Social Studies in Utah Public Schools

ROBERT AUSTIN, USOE K-12 SOCIAL STUDIES SPECIALIST

Why Social Studies?

- Social studies is central to the vision and mission of public education.
- Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.
- College and career-readiness relies on a deep foundation in social studies

What is Civic Competence?

- The ability to make informed decisions for the public good
- Economic literacy
- Active participation in civic and political affairs
- Strong moral and social values
- Loyalty and commitment to constitutional government

Social Studies

Civic Rights and Responsibilities

Systems of Government

History's Continuity and Change Over Time Geography and behavioral sciences in relation to Community, State, Nation, World

The State of Social Studies Education

- Social studies education has some very strong aspects:
 - Committed teachers
 - Strong professional organizations, e.g. UCSS, UGA
 - Frequent professional development
 - Solid district support
 - Strong community participation
 - Solid, content and concept-rich core

Community Support

Utah Law Related Education

Roots of Freedom

United States Senate Youth

Hinckley Institute of Politics

Larry H. Miller Education Project Teaching American History grant recipients

Bill of Rights Institute

3R's Project

Mock Election Program

Utah League of Women Voters

America's Freedom Alliance

Center for Documentary Arts

American West Center

Utah History Fair

• "We the People" and "Project Citizen," components of the Center for Civic Education

Civic Concepts in the Utah Core

- The core "includes experiences that offer civic ideals, principles and practices of how a citizen should act in a democratic republic. Citizenship includes both the attitudes and the actions of a citizen in a democratic society. The development of responsible citizenship in grades K-2 fosters appropriate participation in group activities such as assuming responsibilities in the school and neighborhood, understanding the civic responsibility to vote, and the importance of state and national holidays, symbols, and landmarks."
- Additionally, the kindergarten through second grade core outlines specific vocabulary that teachers should know and use, including civic responsibility, democracy, patriotism, and republic.
- Specific core standards that directly address notions of civic education include kindergarten standard two, first grade standard two, and second grade standard two.

Civics Concepts in the Utah Core

- Specific core standards that directly address notions of civic education include third grade standard three, fourth grade standard three, fifth grade standards one through five, and sixth grade standards one, three and four.
- In the seventh grade, Utah students take at least a halfyear of Utah Studies. The Utah Studies core standard three is the most direct in its emphasis on civic education.
- In the eighth grade, Utah students take United States History 1, a course that "covers events and issues from the Age of Exploration through Reconstruction." Core standards four through nine all have direct civics content.

Civics Concepts in the Utah Core

- All Utah students are then required to take World Civilizations or its equivalent, and civics concepts are strengthened and deepened through the study of classical political systems, modern European political systems, comparative analyses of political revolutions, and the recent and continuing interaction of peoples across the globe, topics woven through every standard in the course.
- United States History 2 has an emphasis on post-Reconstruction America, yet the core standards review principles of the Constitution in standard one, and specifically address additional civics concepts in virtually every standard from three through ten.
- The capstone course for Utah students in social studies is United States Government and Citizenship, a course designed to recap and strengthen their civic education. Every standard in this course has multiple civics concepts embedded into it.

Key Concepts in the Utah Social Studies Core

Kindergarten

- Family, Neighborhood, Community
- Roles and responsibilities as a good citizen
- Diversity
- Geographic representations
- Human needs and wants
- School, state, and national symbols and songs
- Patriotism
- Allegiance

Kindergarten, continued

- Respect
- Culture
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Citizenship

First Grade

- Community traditions
- Roles and responsibilities in the school and neighborhood
- Geographic representations, maps, and the globe
- Exchanging goods and services
- Roles in the community
- Respect
- Economic choices

First grade, continued

- The purposes for saving money and assets
- Neighborhood, state, and national symbols
- Patriotism
- Allegiance
- Republic
- Citizenship
- Constitution

Second Grade

- Culture and cultural heritage
- Civic responsibility
- Geographic influences on culture
- Producers and consumers
- Supply and demand
- Technology
- Modifying our physical environment
- Similarities and differences between cultures

Second grade, continued

- Roles in the school community
- Geographic representations
- The world of work
- Business goods and services
- Governmental services
- Patriotism
- Neighborhood, state, and national symbols
- Allegiance
- Republic

Second grade, continued

- Indigenous peoples, e.g. American Indians
- Voting
- Immigrant
- City, State, Nation, Continent
- Ocean

Third Grade

- Natural resources
- Human adaptation to physical geography
- Ecosystems
- Modifying our physical environment
- Natural and human-made geographic boundaries
- Conservation
- Economic development/ Free markets
- Cultural elements, e.g. language, religion, customs, artistic expression, systems of exchange
- Worldwide cultural diversity

Third Grade, continued

- Cultural interactions
- Inventions
- Indigenous cultures
- Civic responsibility
- Patriotic symbols and traditions
- Representative government
- Taxation
- Allegiance
- Republic

Fourth Grade

- Physical geography's impact on human life
- Geographic symbols and tools
- Natural resources
- Industrial and economic development
- Free markets
- City, county, state, nation
- Communication and transportation systems
- Archaeology
- Irrigation systems
- Environment
- Recreation
- Tourism
- State and national parks
- Future natural resources needs

Fourth Grade, continued

- Immigration and emigration
- Cultural groups and attributes
- Religions
- Outstanding character and life skills
- Key events in Utah history
- Economic change
- Globalization
- Political power
- Civic participation
- Patriotic symbols
- Systems of government
- Allegiance

Fifth Grade

- Exploration
- Geographic symbols and tools
- Cultural differences
- Colonization
- Indigenous peoples, e.g. American Indians
- Cultural diffusion
- Global trade
- Slavery
- Disease
- Indentured servitude
- Compacts, charters, and confederations

Fifth Grade, continued

- Revolution
- Independence
- Self-rule
- Constitution
- Republic
- Democracy
- Amendments
- Branches of government
- Legislative process
- Checks and balances

Fifth Grade, continued

- Patriotic traditions
- Bill of Rights
- Westward expansion
- Treaties
- Abolition
- States' rights
- Civil war
- Emancipation
- Free-market system

Fifth Grade, continued

- Industrial revolution
- Depression
- World War
- Superpower
- Civil Rights movement
- Suffrage
- Child labor
- Genocide
- Patriotism
- Allegiance

Sixth Grade

- Human migration
- Civilization
- Physical geography's impact on human settlement
- World religions
- Religion's impact on cultural expressions
- Ancient forms of government
- Current systems of governance
- Innovations
- Writing
- Social classes, e.g. nobility, serfs, merchant class
- Gender roles
- Vocations

Sixth Grade, continued

- Middle Ages
- Renaissance
- Systems of governance
- Plagues
- Feudalism
- Literacy
- Technological and scientific advances
- Moveable type
- Revolution
- Sacrifice

Sixth Grade, continued

- World war
- Cold war
- Global issues
- Pollution
- Famine
- Conservation
- Child labor
- Human rights and responsibilities
- Allegiance
- Republic

Fundamental Challenges

 Just from a cursory glance at the core concepts present in the elementary grades, we can see how vital these ideas are for a student's academic development.

Loss of Instructional Time

- Research across the nation shows that time devoted to social studies instruction has decreased markedly since the implementation of ESEA.
- In 2001, prior to ESEA, social studies instruction at the elementary level was already minimal. It has only gotten worse.

A Need for Better Practices

- College and career-readiness means our students must practice and learn the skills necessary to navigate complicated texts and media.
- Our teachers at all levels must encourage more writing, research, engagement with primary sources, debate, and critical analysis.
- Geospatial technologies and electronic media hold great promise.

Sputnik Moment

- For the social studies, the ELA common core provides an excellent opportunity to refocus our energies.
- The skills necessary to navigate informational texts, and the background knowledge necessary to comprehend those texts, can and should come from social studies instruction.

The most important goal: a well-lived life

 Excitement, wonder, inquiry, delight, and puzzlement are central to meaningful learning in social studies. Social studies should be fun and intriguing for all students, and provide opportunities to make important life-long connections between the past, present, and future. Students who appreciate the sacrifices that have been made in the past and understand the challenges that lie ahead can make better decisions in the present.