¹ The CRC is an international treaty that specifies the basic *human rights* of every person in the world under 18 years old. (In contrast, *civil rights*, such as the minimal voting age and trial by jury, are the purview of individual nations.) The UN CRC does

not differentiate between male and female children; they have equal rights, such as the right to have an official identity (Article 8), to be together with other family members even if they are of different nationalities (Article 10), to have access to health care (Article 24), to be able to play sometimes (Article 31), to have freedom from dangerous labor (Article 32)— and to receive a free education (Article 28).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights. "The Convention has achieved near-universal acceptance, having now been ratified by 193 parties—more than belong to the United Nations or have acceded to the Geneva Conventions."²

The United States is the only nation that has not ratified the CRC. Then president Bill Clinton signed the CRC in 1995, but ratification of any treaty in the United States requires a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate to pass, and a number of Republican senators, claiming concerns about U.S. sovereignty, have consistently opposed ratification.³

Are children better off than they were a quarter of a century ago? Dr. Jody Heymann, the founding director of the World Policy Analysis Center at UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health said, "In recent decades, we've halved the mortality rate. We've increased the number of children attending primary school...90 percent of the countries that have made the promise [to make primary schools free and compulsory] have done so, and we have seen increases in attendance."⁴ Global challenges still



ON THE COVER: Adolescent girls at school in Barnala, India.
©2013 Sukriti Gangola, Courtesy of Photoshare

remain in the area of child marriage, and high tuition remains a barrier access to secondary school, especially for poor children and girls around the world.

Using the Four-Step Inquiry Process

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework calls for a renewed use of inquiry to better reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of social studies.⁵ Linda Levstik and Keith Barton define inquiry as “The process of asking meaningful questions, finding information, drawing conclusions, and reflecting on possible solutions.”⁶ Teachers can engage students in inquiry by challenging them to construct a deeper understanding. The C3 Framework integrates multiple disciplines (not just one disciplinary lens) to investigate questions more thoroughly, and it describes a multi-step process (not merely listening to a lecture or watching a film) for that investigation. Its Inquiry Arc comprises four dimensions, as shown in the sidebar below.

Inquiry also includes meaningful assessment tasks, whether formal or informal, that require students to explain their thinking and support their conclusions by citing evidence from the sources. These tasks can lead to students working in dimension 4, communicating their conclusions to a broader audience.

Key elements of the inquiry process include: “compelling and supporting *questions* that frame and organize the inquiry; assessment *tasks* that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and apply their understanding; and the disciplinary *sources* that allow students to practice disciplinary thinking and reasoning.”⁷ Both compelling and supporting questions are critical elements to inquiry and correlate to the first dimension of the Inquiry Arc. *Compelling* questions are conceptual. They are meaningful and thought-provoking for students.⁸ They have no simple factual or right-or-wrong answer. *Supporting*

questions, in contrast, scaffold the inquiry so that students are guided and equipped to address the compelling questions. Supporting questions invite students to seek out the meaningful details about an event or situation and its causes and consequences.

Researching and answering supporting questions and discussing compelling questions require that students use skills from multiple disciplines and think critically. Disciplinary sources are also key to doing inquiry in the classroom and are primary components of the second and third dimensions of the inquiry arc. The teacher can help students to find credible sources, evaluate the evidence, formulate final arguments or conclusions, and generate new questions for further inquiry.

The lesson described below combines multiple disciplines such as history, economics, and sociology through the use of inquiry to prepare students to analyze the issues that girls face in different societies. The lesson begins by relating the experiences of a Pakistani teenager, Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai.⁸ Malala has become a well-known change agent in the struggle for girls’ education. It is likely that students know of her and may have read biographical accounts. This inquiry gives students a chance to better understand how many of the challenges that Malala faced were not unique to her; many girls face difficulties when they seek educational opportunities. Malala has taken on the cause of raising public awareness of the challenges young women around the world face when seeking an education.

Students then examine girls’ access to education in five countries in an effort to answer the compelling question that guides their studies: “How can children’s right to an education be realized for girls around the world today?” This compelling question has a wide-angle focus to help students explore how the

C3 Framework



Dimensions of the C3 Framework’s Inquiry Arc

1. Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
2. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools
3. Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
4. Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action

The quotes at the right are from page 17 of NCSS, “The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History” (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013), free at www.socialstudies.org/c3.

Compelling and Supporting Questions

A “**compelling**” question like ‘Was the American Revolution revolutionary?’ is both intriguing to students and intellectually honest. Such a question can be vigorously explored through the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history....

Supporting questions assist students in addressing their compelling questions. For example, questions like “What were the regulations imposed on the colonists under the Townshend Acts?” will help students understand the many dimensions of the war as they form their conclusions..”

issue of girls' education continues to be a worldwide challenge. The question is relevant to students, as it focuses on rights of individuals, like themselves, who are under 18 years of age. The question, however, is not prescriptive—it does not suggest that there's one correct solution that would apply to all cases.

The lesson's supporting questions are specific to each country. For example, we might ask students, "What cultural and

economic factors can inhibit access to education for girls in Guatemala?" And later—"How are challenges, such as early marriage and lack of access to schools, being addressed to increase educational opportunities for girls in Guatemala?" Students learn about different cases, what the problems are, and how values stated in the UN CRC might be gradually realized in various societies.

Children have Human Rights

Five Stations and Five Nations

This lesson plan is intended for middle or high school students. If you provide resources for students, the entire lesson could take about three to four 45-minute class periods. However, if the students engage in their own research, locating and evaluating sources, then additional time should be allotted. The learning objectives are that students will ...

- Discuss the compelling question, "How can children's right to an education be realized for girls around the world today?"
- Read the text of the UN CRC (or a child-friendly version) and find the article that defines the rights of children, including girls, to an education.
- Examine the challenges that girls face in five countries—and ways that those challenges are being addressed—by visiting five inquiry stations. Students' work is guided by a search for answers to supporting questions.
- Revisit the compelling question and engage students in a discussion in which they analyze the information they have learned and reflect on how social change can happen.

Introduction: Children have Human Rights

Engage students' interest by inviting them to think about human rights in relation to their own lives. Pose the questions, "What rights do children around the world have?" and "What rights do you have as someone under 18 living here in the United States?" Allow students 5 to 10 minutes to discuss and reflect on these questions and begin to write a response. Then, invite students to create two columns on their paper to serve as a graphic organizer. (See page 9)

They will list "The rights children have" in the left column and "My thoughts and connections," in the right column. Finally, as students view an online photo essay published by Unicef (see Resources), they can add new facts, as well as their own reactions and opinions to the two-column graphic organizer.

Teachers can project or print infographics such as "What is the CRC?" (see Resources), which outlines categories of rights as well as how progress toward the achievement of these rights can be monitored. Another infographic, "Celebrating the CRC," (see Resources) helps students understand the organization of the document, some of the results it is having in the lives of children, as well as some of the ongoing challenges to its implementation. After viewing these introductory infographics, students should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children?
- Who wrote it? Why?
- Who enforces it?
- To whom does it apply? Boys and girls both?

Students might be able to begin discussing these larger questions in a general way, based only on the infographics

they've seen so far:

- What impact does the UN CRC seem to be having in children's lives?
- What are some challenges to implementation?

Teachers should reiterate that the rights defined in the UN CRC apply to all children under the age of 18 regardless of race, gender, religion, or nationality. If the students continue to have questions about the document (or the teacher would like students to gain a deeper understanding of it), the full text as well as other resources are easily accessible online.

Inquiry Activity: Five Stations and Five Nations

At this point in the lesson, the students should begin focusing on the right to education specifically. Show the 11-minute video of Malala Yousafzai's acceptance speech for the Harvard Foundation's Peter J. Gomes Humanitarian of the Year Award in 2013 (See Resources, below).



commons.wikimedia.org

Malala describes the barriers she faced in Pakistan when seeking an education, and she notes the experiences of girls in several other contexts around the world. As Malala stated in her Nobel Prize acceptance speech "I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not. It is the story of many girls." After the video, write that quote on the board, and tell students that they will begin to investigate some

of the barriers that prevent girls from fulfilling their right to education, and how those barriers might be overcome.

Divide students into five groups that will travel through the five stations. Give each group a summary of the UN CRC (**Handouts** on page 11 and 12) and five graphic-organizers (**Handouts for Stations 1 through 5** on pages 13–17.) At each station, students can learn about efforts to overcome impediments to girls getting an education. Middle School students can read the handouts and any printouts or viewing video clips that the teacher wishes to provide at that station. High school students might be allowed to visit the source websites, at the teacher's discretion. (Those URLs are listed in the Resources section below, but not on each handout, as several websites discuss mature topics such as rape, HIV, and violence against women).

Station 1: Malawi. The supporting question is: "How does the cost of secondary school affect Malawian girls' access to education?" The two websites for this station are "Campaign for Female Education, Malawi" and "Girls Empowerment Network Malawi." Both include testimonials and videos. Teachers can invite older students to explore the website on their own, and direct middle-level students to particular stories, blogs, and videos prepared for student viewing.

Station 2: Liberia. Families in rural Liberia are hesitant to send their daughters to school because of the distance and concern for their safety. A supporting question could be: "What are some of the efforts being made to improve the wellbeing of girls and their families in Liberia?" Invite students to examine the UN's "Girls' Education Initiative, Liberia," and AllAfrica's, "Liberia: Former Miss Liberia Launches Girls' Education Initiative." The UN site has a brief overview of education in Liberia, and AllAfrica includes personal stories and quotes from girls who are attempting to gain an education in Liberia.

Station 3: Guatemala. The supporting question is: "What are the problems that inhibit the ability of indigenous Guatemalan girls to attain an education?" Students visit two websites: the UN Foundation's Campaign Focusing on Adolescent Girls, Guatemala, "Girls'Up"; and The Population Council's "Assessing the Multiple Disadvantages of Mayan Girls." The first has a one-page basic information sheet about



Guatemalan students. See page 14.

Guatemala. The second is a short article about Mayan girls in Guatemala, and the barriers they face when attempting to gain an education.

Station 4: India. The supporting question is, “What factors lead to women dropping out of school in India?” Students read a brief report by Jolkona, a non-profit organization that provides mentorship and education for entrepreneurs working to solve global social issues. They could also watch a free, online 9-minute PBS NewsHour video on the difficulties faced by girls in rural India as they seek an education.

Station 5: Ethiopia. Discussing this case example is optional, as topics quickly arise that are appropriate for older students. A supporting question could be: “How do socio-cultural factors, such as female household responsibilities and violence towards women, affect girls’ education in Ethiopia?” Students can read from two websites to answer this question. The first provides a basic fact sheet, “UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education: One Year On.” The second, a blog from Link Ethiopia titled “Girls’ Education,” offers specifics about how the onset of menstruation can cause students to drop out of school and how that challenge is being addressed in Ethiopian society.

At the conclusion of the students’ visit to a station, provide a few minutes for them to write notes on their graphic



Ethiopian students. See page 16.

organizers. The procession continues until each group has visited all four or five stations.

Assessment: Reporting What We Learned

Finally, gather the class together again and lead a discussion about the compelling question. Now students can refer to specific examples, they can cite evidence for their responses from the resources provided at the stations. They can also refer to the goals and values communicated in the UN CRC. At the conclusion of the discussion, each group should write (or revise) a response to the compelling question according to what they learned through the discussion.

The teacher can choose a more formal performance task at this point if desired. The goal of a concluding task is to address the final dimension of the inquiry arc by having students share new knowledge and using that knowledge to work for change. One recommendation could be to create a newscast that reports on the topic of girls’ education. A second possible assessment could be students working together to create a public service announcement (PSA) to use as a launch for a school-wide awareness campaign. A third possibility would be to create infographics to share at school or in the community.

Conclusion

This inquiry activity can be adapted to accommodate different student needs, abilities, and levels of maturity.¹⁰ Although the task is planned as small group station work, teachers may decide that a different format would be more beneficial for their students. For example, the whole class may examine each country together and work as a large group to explore the resources and answer the supporting questions. The teacher may decide, instead, to assign individual countries to small groups, each of which would examine the issues in a single country, then present their findings to the whole class. Finally, the whole class would discuss the compelling question.

Engaging in this inquiry lesson allows middle or high school students to examine the UN CRC and use it as a lens to critically study access to education for girls in different countries. Beyond fostering an understanding of the barriers to education girls face in Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Liberia, and Malawi, the process of inquiry also reaches broader goals. The integrative nature of the design requires students to engage in authentic literacy by critically reading, formulating arguments, and gathering evidence—all crucial skills for citizenship. This lesson supports students as they seek to answer big questions while learning the skills necessary for critical literacy and citizenship. 🌍

Notes

1. The United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Treaty Series 1577 (UN, 1989), www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx; “As the chair of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Eleanor Roosevelt was the driving force in creating the 1948 charter of liberties that will always be her legacy: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” (www.humanrights.com/voices-for-human-rights/eleanor-roosevelt.html). The UDHR is the foundation upon which subsequent international laws are built, such as the CRC.

2. UNICEF, “About the Convention: What is the CRC?” www.unicef.org/rightsite/237_202.htm.
3. Sarah Mehta, “There’s Only One Country That Hasn’t Ratified the Convention on Children’s Rights: US” (ACLU, November 20, 2015), www.aclu.org/blog/human-rights/treaty-ratification/theres-only-one-country-hasnt-ratified-convention-childrens.
4. Karen Attiah, “Why Won’t the U.S. Ratify the U.N.’s Child Rights Treaty?” (*Washington Post* blog), November 21, 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2014/11/21/why-wont-the-u-s-ratify-the-u-n-s-child-rights-treaty/?utm_term=.e538374d0c5c
5. National Council for the Social Studies, *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013).
6. Linda S. Levstik and Keith C. Barton, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2015) 16.
7. Kathy Swan, John Lee, and S. G. Grant. “The New York State Toolkit and the Inquiry Design Model: Anatomy of an Inquiry,” *Social Education* 79, no 5. (November/December, 2015): 316, emphasis original.
8. S. G. Grant. “From Inquiry Arc to Instructional Practice: The Potential of the C3 Framework,” *Social Education* 77, no. 6. (November/December 2013) 325.
9. “Malala Yousafzai Speaks at Harvard” (2013), video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1tOe4SKbLU>; See also M. Yousafzai, “Nobel Lecture” *NobelPrize.org* (Nobel Media AB, 2014), www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/yousafzai-lecture_en.html.
10. More teaching ideas were described by Sacha Batra, “Child Labor and Consumerism,” *Social Education* 79, no. 3 (November/December 2015): 135–138.

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Web Resources to Use with the Five Station Handouts

1. Malawi

Campaign for Female Education, Malawi, camfed.org/our-impact/malawi/

Girls Empowerment Network Malawi, www.genetmalawi.org/#sthash.sSkJmDYa.dpbs

2. Liberia

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, "Liberia: Background," www.ungei.org/infobycountry/liberia.html

AllAfrica, "Liberia: Former Miss Liberia Launches Girls' Education Initiative," allafrica.com/stories/201601191327.html

3. Guatemala

Girl Up, United Nation Foundation's campaign focusing on adolescent girls, Guatemala, girlup.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Guatemala.pdf

The Population Council, "Assessing the multiple disadvantages of Mayan girls," www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/TABriefs/PGY_Brief16_Guatemala.pdf

4. India

Jolkona, "Report on Girl's Education in India," www.jolkona.org/report-on-girls-education-in-india/

PBS NewsHour, Why it's Hard for Girls in Rural India to Stay in School, www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/hard-girls-rural-india-stay-school/

5. Ethiopia

UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education—One Year On, www.unesco.org/eri/cp/factsheets_ed/ET_EDFactSheet.pdf

UN Girl's Education Initiative, "A Study on Violence against Girls in Primary Schools and Its Impacts on Girls' Education in Ethiopia," www.ungei.org/infobycountry/files/Study_on_Violence_Against_Schoolgirls_final.pdf

Children with free bed nets received during a distribution event at Buhigwe school, Tanzania, in 2017. The nets prevent mosquito bites, which can transmit malaria.

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Global Images for Teachers at Photoshare

Several of the photos in this issue of *MLL* were obtained free from www.photoshare.org, who encourages teachers to also use their online collection. They offer thousands of International Public Health and Development Images—free for nonprofit and educational use.

Photoshare is a service of the Knowledge for Health (K4Health) project, based at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs (CCP) in Baltimore, Maryland. "We welcome you to browse the Photoshare collection, request images for nonprofit educational use, and learn more about editorial and development photography on our website. Most importantly, we invite you to share your own photos. The scope and quality of the Photoshare collection depends entirely on the generosity of those who are willing to freely share their photos as a way to help advance the work of public health professionals and organizations around the world."

Additional Web and Print Resources

I. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

FOR STUDENTS

CRC in child-friendly language, www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf See pp. 10–11 of this issue of *MLL*.

CRC child-friendly resources, www.unicef.org/rightsite/484_540.htm
A collection of downloadable resources: “Rights for Every Child”; “Little Book of Children’s Rights and Responsibilities”; Child Rights Flier”; etc.

UNICEF Children’s Rights Photo Essay/Slideshow, youtu.be/4jiVUND-KJQ
This 2-minute video shows photos of children from around the world with captions that cite articles of the CFC (but do not identify where or when each photo was taken) Pleasant piano music plays in the background.

“Girls Left Behind: Girl’s Education in Africa,” uis.unesco.org/apps/visualisations/no-girl-left-behind A catchy, online slide show with informative captions (no music). Related slideshows are at uis.unesco.org/en/visualisations.

FOR TEACHERS

(or recommend to students after teacher’s review)

UNICEF, “About the Convention: What is the CRC?” www.unicef.org/rightsite/237_202.htm

A great summary and useful links: “The CRC Turns 20”; A List of Children’s Rights”; “FAQs and Resources”; “More about the CRC.”

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “The Children’s Rights Convention,” www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx. Full text of the CRC. An important, formal source.

II. Resources for Teachers about Girl’s Education Globally

UN Girls Education Initiative, www.ungei.org. UNGEI supports global and national development agendas to reflect emerging concerns on girls’ education and gender equality, especially for the most marginalized.
UNICEF Regional Offices and Websites, www.unicef.org/where-we-work. Browse an alphabetical listing of all the nations and areas where UNICEF is working. Usually, you will find information about the status of girls’ education here.

Girl Up, girlup.org/resources/

The United Nation Foundation’s campaign focusing on adolescent girls. Backgrounder, Impact Flier, photos, etc. The UN Foundation supports the work of the UN, but is not part of it.

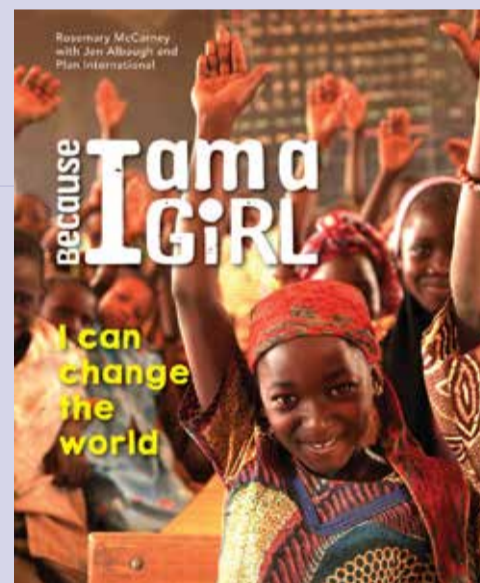
Time for School, www.pbs.org/show/time-school

An award-winning, 12-year documentary project that “follows seven children—from Afghanistan, Benin, Brazil, India, Japan, Kenya, and Romania—who are struggling to achieve what is not yet a global birth-right—a basic education.”

Allen, JoBeth and Lois Alexander, eds. *A Critical Inquiry Framework for K–12 Teachers: Lessons and Resources from the U.N. Rights of the Child*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2013. Describes nine critical inquiry lessons, each centered on an article of the UN CRC.

III. Literature for Youth (Selections from the Notable Trade Books)

Ruurs, Margriet. *My School in the Rain Forest: How Children Attend School around the World*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2009. In this lively photo-essay, readers get to know students—from the arid plains of southern Afghanistan to the rain forests of Guatemala—who are pursuing their dreams of a brighter future.



McCarney, Rosemary with Jen Albaugh and Plan International. *Because I am a Girl: I Can Change the World*. Toronto: Second Story Press 2014. Despite the hardships, these girls have great hope for the future. All are willing to do whatever they can to make their lives and those of their families and communities better.

Trent, Tererai. *The Girl Who Buried Her Dreams in a Can: A True Story*. New York: Viking Books for Young Readers, 2015. All she ever wanted was an education. But in Rhodesia, education for girls was nearly impossible.

The Rights of the Child

My name: _____

The Rights Children Have	My Thoughts and Connections

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language

Source: www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf

Article 1

Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3

All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4

The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and

reach your potential.

Article 5

Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6

You have the right to be alive.

Article 7

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8

You have the right to an identity—an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9

You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10

If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11

You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13

You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16

You have the right to privacy.

Article 17

You have the right to get information that is important to your wellbeing, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18

You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

Article 19

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20

You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21

You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25

If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these

living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26

You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion—or any you choose. Minority and

indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

Article 31

You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32

You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33

You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34

You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 36

You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 37

No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

Article 38

You have the right to

protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39

You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41

If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42

You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

Articles 43 to 54

These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

Station 1: Malawi

Handout



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Students in rural Malawi take a break from schoolwork to get water.

“How does the cost of secondary school affect Malawian girls’ access to education?”

Child marriage and pregnancy are a particular problem. Malawi suffers from an acute lack of secondary schools. Children—especially in rural areas—often have to travel long distances to school. This makes them extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Malawi also suffers from a critical lack of female teachers, meaning those girls able to get to school lack the role models to help encourage them to stay.

(Source: Campaign for Female Education, Malawi, 2017)

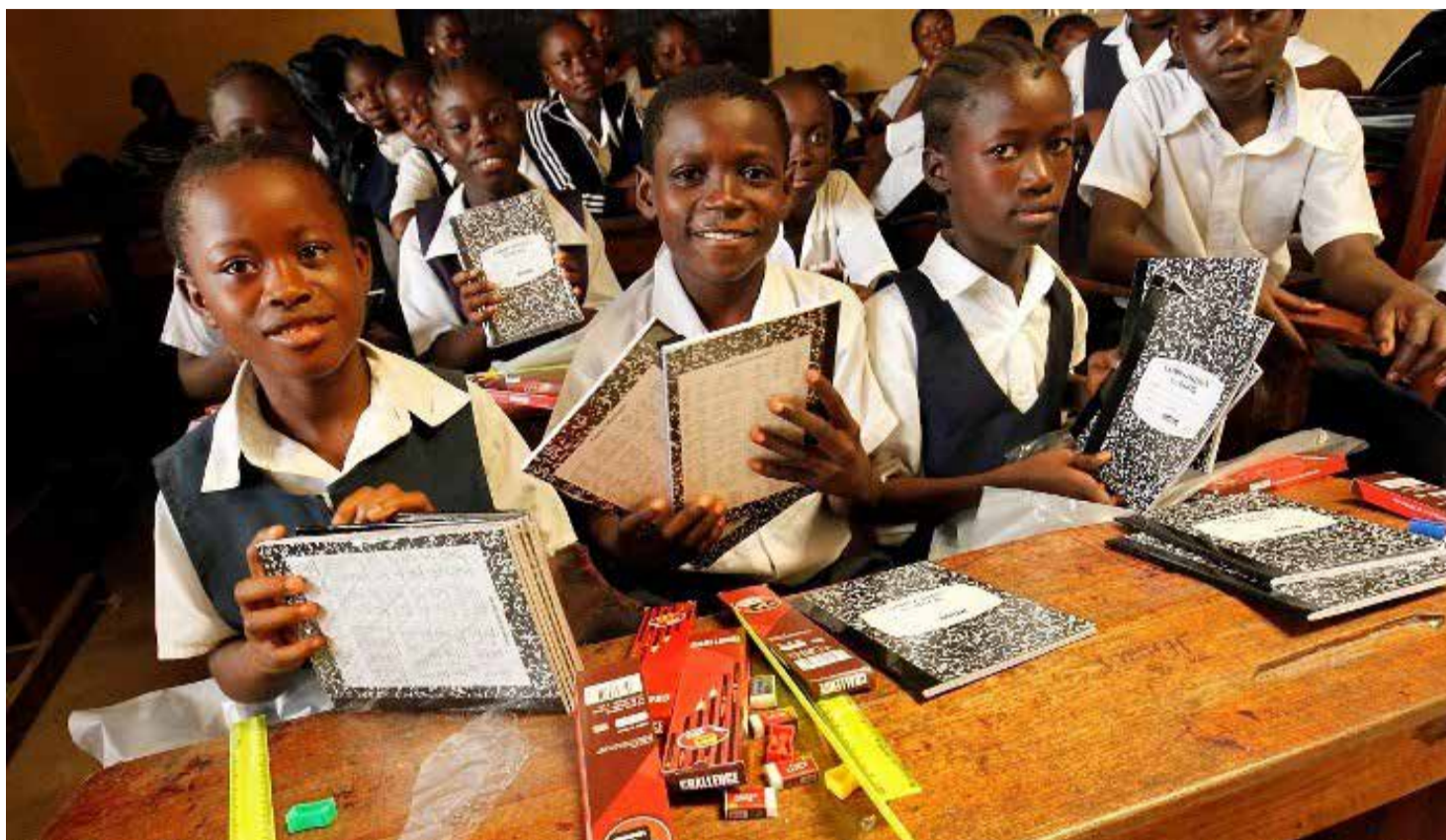
Child brides have poor levels of education and business skills, limiting their chances of survival and social and economic independence. Pregnancy is the leading cause of death worldwide for women ages 15 to 19 because younger girls are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s.

Child marriage is a primary violation of girls’ human rights, which is a serious problem for international, national and local communities because it is a barrier to key development outcomes. In Malawi, the million dollar questions being asked by adolescent girls are: who says girls are fit for marriage at the age of 15 or 16, as Malawi’s Marriage Bill stipulates? Who gives the law makers a go ahead to pass such empty laws when girls are not consulted?

(Source: Girls Empowerment Network Malawi, “Malawi challenged to adopt ‘Girl Declaration’” 2017)

Station 2: Liberia

Handout



UNICEF/Liberia (www.usaid.gov/liberia/education)

Students in Liberia with USAID-provided school supplies in 2016.

“What are some of the efforts being made to improve the wellbeing of girls and their families in Liberia?”

The Government of Liberia launched its National Girls’ Education Policy in April 2006, calling on partners to work together to achieve universal primary education for every Liberian child. The policy aims to provide universal, free and compulsory primary school and reduce secondary school fees by 50 per cent. It outlines activities to recruit and train more female teachers, provide counselling for girls and life skills education in schools,

Liberia is emerging from many years of civil war, which has led to internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, disrupted delivery of basic social services, and increased the vulnerability of women and children to extreme poverty, hunger and disease.

(Source: UN Girls’ Education Initiative, “Liberia: Background.” 2017)

Former Miss Liberia, Patrice Juah, has re-launched the Miss Education Awareness Pageant Platform to help inspire young girls to strive for higher education and contribute to the development of Liberia. The Pageant has since produced several outstanding young women and education ambassadors who continue to mentor and inspire their peers to take their education seriously.

The Miss Education Awareness Pageant was held under the theme: “Beauty, Brains and Humanity,” and was graced by educators and young women who continue to contribute immensely to the development of Liberia, including Ms. Juah, who was hailed for her steadfastness to education.

(Source: AllAfrica, “Liberia: Former Miss Liberia Launches Girls’ Education Initiative.” 2016)

Station 3: Guatemala

Handout



David Amsler/commons.

Elementary students in Guatemala in 2014.

“What are the problems that inhibit the ability of indigenous Guatemalan girls to attain an education?”

More than 2 million children in Guatemala do not attend school, most of whom are in rural areas. The prevalence of child labor is higher in Guatemala than anywhere else in Latin America. Girls can be forced to spend many hours working, leaving little time for school or to just be a girl.

The Girl Up-funded joint UN program works with the national government of Guatemala—the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Statistics—to support adolescent girls from around the country, with a specific focus on indigenous girls in rural areas. There are four strategic goals:

1. An increase in social investments for adolescent girls;
2. Increasing the legal act of marriage to 18 years;
3. Reduce teenage pregnancy, violence, and human trafficking;
- and 4. Support civil efforts that demand comprehensive health education.

(Source: Girl Up, “United Nation Foundation’s campaign focusing on adolescent girls, Guatemala.” 2017)

Most children aged 12 and older, especially Mayans, have very low grade attainment, and few have completed primary school. Although school attendance is compulsory in Guatemala starting at age seven, not all children enroll at this age.

The main reason cited by all Guatemalan children of primary school age for not being currently enrolled was lack of money. “Age” (being overage for grade) and lack of interest were the second and third most common reasons. These findings point to the need to fund scholarships and other educational incentive programs more widely.

(Source: The Population Council, “Assessing the Multiple Disadvantages of Mayan Girls: The Effects of Gender, Ethnicity, Poverty, and Residence on Education in Guatemala.” 2017)

Station 4: India

Handout

“What factors lead to women dropping out of school in India?”



© 2014 Julia Sann, Courtesy of

Village schoolchildren in Jamkhed, India, in 2014.

Despite the Indian Constitution guaranteeing equality before the law and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, India remains a patriarchal society. Male inheritance and property ownership, early marriage, dowry, honor crimes, lack girls' education, witch-hunting, violence against women, and trafficking are all serious issues in the country. There are schools, but most girls do not attend, often because of religious reasons or cultural pressures.

Laws are accessible to the citizens of India, but many of the citizens are unsure of how to properly live them out and where to go with complaints. Complaints usually fall on deaf

ears and the citizen is told that there is equal access but that they are not fully utilizing it. It is a Catch-22 situation.

(Source: Jolkona, "Report on Girl's Education in India." 2012)

PBS has been reporting on the global education crisis by following six children from different countries over 12 years, part of WNET's documentary series "Time for School." Tonight, we travel to India, where nearly 100 percent of children start primary school. But especially for girls in rural areas, staying in school remains a challenge, and literacy rates have not improved.

NARRATOR: Neeraj Gujar is 9 years old and lives with her tightly knit family of herders in a small village in Rajasthan, a desert region in the northwest of India. It's a deeply traditional community, where women rarely have the chance to go to school.

NEERAJ GUJAR: I work during the day. I do so much. I have to sweep. I have to bring water. I have to make dung cakes. I have to graze the cows.

NARRATOR: Like many girls here, Neeraj can only go to school if she does so at night. In Rajasthan, 56 percent of the female population is illiterate. Schools like hers started in India to educate the country's legions of girls, who must work all day. The goal was that students would eventually transfer into mainstream day schools.

(Source: PBS NewsHour, Time for School: "Why It's Hard for Girls in Rural India to Stay in School." 2015)

Station 5: Ethiopia

Handout

“How do socio-cultural factors, such as female household responsibilities and violence towards women, affect girls’ education in Ethiopia?”



Schoolgirls queue up on the playground to enter their classroom in Berahile, Ethiopia.

For every 100 boys enrolled in secondary education, there are approximately only 77 girls. Poverty is one of the main barriers to girls’ and women’s education in Ethiopia. Social norms and traditional practices about the role and position of women in Ethiopian society, gender-based violence, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, are affecting girls’ and women’s access to and completion of education.

There are also various school-related factors. For example, the lack of motivated and gender-sensitive teachers, of girl-friendly school environments, the absence of targeted interventions to support girls and quality education, as well as long distances to schools, all affect negatively the chances of girl’s access to and retention in secondary education.

(Source: “UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education- One Year On.” 2012)

Girls are physically attacked for non-punishment purposes—as an expression of harassment and attempts at relationships. The perpetrators of this are mainly older boys, it primarily takes place on the way to and from school. It appears that in many cases physical attack (beating up) is linked to a boy’s desire for a romantic relationship with girls. Girls who refuse such initiations risk being beaten up.

Other forms of bullying by boys include snatching personal belongings including school materials and other valuable items of the girls. This act may seem rather innocent, but it may also lead to physical attack and other forms of harassment. The loss of personal belongings in this way could also result in parents and teachers punishing the girl.

Four types of psychological violence and abuse were identified: verbal insult, humiliation, threat, and name-calling. They appeared to be most common on the way to and from school.

(Source: UN Girl’s Education Initiative, “A Study on Violence against Girls in Primary Schools and Its Impacts on Girls’ Education in Ethiopia.” 2008)

Within These Halls: *In situ* Primary Sources in Your Own School

Benjamin R. Wellenreiter

When students cross the thresholds into their schools, they're probably not aware that they've surrounded themselves with primary sources that could serve as examples of topics, events, and processes discussed in their social studies classrooms. From sports awards in the trophy cases to the emergency and life safety systems on the walls, school buildings and the things they hold can serve as powerful pedagogical tools. Rather than exclusively reaching decades or centuries into the past for primary sources, students and teachers should also look to their own school environments for examples of the social studies topics taught in classrooms.

What is Discussed in the Classroom Really Happens in the Halls

Only after a student comment during a class discussion was the seemingly obvious made clear: The girls' sports plaques, as opposed to those earned by boys, were located in places less likely to be seen by visitors. The comment arose during a discussion of the impact of Title IX legislation to end discrimination on the basis of sex. Immediately challenged to prove this assertion, the student asked if the class could go into the hallway to confirm it. In the next moment, the students were looking into the display cases. Indeed, we could all see that the boys' plaques and girls' plaques were segregated, with the girls' awards positioned well beyond the public entrance to the gymnasium. By contrast, the boys' plaques framed the most-used sections of the hallway.

An important, measurable observation in gender equity and social perception had been inspired by our own school environment. Students decided to act upon what they had discovered. They protested the segregation with a written note to the principal, who responded by having the plaques rearranged in chronological order, rather than grouped by gender or type of sport.

This powerful learning moment begged the question: "What other artifacts within our own school could be used to illustrate the topics or concepts studied in our social studies classroom?"

Working to answer this question unveiled a trove of examples of social studies in action, many of which might exist in any school.

Waiting to be Discovered

A major goal of social studies education is to better understand how the concepts and topics studied in the classroom can be seen in our lives in society. Schools are public institutions, places where history, government, geography, civics, and economics are on display if only we would pause to look. To borrow a term from the field of anthropology, these primary sources are *in situ*, or in the place they were originally intended to be.¹ The ubiquitous nature of these primary sources provides countless opportunities for students of the social studies to observe firsthand examples related to their topic of study.

This article describes three types of primary sources located *in situ* in school settings that can be used to bridge the perceived gap between concepts and topics studied in the social studies classroom and students' lived experiences (**Table 1**). "We are all the product of history, and the lives we live are a legacy of historical events."² This is also true of the objects, documents, and procedures we encounter every day; they reflect concepts forged in the past, serve as examples of topics discussed in our classrooms, and can be applied in the present.³

Artifacts: Why is this Object in this Place?

A slow, considerate walk through and around a school can encourage students to see social studies all around them. Purposefully timed with in-class activities, these walks can uncover a multitude of *in situ* physical objects that serve as powerful examples of topics and concepts studied in our classrooms.

Perhaps the most common and important objects found in schools relate to safety and emergencies. Fire safety systems, (ex., fire alarms, sprinklers, signage, etc.), school design, (e.g., safety glass, crash bar door mechanisms, multiple exits, doors that swing toward the outside, public address systems, etc.), and

Table 1: **Social Studies Topics and *in situ* Primary Sources**

Social Studies Topics (a few examples)	Examples of <i>in situ</i> Primary Sources often found in Schools	
Preamble to the U.S. Constitution (1787)	ADA accessible drinking fountains (“Promote the general welfare”) School security systems and policies (“Provide for the common defense”)* Student council election posters (“Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity”) Student council notes (“In order to form a more perfect union”) Student handbook/discipline procedures (“Ensure domestic tranquility”; “Establish justice”)	
1st Amendment Freedoms: Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly, Petition (1791)	Policies outlined in student handbook School library Posters announcing student organizations Dress code; Student government documents	
4th Amendment Freedoms: Restricts Search and Seizure (1791)	Policies outlined in student handbook Student cell phones; lockers Policies about testing for drugs	
Progressive-Era Regulations: Health Codes, Labor Laws) (1890–1920)	Fire alarm and suppression systems School nurse Health department reports Soap and water for handwashing Minimum wage/mandatory employee informational posters Free public schools Recycling bins	
Title IX: Prohibits Discrimination Against Women in Education (1972)	School athletic facilities: athletic; locker room; bathroom School yearbooks Sports team trophies, plaques and photographs	
Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA: Equal access to education, employment, and services (1990)	Adapted school buses Braille signage Elevators/chair lifts	Sidewalks designed for wheelchair accessibility Toilet access Water fountain/sink access

* Modern spellings used here



The responsibility for K-12 education rests with the states under the Constitution. Support for K-12 education by the federal government began in 1965 with the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). (See: "Ten Facts about K-12 public Education Funding," www2.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/10facts/index.html). Photo of Park Middle School in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, 2011.



emergency response, (e.g., science lab eye wash stations, AED stations, etc.) can all be observed, analyzed, and critiqued from multiple social studies perspectives. Students who are studying the Progressive Era, for example, may recognize required fire safety devices as contemporary primary sources whose roots can be traced back to events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire. In studying why and how bills become laws, as an example of another topic, students may investigate the history of tragedies that inspired changes to building code. Applying the concept of active and engaged citizenry, students who critique safety equipment or procedures within their school buildings may find “oversights” that have been missed by adults. Though hopefully rare, this last example may be the best justification for encouraging students to apply the concepts from the classroom in environments beyond.

Beyond life and health safety systems, other objects throughout a school can be used to make abstract topics more concrete. Water fountain design and bathroom stall design, as examples, can be tied with studies of racial segregation and the civil rights era. Indeed, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title IX are reforms that followed the principles of equal opportunity enunciated in civil rights law. The debates today about gender identity and equality follow in that tradition. A discussion of locker access and privacy during a study of the Bill of Rights can assist students in seeing the relevance of history, civil rights, and social studies in their daily lives. Though students can certainly study historical photographs,

a trip through the school affords opportunity for students to discuss ideas and perhaps have insights that might otherwise go undiscovered. While standing in the hallway talking about an object, a student may observe a detail that could have a profound impact on the study of the subject at hand. Having the shared experience of viewing the object as it is situated in the school can lead to discussions that would not have occurred if students had remained inside the classroom.

For example, a drinking fountain might seem an ordinary object, but clean drinking water is a human right, as affirmed in the International Human Rights convention. What happens to human health and to family incomes when potable water becomes available only as a commodity to be purchased in a plastic bottle? What happens when lead or other pollutants are discovered in a public water source?

The power of direct observation and discussion of school based objects, tied with in-class discussion of topics and concepts, encourages students to view their environment through multiple social studies lenses. Criticisms that social studies courses are irrelevant outside the classroom can be successfully defeated with experiences that connect concepts to lived experiences.

Documents: Where is My Bus Stop on this Map?

Documents of public record such as school board meeting notes, school budgets, and student handbooks are potent examples of *in situ* primary sources that students can use in their study of various social studies concepts. Students may acutely understand and appreciate the context, references, and impact of the information being analyzed. Additionally, interviews with individuals responsible for these documents, such as school board members or school administrators, can add voices to these documents that may be unobtainable in other, more distant documents of public record.

As a class discusses taxation, for example, having students view, analyze, and critique school budgets can be a powerful and relevant experience. Though the task may seem overwhelming at first, targeting specific line-items in school budgets, then going to physically see these budget items *in situ* connects the abstract to the concrete. Transportation budgets, which include school bus maintenance costs, can be discussed as students watch buses drive by their building. Though most students are aware that transportation costs are real, the experience of discussing cost while watching buses drive by directly con-

nects information with experience. Likewise, discussing the line-item for custodial products such as paper towels, then counting the paper towel dispensers in a school, assists in developing appreciation of how budgeting impacts experience. Returning to the classroom to further discuss and analyze the school budget after a trip outside the classroom to find taxpayer expenditures can elicit opinions on whether spending is necessary or frivolous.

In situ documents include school yearbooks, student newspapers, daily announcement documents, posters in hallways, posted rules in cafeterias, and other texts that are created by school officials or students.⁴ When studying how fads and trends change through time, as an example, it will be enlightening and perhaps entertaining to locate school yearbooks from decades past. Likewise, analysis of changes in dress code over decades of student handbooks can deepen discussions of free speech, gender identity, or socioeconomic concepts.

Broadening the employment of primary source documents to include *in situ* examples can intimately connect students to curricular concepts. Annotation, critique, and comparison of school-based documents, combined with relevant trips outside the classroom to see concepts in action or conduct interviews with individuals responsible for the documents, brings to life text and concepts that may otherwise be seen as dry or irrelevant. In her *Middle Level Learning* article on exploring local school history through primary source documents, Amy Trenkle recommends having students create scrapbooks so future students can have a richer experience.⁵ Adding this activity can further enrich students' experiences by turning them into creators of primary sources, in addition to researchers of them.

It may be helpful to discuss any research ideas with your principal before assuring students that they can have access to documents that are not posted. Although much of school business is publicly accessible, some privacy laws may apply, and accessing archived records can incur some costs.

Processes: How was this Safety Routine Developed?

Students may benefit from analyzing school policies and processes. Viewing the primary source concept broadly, these processes and policies are also *in situ* primary sources and serve as examples of social studies in action in students' personal environments. Processes vital to all students include the various health and safety inspections that takes place within their



school. County health department reports can be connected to the Progressive Era. In many areas, schools are required to publicly display their cafeteria health inspection reports as evidence of compliance with the law. Students who, sometimes for years, have passed these postings without a glance, are encouraged to see how health code enforcement influences their lives on a daily basis. A trip to the school cafeteria to view the health codes enforced there, in conjunction with a discussion of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, raises students' eyebrows.⁶ With discussion of health code requirements and with the health certificate as proof, however, students often express gratitude for the laws passed as a result of early 20th century tragedies and subsequent reforms. Discovering and analyzing earlier, historic health certificates, if available, can allow students to see the developmental trajectory of health code and health code enforcement.


The budget processes used by school officials to determine spending for extracurricular activities, (e.g., how and when sports teams receive new uniforms); the yearly re-mapping of school bus routes; budgeting of school technology purchases and upkeep, and the rules for school fundraising campaign policies are all examples of routines that students can analyze within the context of related social studies concepts. Studies of gender equity issues, investigations into local gentrification, how taxpayer money is spent, and the role of local, state, and federal money in school funding are examples of public policy affecting local educational resources and opportunities. While discussions of these processes in the abstract may be helpful,

analysis of primary sources such as written procedures, certificates, and interviews with individuals charged with executing these procedures add depth and experience that students can use to further their appreciation for how social studies concepts are applied in their lives outside the classroom.

When preparing to analyze school policies or procedures, it is important to let your school administration know your students will be discussing the operations of the school. Talking with your principal before analyzing policies and procedures with your students can give you important insights and will alert administration to be on the lookout for questions from students regarding school functioning. Active intruder drills and other security procedures are sensitive and emotional processes and consideration should be made in how you might respond if students bring up these topics. Additionally, letting your principal know your students will be analyzing their school, and perhaps moving throughout it during class time, can give the administration and other school staff the opportunity to interact with students as they explore their school.

Conclusion

Students view images of primary sources in textbooks and at websites to learn about people, places, events and ideas. Broadening the scope of primary sources to include *in situ*

artifacts, documents, and procedures provides a greater opportunity for students to more deeply connect with the topics and concepts studied inside the social studies classroom and environments beyond. Encouraging students to view all objects as potential items for study works to strengthen connections between classroom activity and lived experience. The result may be students who better understand, appreciate, and actively employ social studies concepts inside—and outside—the classroom. 

Notes

1. Natalie R. Langley and Maria Theresa A. Tersigni-Tarrant, *Forensic Anthropology: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis, 2017).
2. Michael P. Marino, “Urban Space as a Primary Source: Local History and Historical Thinking in New York City,” *The Social Studies* 103, no. 3 (2012): 107–116.
3. *ibid.*
4. Amy Trenkle, “Researching Our School’s History,” *Middle Level Learning* 34 (January/February 2009), 1–9.
5. *ibid.*
6. Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (New York: The Jungle Publishing Co. 1906).

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Additional School-Based Resources and/or Topics

- Name of school and community values
- Pictures or art in classrooms
- School organization and the 19th century factory system
- School rules, the rule of law, and the process of amendment
- School punishments, penal systems, and restorative justice
- Ability grouping, grades A–F, and the idea of progress
- School staff positions and social status
- Student lockers and private property
- School grounds and land use (e.g., space reserved for athletics and cars)
- Cafeteria and public health (e.g., nutrition; government subsidies)

Some Social Studies Concepts (Big Ideas) to Inspire “Treasure Hunting” at Your School

- Time
- Change
- Continuity
- Era
- Culture
- Origins
- Civilization
- Social Change
- Exploration
- Migration
- Conquest
- Conflict
- Consequences
- Colonialism
- Revolution
- Independence
- Nationalism
- Sectionalism
- Isolationism
- Progressivism
- Industrialization
- Invention
- Innovation
- Social Change *MLL*