

# The Development of the C3 Framework

Susan Griffin, executive director of NCSS, was chair of the Task Force of Professional Organizations that initiated and guided the development of *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*, which will soon be released. In this interview with *Social Education*, Susan explains how the new Framework came into being.



**NCSS has published national standards for social studies, but has not previously presented a framework for state social studies standards. What led to this new initiative aimed at the states?**

The NCSS *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* are very well regarded nationwide, but in many states, social studies standards have been notoriously stuck in an outdated and unimaginative model that lists people, places, events, and disciplinary vocabulary to teach civics, economics, geography and history. The year 2010 saw the beginning of the adoption and implementation of the Common Core Standards, with well-funded science standards in the wings. This environment communicated a national disregard for the critical role of social studies in preparing students for college, career, and civic life. State social studies specialists wanted to do something to address the issue.

**What did you see as the challenge posed by the Common Core Standards to social studies education?**

The Common Core Standards focused on English language arts and math, though the final pages of the document on English language arts included literacy



Susan Griffin

standards for history/social studies, science, and other subjects. Economically strapped states could interpret these standards as a way of cutting back on subjects other than English language arts and mathematics while claiming that they were solving the “literacy” challenge that has permeated education policy for over a decade. In fact, social studies has a lot to contribute to one of the aims expressed on the first page of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies—the need for students to “demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible

citizenship in a democratic republic.”\* The C3 Framework promotes this objective. We reject interpretations of the Common Core Standards that focus only on English and math.

**You were chair of the C3 Framework Task Force of Professional Organizations.\*\* How did this Task Force come into being, and what was its role?**

The Council of Chief State School Officers has a Social Studies Assessment Curriculum and Instruction (SSACI) collaborative. While the Common Core Standards were being prepared, SSACI initiated a conversation about social studies standards that could be used across states. At this time, the quantifiable shrinking of social studies instruction in K-12 classrooms alarmed all professional organizations representing civics, economics, geography, and history, who were eager to be part of this conversation. National Council for the Social Studies and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools convened a meeting of 15 national organizations to begin a conversation about a set of Common State Standards for Social Studies.

By the end of the daylong meeting, they had agreed to the following conception of social studies:

\* National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), 3—Ed.

\*\* The organizations comprising the C3 Framework Task Force of Professional Organizations are listed on page 219 of this issue of *Social Education*—Ed

The social studies is an interdisciplinary exploration of the social sciences and humanities, including civics, history, economics, and geography, in order to develop responsible, informed, and engaged citizens and to foster civic, global, historical, geographic, and economic literacy.

These organizations also agreed to begin working together on a set of fewer, higher, clearer social studies standards. They became the constituent members of the C3 Framework Task Force of Professional Organizations.

The Task Force met with SSACI for a year in 2010–2011 to develop a vision of social studies that has inquiry as its foundation and prepares young people for college, career, and civic life. This conception of social studies emphasizes skills and practice as preparation for democratic decision-making, and shares in the responsi-

bility for literacy instruction in K-12 education. This is the vision expressed in the C3 Framework. The focus of the C3 Framework is on the disciplines of civics, economics, geography and history, though it also includes appendices dealing with psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

The Task Force provided the list of scholars and teacher educators from which the writers were chosen.

### **What is your strategy for encouraging states to adopt the C3 Framework?**

We are planning for implementation, not seeking adoption like the Common Core Standards, and we will be using a variety of networks including state social studies specialists, social studies supervisors, state council conferences, conferences sponsored by other members of the Task Force, webinars, and summer workshops. We will miss no opportunity to spread the word about C3.

### **Do you think that the C3 Framework will be of more immediate interest to state social studies supervisors and curriculum developers than to classroom teachers?**

C3 is an essential resource for social studies supervisors and curriculum developers. That said, SSACI chose highly qualified K-12 educators from the states to form a Teacher Collaborative Council to offer feedback on early drafts of the C3 Framework. This Teacher Collaborative Council reviewed each iteration of the Framework and provided useful feedback and glowing evaluations. We encourage classroom teachers to use C3 to inform their instruction.

### **What is your greatest hope for the impact of the C3 Framework on public education in this country?**

We urgently need to transform social studies teaching and learning at all K-12 levels, and our aim is to do this with the C3 Framework. 🌐

## ***Teaching Reading with the Social Studies Standards: Elementary Units that Integrate Great Books, Social Studies, and the Common Core Standards***

**Edited by Syd Golston and Peggy Altoff**  
NCSS Bulletin 112, 118 pp., 2012

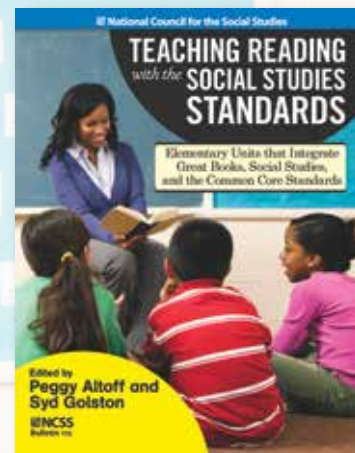
This book has been designed for elementary teachers who want to meet the Common Core Standards for Reading Literature as they teach social studies.

The class activities recommended in this book for each grade level allow teachers to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Achieve specific learning expectations outlined in the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.
2. Achieve specific objectives outlined in the Common Core Standards for Reading Literature (as well as selected other Common Core Standards)

This book's opening chapters lay the groundwork for the effective teaching of standards-based social studies through the use of literature. Most of the volume consists of reviews and annotations of outstanding children's books for the elementary grades. The contributors examine seven outstanding children's books in depth (one for each grade from pre-K through 5) and recommend scores of other suitable books.

**Item 120112 Price: \$29.95/NCSS Members: \$19.95**



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