ELEVENTH EDITION

DYNAMIC SOCIAL STUDIES

Pearson

GEORGE W. MAXIM

ELEVENTH EDITION

Dynamic Social Studies

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West Chester University

Pearson

330 Hudson Street, NY NY 10013

Dedication

To Libby

You gave me the strength to push through the self-doubt and fatigue.
This book could not have happened without you!

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About the Author

George W. Maxim began his elementary school teaching career in rural Appalachia and ultimately taught in varied settings and at different levels from preschool through Grade 6. After completing a very enjoyable elementary school teaching career, Dr. Maxim pursued a PhD in elementary education from Pennsylvania State University, specializing in social studies and early childhood education. He accepted a position at West Chester (PA) University immediately after completing the requirements for the degree, teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in social studies education, creative thinking processes, literacy, and early childhood education. Dr. Maxim served as Director of the Early Childhood program for several years. He has lectured, conducted in-service programs, and offered workshops for teachers throughout the country and has also been invited to speak to audiences in locations as distant as Seoul, South Korea.

Dr. Maxim is the recipient of a number of teaching awards, including the Certificate of Excellence in (College) Teaching Award from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. As an active member of the National Council for the Social Studies, he has served on the Educational Publishing Advisory Committee and has chaired the Early Childhood/Elementary Advisory Committee. He was instrumental in helping to launch NCSS's elementary education journal, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, serving on its editorial board for several years.

His articles have appeared in *Social Studies and the Young Learner, Social Education, The Social Studies, Childhood Education,* and other relevant professional journals. He has written books other than this text, including *The Very Young, The Sourcebook*, *and Learning Centers for Young Children*. In addition, he contributed a chapter to Loretta MacAlpine's *Inside Kidvid*, a parent's guide to video.

Dr. Maxim's wife, Libby, is a highly accomplished reading specialist (now retired), having helped scores of children throughout the West Chester area to become successful readers. His oldest son, Mike, is head of infrastructure at a corporation located in New York City, and his youngest son, Jeff, is a computer programmer in New York City.

Dr. Maxim enjoys writing and teaching; he particularly likes creating new and exciting approaches to classroom instruction. And he will never turn down a chance to play a good game of golf!

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Contents

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Preface

As I worked on this eleventh edition of *Dynamic Social Studies*, I continuously asked myself, "Why are you still doing this?" My question had nothing to do with a lack of enthusiasm for the project; actually, I love writing. Although I will not write the next great novel, I truly enjoy immersing myself in a textbook world. Textbook authors don't simply select a topic to write about and begin punching away at the keyboard, but they must discover ways to capture and sustain a reader's interest in topics that aren't always self-motivating. So, the reason I asked, "Why are you still doing this?" is because I wanted to find ways to grab your attention, arouse your curiosity, and engage you in the content. My answer to the question is also based on a conviction that social studies is crucial for the development of informed, rational, and culturally responsive citizens. I needed to best communicate to you the essential role that social studies plays in bringing pride, responsibility, and meaning to your students' lives as citizens of our nation in the 21st century.

This is not a text steeped in research and theory, although research and theory are an important part of it. Nor is it a "cookbook" text full of delicious classroom recipes, although it does contain a wealth of teaching examples and suggested strategies. It does build bridges between theory and practice with the hope that future teachers understand that no single method of instruction, by itself, can help us achieve all the important goals of social studies instruction. The text is designed to help you find ways to inspire children to want to learn the things they need to know in order to understand and participate in the world around them. To accomplish these goals you must be bold; you cannot be afraid to make mistakes. You must constantly struggle to find the method that works best for your students by seeking out answers to the most important question of all: "Why am I doing this?"

How Is the Text Organized?

The chapters in this edition are arranged into four sections. Section One provides an overview of the purposes, problems, and possibilities of social studies in the elementary school curriculum as well as guidance and direction in planning lessons and units—choosing objectives, assessment procedures, and learning activities. Section Two addresses a key feature of effective teaching—the selection of instructional resources that meet the needs and interests of students as well as satisfy social studies content standards. Section Three describes teaching practices that are supported by constructivist learning theory. The constructivist view of learning can be translated into a number of active teaching practices, running the gamut from teacher-guided instruction to inquiry and problem solving. Section Four focuses on the six core disciplines and their respective content, tools, and investigative processes, from which students will draw as they attempt to uncover and discover significant curricular content about human beings and the ways in which they function: history, geography, civics, economics, anthropology, and sociology.

New to This Edition

This eleventh edition maintains the focus of previous editions, but it has been thoroughly revised and updated.

- In response to the prevailing standards scene and other trends in the field, four new chapters are now included in Section Three:

  CHAPTER 5 Beyond the Ordinary: Teaching and Learning with Concrete Instructional Resources

  CHAPTER 6 Beyond the Ordinary: Teaching and Learning with Representational Instructional Resources

  CHAPTER 7 Beyond the Ordinary: Teaching and Learning with Informational and Persuasive Text

  CHAPTER 8 Beyond the Ordinary: Teaching and Learning with Narrative Text

- Several new classroom scenarios have been introduced at chapter openings. The scenarios, each having taken place in actual elementary school classrooms, work as advance organizers that place the content into a meaningful context. In addition, a number of fresh scenarios have been inserted throughout the chapters to help you understand and visualize how teachers have actually used suggested teaching strategies in their classrooms.
- Numerous new photographs, illustrations, and figures help to illuminate and reinforce the information presented.
- Several important topics have been added, expanded, and updated: diversity and differentiated instruction as an underlying premise of instruction; the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards; the Common Core State Standards; creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources; inquiry strategies based on the C3 Inquiry Arc; a useful framework that strengthens the teaching of the core social studies disciplines; acquiring knowledge through reading complex content area fiction and nonfiction text; guided reading and close reading strategies, as well as suggestions for integrating good children's literature into the social studies program; and expanded discussion of the literacy strategies and skills that help students acquire information and communicate their learning.
- Distributed at strategic points throughout each chapter are open-ended, Reflection on Learning questions that have no clear-cut answers, but require reflection through which you extract personal meaning. Sometimes, reflection will be as simple as thinking about what you've learned and associating it to past experiences. At other times, reflection may become a part of class discussion. Either way, the purpose of reflection is to help personalize the learning experience.
- The eleventh edition is powered by Pearson's new eText technology, which creates a powerful and personal online learning experience. The e-book version is interactive, containing study and review questions, appropriate videos, and questions requiring personal reflection. These features enhance the overall technology movement that is the future of our schools and our society.
- Finally, references have been updated throughout the text. The latest ideas from the social studies profession have been included, and appropriate citations have been made.

eText Features

The eText version of the eleventh edition provides instant access on smartphones, tablets, and laptops. The eText allows you to highlight text, take and share notes, search keywords, and print pages. The eText brings you the following features:

- *Check Your Understanding:* As you read the material, you can use embedded quizzes called "Check Your Understanding" to enhance your grasp of the content. Feedback will be provided to ensure comprehension after you complete each multiple choice question.
- *Video Exploration:* Interactive videos help create interactive lessons. You are invited to answer video quizzes (called *Video Explorations*) as you watch the selected video clip. Feedback is provided after you answer each question.
- *Video Example:* Additional videos provide examples of concepts discussed in the text.

Supplements

Instructor's Manual

For each chapter, the Instructor's Manual contains Key Questions, a Chapter Outline, and eText information. It also includes a combination of Print Resources (books, journals, and current event publications), Electronic Resources (websites), Video Resources, and Organizations. There is also a list of the chapter's vocabulary terms and their definitions.

Test Bank

The Test Bank contains multiple choice questions, essay, and true or false questions, as well as the answer keys for each chapter.

PowerPoint

The PowerPoint slides first explain how the book will help you create a dynamic social studies classroom through its features, such as NCSS standards integration, text sets, and classroom activities. Each chapter is then outlined by topics and terms, which you can read to follow along with the book.

Acknowledgments

This eleventh edition would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of my family. Enormous appreciation is extended to my wife Libby, whose selfless help was given freely and affectionately, and accepted with deep appreciation; my son Mike, head of infrastructure at a major New York City corporation, who has spread his wings and worked hard to make his dreams come true; and my son Jeff, a computer programmer in New York City who boldly exercised courage and integrity to live his dream. They may not be aware of how much they helped, but I thank them for being my strength.

I am also indebted to my parents, Rose and Stanley Maxim. Their honorable work ethic instilled in me the value of determination in tackling a job as overwhelming as writing a book. Their love of parenthood was a valuable inspiration for me throughout my life and my career.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work with a highly talented, supportive, and friendly team of editors at Pearson. First, I would like to thank Meredith Fossel, Executive Editor, Teacher Education, for her vision, extraordinary insights, and personable leadership as she guided this revision. I deeply appreciate Meredith's confidence in me and her support of my work throughout this project. I also consider myself lucky to have had an opportunity to work with Bryce Bell as our Developmental Editor. Bryce was a superb "coach" who provided the best possible conditions for our team to maximize its performance. Hoorah, Bryce! A note of appreciation is also extended to Karen Mason and Tania Zamora, Rights and Permissions specialists, who managed all matters related to the time-consuming process of reviewing photos, text quotes, and other outside materials contained in the manuscript. And, Jesika Bethea, Product Marketing, applied her sound judgment to create a strong marketing strategy for this edition. I think the world of the cover of this edition, a wonderful choice provided by Miryam Chandler, Content Producer. As I express my gratitude to those at Pearson, I must never forget the kindness and patience of Maria Feliberty, Editorial Assistant. You are special, Maria! Finally, I want to send out a big word of thanks to Jason Hammond, Project Manager at SPi Global, who respectfully and affably employed his creativity and craftmanship to organize and monitor the production responsibilities of this project. Doumo arigatou gozaimasu, Jason! Working with Jason at SPi Global, copy editor Susan McIntyre of Essential Edits expertly took hold of my original copy, organized it, cleaned it up, and prepared it for production. This entire team was not only competent and professional, but friendly as well; I owe much to them.

I thank the following reviewers for their helpful suggestions and insights: Judy Britt, Winthrop University; Katherine Condon, Framingham State University; and Amy Saks Pavese, St. Michael's College.

Finally, seven people deserve special thanks for their support and encouragement throughout this project: Dan "Yogdah" Darigan for helping me more fully understand and appreciate the potential of integrating literacy and social studies, as well as for his refreshing inspiration and professional support during our weekly faculty meetings; John "Pogo" Ogborn for his appreciation of and interest in my professional achievements; Ellen and Bernard Tenenbaum and Jane and George Barker for connecting our families through accepting our sons as their daughters' lifemates; and my unnamed junior high school social studies teacher who once motivated me in a way she'll never know with her derisive castigation, "You're never going to amount to anything, Maxim!"

SECTION ONE

Foundational Principles

Learn what it is like to be a social studies teacher in an elementary school. Begin your path to successful teaching by acquiring a deep understanding of social studies as a school subject and learning how to draw on its central concepts and structures to plan classroom instruction for elementary school children. Discover the importance of integrating content and processes from various disciplines as you plan assessment-based, engaging, and effective social studies lessons. Ask yourself, what do I know about social studies and what do I need to learn in order to teach it well?

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CHAPTER 1

Social Studies:
The Subject You Will Teach

Learning Outcomes

Have you ever stopped to think what makes some social studies teachers more successful than others? There is no simple answer, of course, but one characteristic that separates successful social studies teachers from the rest of the pack is that they are students of their profession. That is, they know and understand the nature of the subject they are teaching—its fundamental concepts, structure, and learning processes. Therefore, after completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Appraise how your past elementary school recollections enhance and shape your future as a social studies teacher.
- Describe the nature of social studies as an elementary school subject.
- Explain how past approaches to teaching social studies have evolved into contemporary instructional practices.
- Identify the general strategies that exemplify best practices in contemporary social studies classrooms.
- Explain how democratic ideals are infused into daily classroom life.

Classroom Snapshot

Dorothy Holzwarth's fourth graders in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, were about to wind up a thematic unit on their state when Naisha brought in a newspaper story about Maryland having recently adopted the monarch butterfly as its state insect. "Does Pennsylvania have a state insect, too?" inquired several interested youngsters. That was all it took to launch Mrs. Holzwarth's class into one of the most enjoyable social studies learning adventures it had ever tackled.

The students got the ball rolling by looking up information from various sources; they found a state flower, a state song, a state tree, a state nickname, and various other official state symbols but no official "state bug." The children wanted to write to the president of the United States to see if they could have one, but Mrs. Holzwarth explained that since this was a state matter, they should direct their query to their district legislators in Harrisburg, the state capital.

Before they did so, however, the class decided to conduct a regular democratic election to determine what insect would be the most fitting state symbol. Several insects were nominated, and each nominee became the subject of careful study. The students explored the pros and cons of an assortment of bugs, such as the praying mantis, dragonfly, ladybug, and grasshopper. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each, a class vote settled the matter: the firefly was their selection. Why? One reason was that the scientific name, Photuris pennsylvanica, *closely resembled the name of their state. Students also liked the fact that these insects dotted their backyards on summer evenings and they spent many a summer night running around in pursuit of these elusive "lightning bugs."*

After the vote, the students wrote a letter to their state representatives, asking how they might make their actions official. The lawmakers were extremely impressed with the children's civic energy and arranged to visit Mrs. Holzwarth's classroom to answer the children's questions and personally thank them for their interest in state issues. The awestruck youngsters listened intently as the legislators discussed the process of introducing a law in the state legislature and advised the students how to proceed with their project. Their next step would be to persuade other legislators to support their cause. Undaunted, these 26 children wrote more than 250 letters—203 to the House, 50 to the Senate, and 2 to the governor and his wife. The children also learned that they needed popular support from voters in their area, so they canvassed their neighborhoods and shopping malls until they obtained more than 2,100 signatures.

The students printed more than 600 bumper stickers proclaiming "Firefly for State Insect." They also kept up their letter writing campaign, asking legislators to vote YES when the bill came onto the floor. The children were invited to Harrisburg for the House Government Committee hearings on their bill.

When they arrived in Harrisburg, they were met head-on by television crews and reporters. The hearing was held according to established decorum, with the children testifying about fireflies for about 2 hours. The committee reported its unanimous support of the bill to the House of Representatives, and eventually the bill passed the House by a vote of 156 to 22. The Senate passed the bill by an overwhelming vote of 37 to 11. When the governor finally signed the bill (Act 59), the children were again in Harrisburg to watch the institution of a new state law. Photuris pennsylvanica *officially took its place alongside the whitetail deer, ruffed grouse, and Great Dane as official state animals.*

For Mrs. Holzwarth's class, this was much more than an exercise in choosing a state insect. It was an authentic, purposeful learning experience in which the children took direct political action and participated in legislative processes. They learned about petitioning and writing letters to their representatives, and they saw firsthand how government works. One child noted, "Now we have something to tell our grandchildren." Another, when asked if she would like to get another law passed, blurted, "Darn right! I'd like a law against homework. Homework gives you pimples!"

Successful social studies teachers like Mrs. Holzwarth enjoy their work and value the lives they touch. There are no secret recipes or mystical formulas to duplicate the Mrs. Holzwarths of our profession; each is one of a kind. As much as possible, they try to make social studies an inspiring, productive, and memorable experience for their students. They eagerly combine time-tested, traditional "best practices" with novel, groundbreaking approaches in an effort to encourage deep understandings, enhance curiosity, and provoke critical thinking. They value their role in the lives of children and realize that teachers—not books, not technology, not lesson plans, not buildings, and not even class size—are what really matter. They know and love our nation and hold bright hopes for its future. Their sense of democratic values influences everything they do in their social studies classrooms. Successful teachers know that young children are our future, and the way they live and learn today becomes the way they will live and learn tomorrow. They expertly handle with keen insight and skill all the subtle professional responsibilities that contribute to a quality social studies program, and their instructional choices are based on a maze of complicated decisions.

Few individuals are more meaningful in the lives of elementary school children than their parents, close relatives, and teachers. For that reason, elementary school social studies teachers should be among the finest people we know. But being a fine person does not in itself guarantee success. Successful teachers must also possess a set of professional skills founded on sound theoretical and research-based principles. They welcome the challenge of creating superb social studies classrooms and boldly demonstrate that they would rather be challenged than safe and bored. They work hard to acquire a "can-do spirit" early in their careers, for succeeding in complex situations is as much about attitude and self-confidence as it is about knowledge and skill.

As you strive for success, think of yourself much as an artist preparing to create an oil painting. Certainly, all artists must follow certain basics, acquire specialized painting skills, and practice a lot. But a common element among the artists who stand out seems to be that they have found a distinctive technique that transports their works beyond the ordinary. They are the ones who explore and experiment until they come up with a matchless style that expresses their inner feelings and touches the lives of others. Much like standout artists, successful social studies teachers are the product of a unique vision; they have a special *something* that makes students pause, look closer, and want to take part in the excitement of their classrooms. So work hard, dream a lot, and muster the grit to establish a point of view. However, you cannot, and should not, take risks unless your fundamentals are solid. Successful social studies teachers never take risks blindly; their decisions are based on a strong professional foundation. Build that foundation in social studies education and take your risks there, for it is the one area of the elementary school curriculum that most openly invites the ideas and dreams of adventurous and creative young teachers.

Reflection on Learning

You may simply scribble rough notes or jot down something more polished and complete. The point is to simply start recording your ideas spontaneously and candidly.

I've seen some pre-service teachers work for hours on a lesson plan only to fail miserably, and I've seen others glance over their material for 5 minutes before walking into a classroom and carry out a creative, spontaneous, and highly productive lesson. It makes you think . . . in the end, what makes a great teacher? What qualities would *you* expect a successful social studies teacher to demonstrate? Which do you currently possess? Which do you lack? Which are you in the process of developing?

Memories of Elementary School Social Studies

Our quest to understand how to teach social studies must reach into the past; analyzing threads of the past gives us the insight to examine current conditions. Whether we minimize their importance or cling to them throughout our professional lives, there is little doubt that our past elementary school experiences have shaped us as people and will cause us to behave in certain ways as teachers. All of us tend to attach ourselves to exemplary role models we hope to take after or to classroom conditions we hope to replicate. And, undoubtedly, there have been teachers we have vowed not to model ourselves after and scenarios we have promised to avoid. So go back to your elementary school days and take a close look. What do you remember about social studies from your elementary school days? Who was the *best* elementary school social studies teacher you ever had? Now, try to picture the *worst* elementary school social studies teacher you ever had. What memories do you have of those teachers? Can you single out any of these noteworthy individuals as having contributed to the person you are today? Jot down a list of three or four strong feelings or clear events (good and bad) that first pop into your mind and share your list with your classmates.

I enjoy doing this activity on the first day of a semester with my students. I find it instructive both for them and for me. Although I hesitate to describe this category first, the "dislike" category usually includes memories such as reading assigned pages from a textbook and answering questions at the end of the section (while the teacher corrected weekly spelling tests at his or her desk), listening to a teacher lecture about latitude and longitude (without the benefit of a map or a globe), memorizing facts about the early explorers of North America (where they came from, when they left their homeland, the date they arrived here, and where they explored), and copying facts word for word from a teacher's endless parade of PowerPoint slides (with an oversupply of information on slide after slide of small text). After discussing the "disliked" experiences, I ask students to suggest word labels that best sum up those types of educational experiences. "Boring," "lifeless," "dull," "mind-numbing," "a waste," and "humdrum" are some of the expressions I remember. The power of an ineffective teacher is something almost all of us have experienced on a personal level and, although they are a significant minority, it is a frustrating reality that there are ineffective teachers in some social studies classrooms.

Unfortunately, when they have such negative recollections of their past encounters with social studies, pre-service teachers tend to underestimate the hard work that goes into successful classroom instruction: "Is that all there is to it? Why, anybody can teach social studies to elementary school kids! Who can't tell them to take out their textbooks, read a few pages, and answer the questions at the end of the section? Why does anyone need to take a college methods course to learn to do something so simple?" When facing such satirical feedback from my students, I find that the best way to cope is to admit its legitimacy. It's true . . . anybody *can* tell children to take out their textbooks to read a few pages. And, yes, anybody *can* ask them the questions printed at the end of a reading selection. While these accusations are reasonable, they are missing the whole point of teaching in today's elementary school social studies classroom. Social studies is not meant to be taught that way.

In contrast to the "dislike" category, the "like" category usually includes memories such as "Writing our own classroom constitution and holding elections," "Making web-based travel brochures to interest students from other states to visit our state," "Once we had firefighters, who assisted in recovery efforts, to speak about their impressions and experiences at Ground Zero," "Role-playing a historical figure for a pageant of great people who lived during the Civil War," "Drawing hieroglyphics that represented our names," "Cooking venison stew as we read the book *Sign of the Beaver*," "Hearing a Peace Corps volunteer talk about his experiences in Sierra Leone," and "Taking food and clothing to a homeless shelter." Several students gave

detailed explanations of favorite social studies teachers. One particularly striking remembrance was a story of Mrs. Dunbar:

> *I had a fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Dunbar, who made social studies one of my favorite subjects. We always looked forward to social studies class because Mrs. Dunbar always had something special for us to do. Once, we were studying prehistoric life. Although health and safety regulations would probably not allow teachers to do this today, Mrs. Dunbar asked us to strip everything off and bring in bones left over from our dinners at home. You could probably guess that the next day we had a pile of all kinds of bones—fish, chicken, beef. . . . Our first job was to scrub them thoroughly with soap and water. Then we boiled them in vinegar water, soaked them in a bleach and water solution to make them white, dried them off, and put them in a large box called 'The Boneyard.' We were organized into groups and Mrs. Dunbar encouraged us to select any of the bones we wanted and glue or wire them together in the general shape of the dinosaurs we were studying. We gave our dinosaurs their scientific names and displayed an information card next to the models. Mrs. Dunbar called us paleontologists. I still remember the word because it was a real thrill to have such an impressive title at the time. She was such a talented teacher. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Dunbar is the reason I wanted to become a teacher.*

As the student related this story, I could not help but think how we all need a story of special teachers such as Mrs. Dunbar to remind us of the kinds of creative and inspirational behaviors that make individuals stand out from the crowd.

When asked to suggest words that best summed up these favorable kinds of experiences, students unfailingly come up with expressions such as "fun," "exciting," "interesting," "worthwhile," "rewarding," "active," and "creative." I bring closure to the activity by asking the students to think about these questions: "Which set of words would you want students to use when they describe *you* and *your* social studies program?" and "What will you need to know or be able to do for that to happen?"

The resulting discussion usually raises questions about the professional know-how required to carry out social studies programs that are fun, exciting, interesting, lively, rewarding, and active and, at the same time, instructive. A small number of students worry that using "fun-type" activities might create serious classroom management problems: "I'd like my social studies class to be fun and exciting, but I'm worried that the children, and I, will lose control." "Won't children think of the 'fun' activities as 'playtime' and just fool around in class, not learning anything?" Their concerns suggest a perception that "fun-type" activities are frivolous, lack challenge, or, at best, serve as convenient rewards for accomplishing the more serious stuff of classroom life.

Most of my students, however, tend to feel that being strictly serious about content can do just the opposite—result in a dull and boring social studies program. They fear that "serious-type" social studies programs can become trivial and tedious for both the teacher and the children. "It's a mistake to think of fun learning as wasted learning effort," they counter. "Fun does not mean easy; as teachers, we certainly need to encourage hard work. But self-motivated discovery and play are the most natural ways children learn. Children like to solve problems; they like to think. The problem is that educators often get in the way of this natural process by teaching a meaningless curriculum in an industrial factory setting."

As the class discussion draws to a close, my students typically ask these questions: "How can I make social studies fun and still maintain control over what the children do and understand?" "How can I get across the important social studies content without being run-of-the-mill or ordinary?" "How can I teach content without communicating to the children that we think they're unskilled or ignorant?" "Is it possible to blend both styles to achieve the greatest results?" One of the most significant challenges future social studies teachers face is, on the one hand, ensuring that children acquire the knowledge, skills, and values that help prepare them for constructive participation in a democratic society, and on the other hand, organizing and conducting lessons that offer a blend of pleasure, intrigue, variety, active involvement, and excitement.

Students benefit from fun, active social studies lessons designed with their unique needs and interests in mind.

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As far back as 1933, John Dewey addressed this dilemma and offered some sage advice that remains relevant today. In speaking to the serious–fun dilemma of social studies instruction, Dewey (1933) wrote that if either is used exclusively, we end up with a double-edge sword: "Play degenerates into fooling [around] and work into drudgery" (p. 286). Instead of planning instruction at either end of the play–work continuum, Dewey suggested a delicate balance between seriousness and fun. That is, our social studies classrooms must be places where students play with ideas, think deeply about content, make connections to their lives, and become energized as active, eager learners. The key to successful teaching is creating a lively, playful, experiential curriculum that informs students about things that matter. If your curriculum is meaningful and fun for your students, it will be meaningful and fun for you, too.

The rest of this chapter will consider some of the defining attributes of social studies as a school subject and how to help make social studies a meaningful and vibrant experience for your students. They are not meant to be all inclusive, but the defining attributes have been organized as ***four dimensions of content***: (1) *knowing about the nature of social studies as a school subject*; (2) *understanding the origin, erosion, and rebirth of social studies as a school subject*; (3) *developing instructional practices that promote and support learning;* and (4) *creating a democratic classroom community that serves an array of diverse students.*

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING 1.1 **Click here** to check your understanding of this section of the chapter.

Attribute 1: Social Studies as a School Subject

As an elementary school teacher, you will be responsible for teaching a variety of subjects including math, language arts, reading, science, and social studies (and sometimes art, music, or physical education). And teaching those subjects well to a classroom full of 5- to 12-year-olds demands hard work, dedication, skill, and loads of knowledge. That is why you will be taking a number of methods courses that focus on specific subject areas. Those courses will vary

in content and methodology, but social studies is part of your course lineup because it is the only class that offers specialized techniques explicitly intended to help children become active, responsible citizens in a diverse democratic society.

Being able to share with you a definition of social studies having general consensus is quite significant for those of us who have been in the field for a while, as it took over 75 years of controversy, disagreement, and debate before this deceptively uncomplicated task was completed by the professional community. Many find it incomprehensible that the field labored from 1916 to 1993 to ultimately agree on the nature of this school subject! (You will read more about this later in this chapter.) However, when you think about a subject responsible for achieving a goal as extensive as "educating good citizens," such a significant responsibility is bound to raise disputes among experts holding strong opinions about sensitive educational issues. That is why coming to an agreement on its definition can be arguably much more contentious than defining school subjects such as math or reading. With that in mind, the confirmed National Council for the Social Studies definition (NCSS, 1993) is a good place to start your investigation into the nature of social studies as an elementary school subject:

> *Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.* (p. 3)

Clearly, the definition highlights two main characteristics that distinguish social studies from other subjects you will teach. That is, social studies (1) is *integrative*—by its nature, social studies incorporates content and processes from many disciplines—and (2) is the main school subject that assumes the *major goals* of preparing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for civic competence. Although civic competence is not the exclusive responsibility of social studies, it is more fundamental to social studies than to any other subject in the elementary school curriculum.

Integrative Social Studies

What is an integrated social studies curriculum? Basically, it is a way of connecting separate school subjects with social studies to focus upon unifying concepts or skills. This unity can be commonly brought about in either, or both, of two major ways: *intra*disciplinary integration and *inter*disciplinary integration. *Intradisciplinary integration* happens when the knowledge and skills of the disciplines that make up one school subject are fused together for instruction. For example, reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing have been merged into the elementary school subject we call "language arts." Disciplines such as biology, chemistry, astronomy, zoology, meteorology, botany, and geology have been combined as the elementary school subject known as "science." Similarly, history, geography, civics, economics, sociology, and anthropology have been joined into a subject we know well as "social studies."

The process of *interdisciplinary integration*, on the other hand, combines the various school subjects for the purpose of examining a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience. To help your students better understand a complex issue such as global warming, for example, you may plan learning experiences that include content, skills, and processes from science, technology, language arts, art, and social studies.

SOCIAL STUDIES AS AN INTRADISCIPLINARY SCHOOL SUBJECT

To help you understand the connections among the different sub-disciplines of social studies, it is essential to look into two seemingly similar terms that people often confuse: *social science* and *social studies*. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, they are quite different.

Let us first examine the term *social science*. The word *social* indicates that we are dealing with people living together in organized groups, or societies. The word *science* is derived from the Latin word *Scientia*; it means "knowledge." So, if we combine the separate words *social* and *science*, we can define a *social science* as any of several disciplines that examine how people interact and develop as social beings. If you're interested in learning about the exercise of authority in India, for example, you would want to consider a social science that explains governing systems. If you want to know where the finest coffee growing regions of the world are located, it would be wise to look into a social science that describes places on Earth and how those places influence human activity. Social sciences cover a variety of disciplines; each has its own investigative methodology and specialized field of knowledge.

Six major social sciences contribute to most elementary school social studies programs: geography, history, political science, anthropology, sociology, and economics. Each discipline is distinctive, but specialists from one discipline often find that their research overlaps with work being done in another. *Social studies* is an umbrella label for the curricular area that brings together the subarea social sciences into a single coordinated, systematic school subject area called social studies (see Figure 1.1).

Geography "What is the Ring of Fire?" "Why does New York City have so much traffic?" and "How does global warming affect ocean life?" are but three of the countless questions geographers ask about places on Earth and their relationship to the people who live there. Geographers study people and places by investigating Earth's physical dimensions (such as mountains, deserts, rivers, and oceans) and its human dimensions (the impact of Earth's physical features on people and vice versa).

History Historians systematically investigate, analyze, and interpret the past by asking questions such as "What happened?" "Why did it happen?" and "What can we learn from what has

FIGURE 1.1 The Social Sciences