
**The Authors of the Harvard Social Studies Project:
A Retrospective Analysis of
Donald Oliver, Fred Newmann, and James Shaver**

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During the late twentieth century in the field of social studies education, Donald Oliver, Fred Newmann, and James Shaver were prominent leaders. Their work on the Harvard Social Studies Project was part of the New Social Studies movement popular in the 1960s and 1970s that attempted to transform the social studies curriculum nationwide. By creating materials that focused on inquiry-based learning, they aimed to make a difference in the way that social studies courses were taught in American schools. The focus of this research is an analysis of the content and impact of the Harvard Social Studies Project and an exploration of the contributions of Donald Oliver, Fred Newmann, and James Shaver to that project. Historical research methods served as the primary theoretical framework for guiding the investigation. Oliver, Newmann, and Shaver's work on the Harvard Social Studies Project not only established all three men as influential leaders in social studies education but also laid the groundwork for their subsequent work in broader areas of education.

Introduction

In the field of social studies education, Donald Oliver, Fred Newmann, and James Shaver were prominent leaders. Their work on the Harvard Social Studies Project was part of the New Social Studies movement, popular in the 1960s and 1970s, that attempted to transform the social studies curriculum nationwide. While there have been a few contemporary inquiries on the New Social Studies (Beyer, 1994; Helburn, 1998; Helburn, 1997; Massialis, 1992; Rossi, 1992), Woyshner (2006) argues for the need for further historiography to investigate the impact of the New Social Studies on education. The New Social Studies movement broke from traditional content and pedagogy in the social sciences. As a concerted effort, the New Social Studies movement stressed the structure of the disciplines and inquiry-based methods. Cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner (1960) established the foundation for a structuralist view and several New Social Studies Projects implemented Bruner's

framework (Cherryholmes, 1991). Oliver, Newmann, and Shaver, however, placed greater emphasis on inquiry-based lessons, participation through decision making, and case study analysis in their curriculum (J. Shaver, personal communication, June 24, 2007). These three Harvard education intellectuals engaged in thinking about ways to improve social studies education. They created curriculum materials that influenced the way that social studies is taught in American schools. Indeed, all three commenced their relationship with the Harvard Social Studies Project, which is hailed as one of the best exemplars of the New Social Studies (Hunt & Metcalf, 1968). Subsequently, they made notable contributions to social studies education.

Throughout the past century, the major division in social studies education was between supporters of discipline-centered approaches and advocates of inquiry-based, social education curricula (Lybarger, 1991; Ross, 1997; Thornton, 2005). The Harvard Social Studies Project was a collaborative effort by Harvard

education professor Donald Oliver, several of his graduate students, including Newmann and Shaver, and 7th-12th grade school teachers. The Harvard Social Studies Project led to the publication of a series of pamphlets published in the 1960s and 1970s. The curriculum materials that were developed from the project became known as the Public Issue Series (Stern, 2006). The Public Issue Series demonstrated that Oliver, Newmann, and Shaver favored an inquiry-based, interdisciplinary approach to social studies education. Established as topic oriented case studies, the pamphlets addressed persistent political-ethical questions in history and encouraged teachers and students to be active participants who employed rational decision-making for addressing complex problems that did not have established, correct answers. Although the materials may never have been widely adopted, many of the intellectual concepts and instructional methods produced a lasting legacy on social studies education (Shaver, 1989; Stern, 2006, p. 267).

The focus of this research is an analysis of the Harvard Social Studies Project and an exploration of the contributions of Donald Oliver, Fred Newmann, and James Shaver to that project. The content, impact, and the historical context of this work, as part of the larger New Social Studies movement, are examined as well. Oliver, Newmann, and Shaver's writings about instructional methods and their conceptual understanding of social studies education are unique and worthy of contemporary examination, as the Harvard Social Studies Project is "hailed as one of the best" of the New Social Studies curricula (Woyshner, 2006, p. 29). Indeed, the Harvard Social Studies Project not only established all three men as influential leaders in social studies education but also laid the groundwork for their subsequent work in broader areas of education.

As the educational establishment fixates on standards-based testing in the wake of No Child Left Behind, test creators would be well

served to examine the publications that resulted from the Harvard Social Studies Project. These pamphlets aimed to encourage students to understand multiple perspectives, to evaluate historical understandings, to compare and contrast past historical events with contemporary issues, and to evaluate persisting questions in history through weighing factual claims and values. For example, in a pamphlet on the American Revolution, the authors included selections from the Colonial perspective and the British perspective. Students were then encouraged to evaluate positions and make value judgments. Clearly, the authors of the Harvard Social Studies Project intended to change traditional social studies education. Reading traditional textbooks and answering end the chapter questions were abandoned in favor of multiple perspectives, higher order thinking, evaluation, and dialogue.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Historical research methods served as the primary theoretical framework for guiding the investigation of the Harvard Social Studies Project and the contributions of Donald Oliver, James Shaver, and Fred Newmann. Historical methods are both science and art: "science as a search for general causes; art as an exercise in creative imagination" (Postan, 2005, p. 138). Historical methodology commonly relies on the use of primary and secondary sources in order to gather new information and establish the relevance and historical context of those findings. Historical research as a tool for investigation dates back to Ancient Greece, as Herodotus (480-425 BCE) is often viewed as the Father of History (Grant, 1991; Shenkman, 1993).

In researching the Harvard Social Studies Project, the authors gathered considerable primary source materials, including the published writings of Oliver, Shaver, and Newmann that pertained to their work on the Harvard Social Studies Project and the original public issues series pamphlets that were

produced for use in K-12 schools. In addition, the authors created written questionnaires for James Shaver and Fred Newmann, who both kindly provided detailed responses. Donald Oliver was deceased in 2002, but contact was made with his widow Polly Oliver. All three people — Shaver, Newmann, and Polly Oliver — were given initial drafts of the manuscript and were asked to provide feedback in order to ensure accuracy of information provided. Graciously, they responded with detailed commentary and editorial suggestions. Finally, secondary sources on the history of the New Social Studies movement were also consulted. Already the extent of biographical and autobiographical pieces on the three social studies leaders was scarce, but the few available were consulted. The authors, like historian Marc Bloch (1953), in addition to finding history a constant source of pleasure that sparks the imagination, also believe an investigation of the Harvard Social Studies Project serves as a window allowing for a better understanding of education reform projects that existed in an era of innovation and plentiful funding.

Donald Oliver's Contributions to the Harvard Social Studies Project

Born in 1929, the year of the infamous stock market crash, Donald Oliver was a product of the Great Depression. Oliver's family was of working class origin, so he attended a one-room schoolhouse in Connecticut during his primary grades (Gewertz, 2002). In later years, he excelled as a public high school student and earned a scholarship to Amherst College in Massachusetts (Stern, 2006). Having earned a bachelor's degree in psychology, Oliver graduated from Amherst in 1952. He continued his studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, earned a doctorate in 1956, and continued on as faculty at Harvard. He held a temporary faculty position as he completed his degree, filling in for his advisor Schaeffer, who left for Washington University in St. Louis. He later earned

a permanent position at Harvard. Despite an elite background in higher education, Oliver possessed strong anti-elitist sentiments, in large part, due to his working class and depression era origins.

Donald Oliver was a complex individual described as brilliant, distant, acerbic, confrontational, insecure, and analytic (Stern, 2006). His success in education can be attributed to his intellectual prowess. He was a bulldog who was known for obstinate behavior in an argument. He conducted class as Socratic discussion, and the intensity of the debate brought at least one graduate student to tears (J. Shaver, personal communication, June 24, 2007). Indeed, the author of his obituary wrote in the *Harvard University Gazette* that he was "known for conducting marathon discussion classes, lasting four hours or more," and his students remembered him for his "confrontational discussion style" (Gewertz, 2002, p. 1).

During the course of his lifetime, Donald Oliver mellowed and changed. During the height of the Harvard Social Studies Project, however, he was a brash, young assistant professor with bold ideas. Oliver described the foundation of his ideas for the Harvard Social Studies Project in a 1957 article in the *Harvard Educational Review* (reprinted in Oliver, 1968). In this seminal article, Oliver discussed the value of an inquiry approach to social studies education. His analysis of the selection of content in social studies (1957) broke new ground in the field (F. Newmann, personal communication, May 15, 2007). Yet, it took a decade of work for such ideas to be realized in social studies classrooms and textbooks. The Harvard Social Studies Project was one of several New Social Studies projects. Donald Oliver had established the innovative intellectual basis for such work as early as the late 1950s.

When asked to analyze the significance of Donald Oliver's contributions to the Harvard Social Studies Project, Jim Shaver (personal communication, May 10, 2007) responded, "Don Oliver didn't 'contribute' to the project.

He *was* the Harvard Social Studies Project.” Although Donald Oliver directed the project single-mindedly, it was a cooperative endeavor between professors, graduate students, and classroom teachers to change traditional social studies teaching and to promote analysis of societal problems.

Donald Oliver’s inquiry approach provided specific instructional strategies to nurture discussion in the classroom. He loved classroom debate, so it is not surprising that he would foster such methodology in social studies classrooms and textbooks (J. Shaver, personal communication, May 10, 2007). He wanted teachers and students to think about persistent questions in history, and these questions did not have clear-cut, right or wrong answers. His analytical approach to social studies education contrasted sharply with the post-Sputnik emphasis on content knowledge, especially in science and math. Despite “New Math,” “New Science,” and “New Social Studies,” traditional teaching methods often prevailed. Critics, such as Arthur Bestor, challenged the intellectual rigor of progressive educational methods and emphasized the need for strong content knowledge. Paradoxically, the funding for the New Social Studies, with its avant-garde methodology, came from the U.S. Office of Education (Shaver, 2006) in the wake of concern that Russian students were better educated than American students in the post-Sputnik era (See e.g., Davidow, *Why Johnny Can’t Read and Ivan Can*, 1977; Flesch, *Why Johnny Can’t Read*, 1955).

Donald Oliver became more radical in his beliefs about education as his career progressed. He employed Deweyan beliefs about education and Jeffersonian perspectives on society in the Harvard Social Studies Project. Personal and professional events of the early 1970s led Oliver to change the focus of his studies. He began to engage in broader intellectual interests rather than the more narrow interest in social studies.

James Shaver’s Contributions to the Harvard Social Studies Project

James Shaver is renowned for his work in social studies education because he served as President of the National Council for the Social Studies during America’s bicentennial year. Additionally, within the social studies education community, Shaver is well-known as the editor of the *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (1991). Shaver’s start in social studies education, however, began with Donald Oliver as a contributor to the New Social Studies movement.

James Shaver was one of the first of Donald Oliver’s graduate students and collaborated with him on the Harvard Social Studies Project. Shaver was born almost five years after Oliver in 1933; he was also a product of the Great Depression. However, Shaver was raised across the country from Oliver. Born in Wadena, Minnesota, Shaver’s family moved to the state of Washington when he was in the fourth grade (J. Shaver, personal communication, May 10, 2007). He claims that his career in social studies education was “happenstance-based,” but the body of his work suggests that chance was not the only factor affecting his career path (Shaver, 2006). Intelligence and determination also must have been at play. At high school in Sumner, Washington, he was class valedictorian. Subsequently, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Washington in 1955. Shaver was accepted and enrolled at Harvard Law School but found it did not suit his interests and temperament; he switched to the Master of Arts in Teaching program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) which is where, in 1956, Shaver met Donald Oliver and began studying with him.

In the summer of 1956, Don Oliver was Shaver’s social studies methods instructor at Newton Junior High, and he served as a master teacher for a team of student teachers, which

included Shaver, who was at the Harvard-Newton Summer School at Newton Junior High. Although Shaver was unaware of it at the time, Oliver's highly influential 1957 article about content selection in social studies was about to be published. Shaver was certain that Oliver was one of the brightest intellects with whom he had ever been acquainted. Oliver challenged assumptions, raised questions, and helped Shaver think about teaching, curriculum, social studies education, and societal issues.

According to Fred Newmann, who followed Jim Shaver as an Oliver advisee at HGSE and became an instrumental collaborator, Shaver was "Oliver's key colleague" from 1957 through 1961 (F. Newmann, personal communication, May 15, 2007). Shaver reported that his early schooling did not affect his ideas about social studies education, but perhaps it affected him more than he realized, as it materialized in the form of his desire to be a different kind of teacher than those who had educated him. Shaver's educational experiences in K-12 schooling apparently served as a non-example of the kind of teacher he aspired to become. He knew he wanted to teach in a more interesting fashion than that to which he had been exposed: "the read, answer end-of-chapter questions, recite, test teaching" (Shaver, 2006; Shaver, personal communication, May 10, 2007). Shaver credited Don Oliver with changing his understanding of social studies education. Shaver (2006) wrote:

The major influence on my approach to social/societal issues was certainly Don Oliver. My involvement in the Harvard Project and other exposure to his probing intellect as a student and colleague affected me profoundly. There could be only one Don Oliver, but the commitment he exuded to the relentless probing of assumptions and their relations to teaching and curricular decisions reinforced an analytic bent in myself that other people had sometimes labeled as

overly aggressive or too negative. (p. 165)

James Shaver's work with Donald Oliver was the start of a significant academic publishing career. Shaver was instrumental in carrying out the first grant that funded the Harvard Social Studies Project, and his first significant book-length publication was a direct result of the project. He co-authored with Don Oliver (1966) *Teaching Public Issues in the High School*. In this book, Oliver and Shaver discussed social studies education in general, provided the conceptual framework for teaching analysis of public issues, elaborated on the application of the jurisprudential framework to the teaching of public issues, and offered a description of an experimental curricular project carried out within the jurisprudential framework (1966, pp. v-vi). The authors stated that the book was a progress report of the first five years of the Harvard Social Studies Project and that they meant for the book to be "an open challenge to current efforts to redefine the social studies in narrow academic terms" (Oliver & Shaver, 1966, p. xii).

Review of the *Public Issues* work was favorable in the academic community. The author of an approving review in the *Teachers College Record* wrote, "The authors effectively attack the prevailing myth that the function of the social studies teacher is simply to teach 'the facts' and let the students form their own 'opinions,' by pointing out that this ignores the 'complex problem of teaching the student to relate fact to opinion or value'" (Burton, 1967, p. 2). Indeed, the reviewer believed that the book demanded a "radical change in educational orientation" (Burton, 1967, p. 3).

After earning his Ed.D. from Harvard in 1961, Jim Shaver returned to the western United States and began his work as a member of the faculty at Utah State University (USU) in the summer of 1962. Aside from the *Public Issues* book, Shaver stated that he and Oliver worked very little afterwards. He believed that Oliver was an "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" kind

of person who did not like to venture away from New England (Shaver, personal communication, May 10, 2007). Shaver, on the other hand, displayed an independent nature and moved in his own academic direction.

Shaver expanded the work of the Harvard Project in the Utah Analysis of Public Issues Project and developed the idea of qualified decision-making (Shaver, 2006). After a one-year stint to direct the Social Studies Curriculum Center at The Ohio State University in 1964, Shaver returned to Utah State University. Upon his return, however, he began teaching statistics and research design. Shaver has called his dual interests in social studies and statistics “schizophrenic,” but his expertise in both likely has helped broaden his understanding of each content area and education in general (Shaver, 2006, p. 171). In 1976, Shaver was president of the National Council for the Social Studies, and in characteristic “Don Oliver style,” he delivered a critical analysis of the state of social studies education. Ultimately, Shaver’s academic interests broadened just as Donald Oliver’s had done but in different areas.

Fred Newmann’s Contributions to the Harvard Social Studies Project

Although Fred Newmann was the youngest co-creator of the Harvard Social Studies Project, his contribution to the project was indispensable. Similar to Jim Shaver, Fred Newmann was a graduate student prodigy of Don Oliver. Also similar to Oliver and Shaver, Newmann was born during the Great Depression era in January 1937. In contrast, Newmann had a relatively privileged background, and his teenage life in the 1950s had little involvement with social issues. However, when he was a freshman in high school, his interest in government and civic responsibility was cultivated by his civics-government teacher. As an American Studies major at Amherst College, his interest in social issues was further developed through a critical

analysis approach that used case studies in U.S. history (Newmann, 2006). After graduating in 1959 from Amherst College in Massachusetts, which was Oliver’s alma mater seven years earlier, Newmann began the Harvard M.A.T. program the same year. Oliver was his social studies methods instructor. The persuasive structure of the class, which was “later published as the Oliver-Shaver rationale” (Newmann, 2006, p. 121), had a profound impact on Newmann’s conception of social studies education.

Early in his teaching career, Newmann became frustrated with the traditional discipline-based curriculum that did not offer opportunities for students to arrive at reasoned positions about public issues (Newmann, 2006). He realized, during his semester-long internship at Winchester High School, in Winchester, Massachusetts (fall 1959) and his first year of teaching across the country at Capuchino High School in San Bruno, California (1960-1961), that it was difficult to engage students, using the conventional chronological framework. Newmann saw the Oliver-Shaver public issues approach as a solution to the problems he encountered as a teacher. He prefers to emphasize and use *public issue* over *social issue* because social issue “can be construed to include almost any disagreement between two or more people,” whereas, public issue is limited to disputes that are political or legal in nature (Newmann, 2006, p. 122). Thus, the public issues approach entails events that impact politicians and legislative policy and entitle citizens to become actively influential and involved in a direct manner.

After completing his M.A.T. degree in 1960, Newmann was awarded Amherst Fellowships for graduate study at Harvard University (1960-62) and Lehman Fellowships (1962-64) for his doctorate studies at Harvard University (personal communication, May 15, 2007). He finished his dissertation with distinction and earned an Ed.D. in 1964. Newmann continued working with Oliver as an assistant professor of education at Harvard

(1964-1968) and then became an associate professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin. Newmann began collaborating with the Harvard Social Studies Project when he was still a graduate student, and he was a key contributor to the second grant, which was successfully funded through co-sponsorship by Harvard University and the Cooperative Research Branch of the U.S. Office of Education from June 1963 to June 1968 (Newmann, 1970). In cooperation with Don Oliver, several Harvard graduate students, and teachers at Newton High School (Newton, Massachusetts), Newmann “conceptualized, developed materials for, taught experimentally, and conducted research on a three-year curriculum focusing on the analysis of public controversy” (Newmann, 1970, p. vi). Thus, he embraced and diligently worked with the Harvard Social Studies Project that evolved into the Harvard Public Issues Project. With the assistance of Don Oliver, Newmann wrote *Clarifying Public Controversy: An Approach to Teaching Social Studies* (1970). He focused the book on “the clarification of public controversy” and he hoped a diverse audience beyond high school social studies teachers would embrace the book (Newmann, 1970, p. v). Interestingly, the text evolved from his association with the Harvard Social Studies Project and direct work with Oliver, but Shaver’s name only appears in a long alphabetical list of acknowledged contributors. The detachment of Oliver and Shaver appears to have contributed to the limited interaction between Newmann and Shaver. In a written communication (May 26, 2007), Newmann expressed great respect for Shaver, although they had no direct relationship, they maintained cordial and professional relations throughout their careers.

During three of his six years of public school teaching experience in Massachusetts, California, and Wisconsin, Newmann worked with “the Harvard Public Issues Project teaching students to analyze public controversy and two years with Madison’s Community Issues program sending students into the

community to take action” (Newmann, 1977, pp. ii-iii). At the University of Wisconsin, Newmann’s passion for public issues evolved into a desire to extend “the Oliver-Shaver approach beyond classroom study/discussion to students’ acting on their beliefs in their communities through volunteer service and social action” (Newmann, 2006, p. 123). The result was several publications that Newmann (2006, p. 127) cites are some of his major contributions to the field, such as *Education for Citizen Action: Challenge for Secondary Curriculum* (1975) and *Skills in Citizen Action: An English-Social Studies Program for Secondary Schools* (1977). However, in the early 1980s and after almost twenty years of working to develop social studies curricula, Newman became frustrated with the structural and cultural barriers of public education that inhibited the adoption of reflective and participatory social studies curricula (Newmann, 2006). In addition, funding for participatory civic education was not readily available, so he changed his research direction and focused on how schools functioned. He reasoned that learning how schools operate would lead to more effective implementation of curriculum innovations for participatory citizenship (Newmann, 2006).

General Background of the Harvard Social Studies Project

In a seminal 1957 *Harvard Educational Review* article on content selection in social studies education, Donald Oliver launched the innovative conceptual framework for the Harvard Social Studies Project. He advocated a change in the traditional social studies curriculum, teaching, and textbooks as well as for social studies educators to develop a more analytic approach. In creating a theory to undergird social studies education, Oliver relied on the work of previous influential educational and political theorists such as John Dewey, Thomas Jefferson, and Gunnar Myrdal (Oliver & Shaver, 1966; Shaver, 2006; Stern, 2006). Dewey’s progressive educational

philosophy, coupled with Jefferson's enlightenment philosophy and Myrdal's path-breaking work on normative concepts such as the American creed, served as the foundation for Oliver's creation of a social studies curriculum in which public issues provided the focus for debate in social studies classrooms.

The Harvard Social Studies Project first received private funding and later won federal funding from the U.S. Office of Education. In the post-Sputnik era, the federal government poured considerable money into education. Indeed, Urban and Wagoner (2004) reported that the most significant consequence of Sputnik was not the space race or the attention to academic studies, but "the impetus it gave to federal financing of public education" (p. 293). Donald Oliver was a deserving recipient of federal funding for the Harvard Social Studies Project, and he was able to provide the project direction with the theoretical framework he established.

Donald Oliver directed the first phase of the Harvard Social Studies Project at Peter Buckeley Junior High School in Concord, Massachusetts, and James Shaver participated as a teacher-researcher. Don Oliver believed in the importance of "teacher involvement and public school experiences in developing curricula" (Shaver, personal communication, May 10, 2007). He rejected the idea of "teacher-proof" materials and valued the authenticity of a curriculum that was developed and implemented in actual schools. The second phase of the project was facilitated by Oliver and Newmann and implemented at a high school in Newton, Massachusetts. Again, all participants were Don Oliver's graduate students, teachers who taught at these schools, or students in the Boston area. Although Oliver guided the projects, clearly the work that resulted in both Concord and Newton was a collaborative effort. According to Fred Newmann (personal communication, May 15, 2007), during the development phase of the Newton Project, the Harvard staff worked

consistently with six to ten teachers on the many details of the project.

The Public Issues series that was published by American Education Publications (a Xerox Company) was derived from the actual implementation of the Harvard Social Studies Project in the schools. Oliver and his colleagues created approximately 30 pamphlets in the series on an assortment of social studies topics. The idea for developing individual, short (50-75 pages), staple-bound pamphlets was that they would be fairly inexpensive, easy for teachers and students to use (not heavy hard-bound books), and teachers could select and flexibly implement individual units as they desired. The 30 pamphlets obtained from the back of the 1972 *The American Revolution* pamphlet are listed in Appendix A. More important than the ease and convenience of use, however, was the innovative approach to teaching social studies that the pamphlets facilitated.

In order to understand the approach to social studies education that Oliver developed with the Harvard project, a detailed examination of selected pamphlets is warranted. The pamphlets are worthy of examination and, in fact, a few were updated and adapted for use in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some updates by the Social Science Education Consortium include, for example, *The Progressive Era* (1989), *The Railroad Era* (1991), and *Science and Public Policy* (1993). *The Railroad Era* and many of the other pamphlets in the series open up with a section titled, "The Necessary Questions." In this section, students are asked if social studies typically covers answers and leaves out important questions, as the authors believed. The authors hoped to draw students into the drama of history, in order for students to recognize that they were part of a "living dimension of history" (Oliver & Newman, 1970, p.3).

The next section of *The Railroad Era* provides background information in the form of a description of a state legislature meeting on a proposal to consider the benefits and harms of

bringing the railroad to the state. Indeed, the pamphlets often provided introductory background that demonstrated varying perspectives on a particular historical issue. Rather than provide historical detail as facts that happened, students are encouraged to realize that multiple perspectives are at play, even with respect to historical events. Authors carefully portray conflicts of interest. Subsequently, students are asked to answer persisting questions of history, including making value judgments about the conflicts. Students also identify various interest groups, explain why a particular person would support or oppose the railroad, and make parallels to similar modern problems. In a subsequent contemporary analogy, a community wrestles with the idea of constructing a solar energy facility (Oliver & Newman, 1970, p.17).

In another section of *The Railroad Era*, students are invited to participate in a simulation game called “The Railroad Game.” Teachers divide students into four groups, representing different railroad lines. Each group is asked to compete for the business of carrying ore between mining towns on the railroad. Rules of the game are provided as well as a sequence of competition. The simulation game is followed by a description of “Three Faces of Competition,” that include stakeholders in railroad development. One is an ordinary California farmer; a second is a New York merchant, and the third is William H. Vanderbilt, head of the New York Central Railroad system (Oliver & Newman, 1970, pp. 37-50). Interestingly, Fred Newmann reported that one of the problems of developing the public issues series was the “lack of adequate history of the common man” (personal communication, May 15, 2007). Despite such challenges, the authors clearly created a different kind of historical narrative — one that included competing interests and the perspective of ordinary people in the event.

In another pamphlet, *The American Revolution*, students are introduced to “A Crisis of Youth” and asked to contemplate not only how

Revolutionary events unfolded but also how resolution of the differences between the colonists and the British might have been different and better (Oliver & Newmann, 1972, p. 5). After a basic overview of events leading up to the Revolution, students read a case study of George Watkins, a fictional character, caught in the middle of two views of authority. By reading this case study, students develop an understanding of multiple perspectives as they follow a discussion between Watkins, a British supporter, and a Colonial supporter. Later in the narrative, students continue to explore differing perspectives by reading about a speech given by Sam Adams, a famous revolutionary, and Dr. James Cartwright, a minister and loyalist. Students consequently determine their own values about the role of government as they assess and classify the values of the historical characters in the reading. Persisting questions of history follow which require students to define terms such as patriotism and legality and then solicit student assessment of historical figures, such as Patrick Henry, to determine whether they were lawmakers or lawbreakers. Students were expected to provide reasons to support their positions. Finally, students make judgments about methods of protest.

In reviewing these activities, the authors helped students achieve high levels of cognition. The aim of the Harvard Social Studies Project was to encourage students to understand differing perspectives, evaluate, make judgments, and clarify values which are all ideas that represent the apex of human thinking. In the closing section, students read short biographies of several individuals and are asked to evaluate the likelihood the person was a patriot, loyalist, or undecided. Many of the pamphlets close with a section of contemporary analogies, and *The American Revolution* asks students to compare the Revolution to a modern case, the incident at Pettus Bridge, a Civil Rights protest in Selma, Alabama, that led to violence between protestors and city officials and police (Oliver & Newmann, 1972,

pp. 55-60). The unit concludes by asking students to review, reflect, and research.

The Public Issue series was a pioneer in facilitating discussion of social studies topics not only by providing unique historical background of events but also by giving readers multiple perspectives. The series led students to understand the complexity of historical events, including that of ordinary people. The pamphlets encourage student opinions, supported by evidence. Teachers were able to foster critical analysis by helping students understand connections between facts, values, and judgments as they encourage rational discussion in classrooms. The ultimate goal was for students to clarify and justify their views on persisting questions of public policy. For example, students consider hypotheses as in the case of the American Revolution, "Under what conditions would citizens be justified in using violence to overthrow a government?" Or they are asked to think about issues related to organized labor: "In what situations should the rights of private property and private enterprise be limited to insure certain rights or benefits to workers?" The pamphlets stood in sharp contrast to textbooks that provided simple narrative of events from one voice.

More than eight million copies of the Harvard Social Studies Project/Public Issue Series sold during the 20 years of initial publication not counting subsequent adaptations (Newmann, 2006). The extent of the pamphlets' use and the effect on methodology in social studies classrooms throughout the United States, however, is open to interpretation, rational discussion, and multiple perspectives.

Lasting Legacy of the Harvard Social Studies Project

Early in his career, Donald Oliver set in motion the intellectual framework for inquiry-based social studies education in his 1957 *Harvard Educational Review* article. The article was an important contribution to the

"New Social Studies movement," which profoundly affected social studies education during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Lybarger, 1991). Within the New Social Studies movement, the Harvard Social Studies Project confronted basic beliefs about how K-12 students should learn social studies.

Oliver's creation of the Harvard Social Studies Project laid the groundwork for the academic careers of Jim Shaver and Fred Newmann. These intellects profoundly impacted the direction of scholarly activity in social studies education. Although the Harvard Social Studies Project may not have impacted a broader audience, the influence was not limited to the authors. The New Social Studies movement grew so rapidly that there were more than 50 national curriculum projects by 1967 (Haas, 1977). Three years later, a comprehensive appraisal of the New Social Studies movement reported more than 100 projects (Sanders & Tanck, 1970).

However, the New Social Studies movement was not uniformly unified in influence or impact. The projects were diverse in "theory, goals, procedures, style, and materials" (Sanders & Tanck, 1970, p. 384). Other projects included the Fenton series entitled *Man: A Course of Study* (MACOS) and the Amherst Project (Lybarger, 1991). Unlike the Harvard Social Studies Project, the aforementioned projects were significantly influenced by Jerome Bruner's report at the Woods Hole Conference *The Process of Education* (1960) and his emphasis on the structure of the disciplines in the MACOS curriculum (Kleibard, 2002). Bruner's work was more controversial, and MACOS was politically attacked at the national level (Evans, 2004). Arizona Representative John Conlan attacked MACOS for controversial content, cultural relativism, and the lack of teacher input in the creation of the curriculum. Ultimately, Conlan's views prevailed and Congress voted to eliminate funding for MACOS, which signaled the end of the New Social Studies movement (Report, 1975).

Some common characteristics pertained to most New Social Studies projects, such as greater emphasis on ideas from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political science as well as a stronger interdisciplinary approach to curriculum development. A 1970 issue of *Social Education* highlighted 26 national social studies projects and critically appraised each (Sanders & Tanck, 1970). Most New Social Studies projects, nonetheless, promoted inquiry-based learning. Furthermore, the Harvard Social Studies Project, Fenton's series, Bruner's MACOS, the Amherst Project, and the myriad other New Social Studies projects were, of course, helped with financing because of Sputnik.

As New Social Studies projects continued to grow, critics arose. Edwin Fenton's textbook series with Holt, Rinehart, and Winston became renowned for promoting an inquiry approach in social studies education. In a book titled *The New Social Studies*, Fenton had described the various social studies curriculum reform projects throughout the United States, the quality of the work, and the projects' comprehensiveness (Shaftel, 1968). Like Bruner, Fenton, a respected academic from Carnegie Institute of Technology, nonetheless, became a target of criticism. In Georgia, his 1972 textbook on American history was banned by the Georgia State Board of Education (Anon, 2007).

In his 1976 NCSS presidential address reflecting on the New Social Studies movement, Shaver declared that the history and social science curricular reforms and projects of the 1960s were "a fad that exemplified our long standing and unthinking subservience to professors in the academic disciplines" (Shaver, 1977, p. 305). Shaver also asserted that most educational research was useless and had little effect on teaching. Not surprisingly, Shaver's views were not warmly received. Newmann may have agreed as he examined the structure of schools to implement authentic learning.

Yet, Newmann found positive implications that resulted from the Harvard Social Studies Project. Earlier in his career, he believed one legacy of the project was its relationship to graduate education in social studies. According to Newmann:

The purpose of the Harvard project has been not merely the creation of a curriculum or product. Perhaps more important has been the improved training of graduate students in social studies through intensive clinical experience in writing, teaching, and evaluating curriculum. (1970, p. vi)

However, Newmann now believes the lasting legacy is a "positive teaching experience for the teachers who were philosophically committed to the approach and used the materials, most of whom are probably retired by now, and for professors of education who are interested in the history of social studies" (personal communication, May 26, 2007).

Evans (1997) notes that the impact of the New Social Studies movement may have been superficial, although widespread, in its implementation. Even if chances for large-scale change are slight, Evans (1997) believes social studies education reformers have had some success over the years and should remain committed to the potential for profound impact on teachers and students. Without a doubt, the Harvard Social Studies Project established Donald Oliver, James Shaver, and Fred Newmann as leaders in the field of social studies education. The New Social Studies movement may have been controversial because it saw new approaches to content and pedagogy in social studies curriculum. The impact of the reform is subject to debate. Nonetheless, in an era of standards-based reforms, the innovative approaches to social studies education promoted by Donald Oliver, James Shaver, and Fred Newmann ought to influence contemporary social studies dialogue.

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Appendix A

Thirty Public Issues Series' titles obtained from the back of the 1972 *The American Revolution* pamphlet.

The American Revolution: Crisis of Law and Change
The Railroad Era: Business Competition and the Public Interest
Taking a Stand: A Guide to Clear Discussion of Public Issues
Religious Freedom: Minority Faiths and Majority Rule
The Rise of Organized Labor: Worker Security and Employer Rights
The Immigrant's Experience: Cultural Variety and the "Melting Pot"
Negro Views of America: The Legacy of Oppression
Municipal Politics: Interest Groups and the Government
The New Deal: Free Enterprise and Public Planning
Rights of the Accused: Criminal Procedure and Public Security
The Lawsuit: Legal Reasoning and Civil Procedure
Community Change: Law, Politics, and Social Attitudes
Colonial Africa: The Kenya Experience
Communist China: Communal Progress and Individual Freedom
Nazi Germany: Social Forces and Personal Responsibility
20th Century Russia: Agents of the Revolution

The Civil War: Crisis of Federalism
Race and Education: Integration and Community Control
Science and Public Policy: Uses and Control of Knowledge
Status: Achievement and Social Values
Revolution and World Politics: The Search for National Independence
The Limits of War: National Policy and World Conscience
Organizations Among Nations: The Search for World Order
Diplomacy and International Law: Alternatives to War
Privacy: The Control of Personal Information
The Progressive Era: Abundance, Poverty, and Reform
Population Control: Whose Right to Live?
Jacksonian Democracy: The Common Man in American Life
Moral Reasoning: The Value of Life
Social Action: Dilemmas and Strategies