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Games for Social Studies Education

William R. Watson

■ ■ ■ **AS A FORM OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT**, digital video games have reached an all-time high in popularity, becoming a regular part of many students' lives. Games have become so pervasive that some are referring to the current generation as the "gamer generation" (Beck & Wade, 2004). Digital video games are also gaining an increased advocacy for their adaptation for educational purposes. This chapter addresses the appropriateness of video games for social studies and citizenship education and identifies available games, tying them to national standards for social studies and citizenship education ■

An increasing number of practitioners and researchers are advocating digital computer and video games (also referred to simply as video games) as a promising form of instruction that can engage students and strengthen skills important in the current information age (Aldrich, 2004; Foreman, Gee, Herz, Hinrichs, Prensky, & Sawyer, 2004; Prensky, 2001; Quinn, 2005). In fact, the Federation of American Scientists (2006) has called for increased federal funding for educational game research, identifying games as well suited to educating students for today's knowledge economy.

Apart from being well suited for today's learners, video games have also become an extremely popular form of mainstream entertainment. Video game software sales reached a record \$10.3 billion in the United States in 2002 and maintained their strong showing with \$10 billion in sales in 2003 (NPD Group, 2004), exceeding the \$9.1 billion in 2002 box office sales for the U.S./Canada movie industry (*Theatrical Market Statistics: 2009*, 2009). The growth of video games shows no sign of stopping, as total video game hardware and software sales increased 43% from 2006 to 2007, resulting in total revenues of nearly \$18 billion and breaking records for the third consecutive year (NPD Group, 2008).

With their widespread popularity, video games also have a strong impact on the players themselves, altering the very ways in which they play and learn, creating a "gamer generation" (Beck & Wade, 2004) or "digital natives" (Prensky, 2005), who multitask, like to discover things for themselves through trial and error, and crave engagement and interactivity. Given such issues as the popularity of video games and their impact on players, proponents of educational video games believe they offer a viable alternative form of instruction to traditional, teacher-centric learning activities.

Despite growing recommendations for increased use of educational video games, quality studies on the effectiveness of educational games for raising students' achievement levels are scarce (Fletcher & Tobias, 2006). Along with limited available research, established guidelines for how to implement educational video games in classrooms and into curriculums are lacking. In reviewing the current research on educational games, I noted a number of researchers' conclusions that learning via gameplay in schools is not likely to be effective without additional instructional support and sound implementation strategies (Leemkuil, de Jong, de Hoog, & Christopher, 2003; O'Neil, Wainess, & Baker, 2005; Wolfe, 1997). Thus, there is a great need for additional research on real-world applications of educational video games in different contexts, including K–12 schools. In addition, the initial use of games could be daunting due to current conditions in schools, where class time limits, high stakes testing, lack of teacher familiarity with video games, and limited funds for purchasing games often exist.

In this chapter, I examine traditional approaches to social studies education and refer to readily available games that can be used for civic education. Today's students demand engaging instruction and disengage when they do not receive it (Prensky, 2005; Beck & Wade, 2004). Citizenship education is a pressing need in the United States, and video games hold great potential for reshaping citizenship education to meet the needs of today's students as global citizens more comprehensively.

Citizenship is perceived as a key goal of K–12 education, and I argue that educational video games are a strong fit for meeting the needs of social studies education. This chapter is organized into six

sections. In the first section, I present an overview of the current state of social studies education and the push for citizenship education. I also discuss the appropriateness of using video games for social studies education and address the issue of national and state standards. In the second section, available commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) video games that can be used for social studies education are reviewed. In the third section, available educational games are reviewed, and in the fourth, available political games. The fifth section takes a brief look at the development of an educational game for social studies education and the implementation of an educational game in a high school history classroom. In the sixth section, I discuss lessons learned, provide guidelines for choosing and implementing appropriate games, and tie them to existing standards.

Social Studies and Citizenship Education

In this section, I offer an overview on the current status of social studies, including the sometimes controversial viewpoint that its primary goal should be citizenship education. Then I argue that video games are appropriate for use in social studies. I conclude with a discussion of social studies standards and how they relate to video games.

Social Studies in the Information Age: The Current State of the Field

In the United States, social studies education has a history of conflict among opposing camps seeking to control or influence its direction (Evans, 2004). Evans notes, “What began as a struggle among interest groups gradually evolved into a war against progressive social studies that has strongly influenced the current and future direction of the curriculum” (p. 176). In Evans and Passe (2007), Leming describes the two primary types of social studies education as progressive social studies, which promotes citizenship, and traditional social studies, which seeks “to transmit cultural knowledge and our civic heritage through a focus on subject matter and teacher-directed instruction” (p. 252).

Citizenship education is one of the most frequently stated goals of education (Parker, 1996) and a goal noted as increasingly important in the United States and in other countries worldwide. In his review of civic engagement, Galston (2007) notes that Americans under age 30 pay less attention to current events than their elders or those their age did two to three decades ago; the percentage of eligible voters aged 18–25 who voted in the presidential election dropped from 52% in 1972 to 37% in 2000, though the percentage has started to rise since then. And in general, whether evaluating “civic beliefs or civic behavior, there have been marked declines in the qualities and characteristics that we associate with successful democratic government,” particularly among young adults (p. 639).

Furthermore, civic knowledge is extremely important in developing effective citizens. Galston (2007) found that civic knowledge (a) helps citizens understand their interests as individuals and group members; (b) increases the consistency of views on issues; (c) alters citizens’ viewpoints on specific public issues, even when the civic knowledge is general; (d) lessens isolation from public life and feelings of generalized mistrust; (e) promotes support for democratic values; and

(f) promotes political participation. Galston's final point is that (g) without a basic level of civic knowledge, especially concerning political processes or institutions, citizens have difficulty understanding political events or integrating new information into their existing conceptual framework.

There is a growing body of research that suggests civic education can be effective if taught in a certain way. One comprehensive study showed that a "classroom environment that encourages respectful discussions of civic and political issues fosters both civic knowledge and engagement" (Galston, 2007, p. 639). The primary reason for traditional civic education's failure was its focus on teaching facts to passive students who memorized material they often considered irrelevant to their lives.

The call to move away from traditional civic education and focus on generating critical discussion and debate is echoed in Selwyn's (2007) review of information and computer technology (ICT) in civic education in the United Kingdom. He notes that there is a significant lack of research on using technology to teach civic education and that the implementation of ICT in civic education has often failed to produce significant results, as it is often little more than a repackaging of traditional instructional approaches that encourage students to remain passive. He calls for a move beyond passive memorization of facts to the use of software that engenders dialogue. He states, "At the heart of increasing the effectiveness of citizenship education in schools is making politics itself more engaging to young people" (Selwyn, 2007, p. 5).

Social Studies progressives are calling for re-envisioning the goals of citizenship education due to the increasingly pluralistic nature of the United States and the world. To understand how they can function as participating citizens in increasingly complex societies (as opposed to being passive consumers), students need to be challenged with new methods of learning (Banks, 2001; Kerr, 1999; Parker, 1996). Some of the recommendations for civic education reform fit particularly well with the reasons for utilizing educational video games.

The Appropriateness of Digital Video Games for Citizenship Education

In its recommendations for policy makers, the Education Commission of the States calls for "Making citizenship education experience grounded in knowledge and explicitly designed to engage students" (Torney-Purta & Vermeer, 2004, p. 5). The Education Commission of the States is a nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps state leaders shape education policy. Torney-Purta is senior advisor and Vermeer is project manager for the National Center for Learning and Citizenship, part of the Education Commission of the States. The two authors conducted the research and wrote the report, *Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten through Grade 12: A Background Paper for Policy Makers and Educators*, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, for the Education Commission of the States.

One of the great promises of educational video games is their ability to engage students. The Federation of American Scientists (2006) highlights games' potential for motivation and encouraging time on task as chief reasons why they are well suited for education.

In identifying elements of engaged learning, Dickey details how games support each of the following elements:

- ▶ Focused goals
- ▶ Challenging tasks
- ▶ Clear and compelling standards
- ▶ Protection from adverse consequences for initial failures
- ▶ Affirmation of performance
- ▶ Affiliation with others
- ▶ Novelty and variety
- ▶ Choice
- ▶ Authenticity (Dickey, 2005, p. 70, citing Jones et al., , and Schlechty,)

Games represent a means for students to move away from passive learning to make choices, explore options, take on roles, and participate in realistic representations of real-world dilemmas and challenges.

If the promise of engagement is one reason video games are well suited to citizenship education, the possibility of transporting students to different environments and situations and allowing them to take on different roles and viewpoints via the games' simulations is another strength. The Education Commission of the States also notes that schools help to foster civic education when they are able to help students "express their views in media forms that are attractive and familiar to them" and "link knowledge gained in an abstract form to more concrete everyday situations in which it might be used" (Torney-Purta & Vermeer, 2004, p. 7). The popularity of video games among today's students has already been noted, so it is clear how allowing students to learn through their favorite media would be favorable. Furthermore, students are able to express their views and take on different roles through typical gameplay, experimenting with different identities and attempting to solve global conflicts.

Banks (2001) says that educators need to move away from the assimilationist notions of past civic education to help students develop clear, well-thought-out identification with both their nation-state and their cultural community. He also notes the need for students to develop "clarified global identifications and deep understandings of their roles in the world community" (Banks, 2001, p. 8). Games are an excellent fit for meeting these needs and reaching these goals because students play from differing viewpoints and immerse themselves in unfamiliar cultures or nations, face new and relevant problems, and learn to recognize and understand important conceptual linkages. The Federation of American Scientists (2006) also recommends games for education due to their strength in "contextual bridging (i.e., closing the gap between what is learned in theory and its use)" (p. 5). Games offer a means for students to become engaged with civic education, sparking further learning outside the game, and they hold promise for helping students to develop higher-level understandings of theory by allowing them to experience the theory through varied contexts.

Educational video games are gaining widespread support as a new form of instruction in schools, and the recognized benefits they offer are well suited to the needs of civic education. Furthermore, perhaps more than in any other subject area, video games have a history of being used for civic education. The rest of this chapter will illustrate how instructors and researchers do not need to wait to begin using video games for civic education—a wealth of available resources are available, including COTS video games and excellent online educational games; additionally, new educational video games are being designed and developed every year. In the next section, I review available COTS games currently used for civic education. Before the review, the issue of alignment with national and state standards will be addressed.

Games and Standards: Navigating the Maze of National and State Standards

The current era of standards and high-stakes testing has drawn a great deal of criticism for the ways it has limited educational content and instructional methods. Research shows that elementary schools are cutting social studies classes because federal testing does not call for them, students are learning only low-cognition facts in preparation for tests, and teachers and administrators are narrowing curricula to teach to the tests (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). Despite these criticisms, many teachers find themselves in environments that stress standards and testing and feel compelled to emphasize preparation for the tests. In my conversations with social studies teachers, I have learned that the narrowing curriculum is one of their greatest concerns when they consider adopting video games in their classrooms. This issue is discussed further toward the end of this chapter, as I relay the experiences of a high school teacher who utilizes an educational game in his history classroom.

In the meantime, for teachers in today's educational environment, there is an emphasis on tying all curricula to established standards. The next three sections of this chapter provide reviews of available games for social studies teachers. Ideally, the descriptions of the games in the reviews would identify standards for each teacher; however, with no commonly used national standards for social studies, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to identify standards for each state. Instead, the games will be tied to the curriculum standards provided by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Task Force (NCSS, 1994), titled *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*. The standards are divided into 10 thematic strands: (a) culture; (b) time, continuity, and change; (c) people, places, and environment; (d) individual development and identity; (e) individuals, groups, and institutions; (f) power, authority, and governance; (g) production, distribution, and consumption; (h) science, technology, and society; (i) global connections; and (j) civic ideals and practice. Referring to these thematic strands, teachers will see how they tie a given game to their state standards. In a later section of this chapter, I offer advice for teachers seeking to do the same with local standards.

Matching curricula to various standards can be a complex task. The NCSS describes its standards as strongly interrelated and holistic and recommends that local education planners be guided by its 10 strands to define their own standards. The NCSS also advises local educators to seek additional guidance from “detailed content from standards developed for history, geography, civics, economics, and other fields” (NCSS, 1994, p. 15).

While research shows that the pressures of standards and high-stakes testing often drive teachers away from the learner-centered approaches to teaching social studies that have been increasingly recommended (Vogler & Virtue, 2007), members of the “noble profession” continue to seek to engage their students and spark a love of learning. Video games are a strong instructional option not only for engaging students, but also for promoting critical thinking, position taking, and problem solving. In the next three sections, I identify numerous games that are available to social studies teachers for use in and outside their classrooms.

Using COTS Games for Social Studies Education

Educators are using a number of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) games as one effective method for teaching social studies. While other available games might have potential for use in social studies classrooms, Table 8.1 lists primary games known to have been adapted to teach social studies. Each game is described, including its appropriate grade levels, related NCSS standards, and cost. Grade levels are based on content ratings by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) and the complexity of gameplay, not on the grade level when a specific topic is covered. The standards’ reference coded descriptions are provided in this chapter’s Appendix. Following Table 8.1, I present a quick summary of available research on the instructional application of the described games.

TABLE 8.1 ► Commercial (COTS) Entertainment Video Games for Teaching Social Studies

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS (<i>advisories</i>)	NCSS STANDARDS (<i>see Appendix</i>)	COST (<i>per copy</i>)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>Civilization</p> <p>Civilization is a turn-based strategy game series; Civilization III, IV, and V are played on the computer, and Civilization Revolution is for console platforms, including the Xbox 360, PS3, and Nintendo’s DS.</p> <p>Civilization allows players to establish, develop, and govern a nation over centuries to create a simulated history of that nation. Players determine where to establish cities; what cultural, scientific, and technological advancements to pursue; what forms of government to govern with; and when to declare war or sign treaties or trade agreements.</p>	7–12 (<i>violence</i>)	<p>Middle Grade I-a. b. d.; II-b. c. f.; III-a. e. h.; IV-h; VI-f. g.; VII-a.; VIII-a.; IX-a. b.; X-g</p> <p>High School I-a. b. g. h.; II-b. c. f.; III-a. e. h.; IV-h.; VI-e.; VII-a.; VIII-a.; IX-a. b.; X-g.</p>	<p>Civ III—\$10</p> <p>Civ IV—\$30</p> <p>Civ V—\$50</p> <p>CivRevolution: \$60; DS is \$30</p>	No, but educators’ discussion forum available on website: fireaxis.com/educators
<p>Caesar IV</p> <p>Caesar IV is a city-building game in ancient Rome, where players manage the city, setting policies to encourage its growth and success.</p>	5–12 (<i>violence, alcohol use</i>)	<p>Middle Grade and High School I-a.; III-a.; IV-h.; VI-b. c. d.; VII-a. b. d.</p>	\$20	No
<p>CivCity: Rome</p> <p>CivCity: Rome is a city-building game set in ancient Rome. It includes a “Citypedia” that shares historical facts about life in Rome.</p>	5–12 (<i>mild violence, alcohol references</i>)	<p>Middle Grade and High School I-a.; III-a.; IV-h.; VI-b. c. d.; VII-a. b. d.</p>	\$10	No

(Continued)

TABLE 8.1 (Continued)

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS (advisories)	NCSS STANDARDS (see Appendix)	COST (per copy)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>Europa Universalis III</p> <p>Europa Universalis is a real-time strategy game that takes place in Europe between 1453 and 1789, the Napoleonic era. Players can choose to begin the game at any date in this time span and lead their nations through trade, exploration, diplomacy, and war.</p>	7–12 (mild violence, alcohol & tobacco references)	<p>Middle Grade I-a. b. d.; II-b. c. f.; III-a. e. h.; IV-h.; VI-f. g.; VII-a.; VIII-a.; IX-a. b.; X-g.</p> <p>High School I-a. b. g. h.; II-b. c. f.; III-a. e. h.; IV-h.; VI-e.; VII-a.; VIII-a.; IX-a. b.; X-g.</p>	\$20	No
<p>SimCity 4</p> <p>SimCity is a simulation game series allowing players to be the mayor and to design and build a city, dealing with population growth, pollution, commercial and residential zoning, quality of life, and so forth. It is largely responsible for the explosion of simulation games for entertainment and is a frequent model for educational simulation games as well as other city-building games.</p> <p>SimCity 4 is the latest version of the game, with the exception of SimCity Societies, a recent release that changes the game's focus from city management toward citizen values of different societal types.</p>	5–12	<p>Middle Grade and High School III-e. h. j.; VI-c.; VII-a. c. d. h.</p>	\$20	No
<p>Railroad Tycoon</p> <p>Railroad Tycoon 3 and its sequel Sid Meier's Railroad! are business simulation games where the player builds a railroad company by laying track, building trains, managing the train schedule, and shipping goods. Railroad! also supports the player's competition against historical "rail barons."</p>	5–12 (alcohol references)	<p>Middle Grade and High School VII-a. c. d. h.</p>	<p>Tycoon 3: \$20</p> <p>Railroad!: \$40 original</p> <p>Railroad Tycoon: free for download at 2kgames.com/railroads</p>	No
<p>Rise of Nations</p> <p>Rise of Nations is very similar to the Civilization series but with a stronger focus on warfare. It is a real-time strategy game where players can choose any of 18 societies to control at any time in history.</p>	7–12 (blood & gore, violence)	<p>Middle Grade and High School II-b. c.; III-a.; VII-a.; VIII-a.; IX-b.</p>	\$25	No
<p>Age of Empires III</p> <p>Age of Empires III is a real-time strategy game similar to Rise of Nations, but with a focus on the European colonization of North America in the years 1500–1850. Players can choose to play eight different colonizing nations as well as a native American tribe after making a treaty.</p>	7–12 (blood & violence)	<p>Middle Grade and High School II-b. c.; III-a.; VII-a.; VIII-a.; IX-b.</p>	\$30	No

(Continued)

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS (<i>advisories</i>)	NCSS STANDARDS (<i>see Appendix</i>)	COST (<i>per copy</i>)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>Birth of America 1 and 2</p> <p>Birth of America is a turn-based strategy game with 10 modules covering the French and Indian War and the American War for Independence. Players play one of two sides in each module, trying to achieve military and political victory. Each module also contains specific historical events. Birth of America 2 focuses solely on the War for Independence with a turn replay feature and updated graphics and rules.</p>	5–12	<p>Middle Grades and High School</p> <p>II-a. b. c. d. e. f.; III-a.; VI-b. c.; IX-b.; X-a. b. d. h. j.</p>	<p>\$17.85 (download)</p> <p>\$30 (shipped)</p>	No
<p>Victoria: An Empire Under the Sun / Victoria II</p> <p>Victoria is a real-time strategy game that takes place during the Victorian era (1836–1920). Players run a nation, seeking to generate enough victory points from prestige, industry, and military to win the game. Players manage their country, dealing with the economy and the social and political changes of industrialization.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades and High School</p> <p>II-b. c. e. f.; III-a.; VI-b. c. f. g.; VII-a VIII-a. c.; IX-b. c.</p>	<p>\$9 (Victoria)</p> <p>\$40 (Victoria II)</p>	No

Several COTS games described above have been applied and researched in classrooms. Squire (2004) conducted a study in which he implemented Civilization III in a U.S. high school for teaching world history. The study found that students played the game in very different ways and that their discussions on game strategies and gameplay experiences resulted in developing alternative approaches to the game. While students did not necessarily increase their knowledge of specific learning concepts, they did discuss the impact of these concepts on their gameplay experience, using broader conceptual terms. Squire concludes that student responses to their gameplay experiences can lead to strong learning opportunities.

Egenfeldt-Nielsen (2005) conducted a study using Europa Universalis II with 72 Danish high school students to support learning in a history course. The study found that students sometimes struggled to recognize connections between their gameplay experience and history, due to a lack of established understanding of history as well as struggles with understanding the game itself. The study concludes that most participants in the study gained experience through the game that offered potential for increased understanding; however, he notes that students often did not make the connection between gameplay and learning. Egenfeldt-Nielsen concludes that games in classrooms need to be directed by specific educational goals and guidance to maximize learning. This concept will be discussed further in the conclusion of this chapter.

While the use of COTS games for civic education has a history stretching back decades, instructors interested in utilizing games in their civics/social studies classrooms need not be limited by the availability of COTS games, as they can be a challenge to adapt for educational purposes because they were originally designed for entertainment. These games do provide immersive gameplay and impressive graphics but can also require greater technical requirements to

run, more class time to play, and can be more expensive than games designed for educational purposes. The next section will detail available serious games; many are free to play, and all were developed for educational or other “serious” purposes.

Using Educational Games for Social Studies Education

Educational games are digital video games designed for educational purposes, as opposed to games created solely for entertainment. As educational games often are not expected to produce revenues equivalent with those of entertainment games, they often have much smaller budgets available for development. With smaller budgets and smaller development teams, educational games often struggle to match the advanced technology present in the latest COTS games. However, the lack of cutting-edge graphics does not mean a game cannot be successful in being engaging and effectively communicating its message.

Salen and Zimmerman (2004) label the focus on cutting-edge technology in games as “the immersive fallacy” (p. 450), which is “the belief that the pleasure of a media experience is the ability of that experience to sensually transport a player into an illusory reality” (p. 458). They argue that the immersive fallacy ignores the “metacommunicative nature of play” (p. 458), meaning that players are aware of the frame of a game as separate from their reality. To put it another way, the audience attending the production of a play realizes that what they are watching is not real, and often the production may not look remotely realistic, such as the barren sets of Thornton Wilder’s play, *Our Town*; however, this does not prevent the audience from being effectively engaged with and immersed in the context of the play. In much the same way, games that lack realistic or sensational graphics can still engage players effectively.

Likely the most well-known educational game is *The Oregon Trail*, which was created in the 1980s and allows players to assume the roles of American pioneers traveling along the Oregon Trail to the West in the mid-1800s. The fifth edition of *The Oregon Trail* is available. While the game was highly popular and used in many classrooms, including social studies classes when I was a grade school student, as is the case with many games, no literature exists to evaluate the learning impact of the game. That being said, whole generations of students look back fondly on this game as a highlight of their elementary history classes.

Educational games have seen substantial growth in the last decade, and a number of games, many of them free, are now available for teachers or researchers wishing to use video games for civic education. As most of these games were developed fairly recently, no research regarding their use for education could be found for this chapter; however, they hold promise and were developed with a focus on more than just entertainment for their players. A brief overview of these games is listed in Table 8.2, including the web address to access to play, purchase, or find more information about the game, including appropriate grade levels, applicable standards, cost, and whether curriculum support is available.

TABLE 8.2 ► Serious Games for Teaching Social Studies

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS	NCSS STANDARDS (see Appendix)	COST (per copy)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>The Oregon Trail <i>broderbund.com</i></p> <p>The Oregon Trail (fifth edition) has the player take the role of a pioneer traveling west across the United States on the Oregon Trail. The player makes choices on purchases, locates food, and deals with obstacles on the trail.</p>	3–9	<p>Early Grades II-a. b.; III-a.; VII-a. b. g</p> <p>Middle Grade II-a. b.; III-a.; VII-a.</p>	\$20	No
<p>Where in the World/USA Is Carmen Sandiego? <i>broderbund.com</i></p> <p>Where in the World and Where in the USA Is Carmen Sandiego? are two well-known games for teaching about geography and history. Players seek to catch the criminal, Carmen Sandiego, as they chase her across the USA or the world, learning facts about the locations they visit.</p>	3–6	<p>Early and Middle Grades II-b.; III-a.</p>	\$10	No
<p>Discover Babylon <i>fas.org/babylon</i></p> <p>Discover Babylon, created by the Federation of American Scientists, is a multiplayer game that puts players in a museum, learning about Mesopotamia by interacting with artifacts and asking questions of characters in the game.</p>	3–9		free	Limited, website notes that educator's guide is coming soon.
<p>Quest Atlantis <i>questatlantis.org</i></p> <p>Quest Atlantis is aimed at students aged 9–16 and was developed by educational researchers. Students interact with each other in an online, immersive environment, similar to massive, multiplayer, online role-playing games (MMORPGs). Players complete various educational quests, such as conducting environmental research and researching other cultures.</p>	3–9	<p>Early and Middle Grades I-a. c. e.; III-k.; IV-h.; VIII-e.</p>	Free; requires an application for schools to show administrator and teacher support for the project.	Yes, built-in assessments and online teacher toolkits are provided.
<p>Food Force <i>food-force.com</i></p> <p>Food Force was developed for the United Nations' World Food Programme. It is free to play and provides teacher resources. Players in the game distribute food and try to help a struggling, fictitious country become self-sufficient, while learning about hunger and the UN's World Food Programme.</p>	3–9	<p>Early and Middle Grades III-j.; V-g.; VII-b. g.; VIII-a.; IX-b. f.</p>	Free	Yes, website provides numerous resources and recommendations for creating lesson plans.
<p>Virtual History <i>knowledgematters.com/products/vhe/</i> (Ancient Egypt) <i>knowledgematters.com/products/vhsa/tour</i> (Settling America)</p> <p>Virtual History is available in two packages: Ancient Egypt and Settling America. In these games, players make decisions regarding the growth of a village in ancient Egypt or in pioneer America. Players are assessed with questions and quizzes throughout the game and given feedback, based on their decisions as they grow food, build buildings, and deal with the challenges of nature.</p>	5–8	<p>Early and Middle Grades I-a.; II-b.; III-a. f. h.; VII-a. b.; VIII-a.</p>	<p>V-User = \$195 Lab License = \$395 Site License = \$595</p>	Yes, activities and matching standards for each state are provided on website.

(Continued)

TABLE 8.2 (Continued)

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS	NCSS STANDARDS (see Appendix)	COST (per copy)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>Real Lives <i>educationalsimulations.com</i></p> <p>Real Lives is a simulation game of a person's life. Based on statistical information, the user plays an assigned role; he or she will be born in a given country and have his or her life determined by the simulation's calculations and the role player's own decisions, such as what job to take, whether or not to marry or have children, what investments to make, etc. The person being simulated is scored on his/her health, happiness, wealth, and other factors.</p>	4–12	<p>All Grade Levels</p> <p>I-a. b. d.; III-a. j.; IV-c. e.; VII-a. b. g.; VIII-a.; IX-b. d. f.</p>	<p>1 download = \$29</p> <p>1 user/CD = \$39</p> <p>6 users/CDs = \$199</p> <p>30 users/CDs = \$899</p> <p>Site License = \$1 per enrolled student in the school</p>	No
<p>3rd World Farmer <i>3rdworldfarmer.com</i></p> <p>3rd World Farmer is an online game in which players control a family of farmers, choosing what crops to plant, what livestock to raise, and how to spend money. Weather, political upheaval, and other events show the challenges of poverty faced by those in the third world and the difficulties of rising out of poverty.</p>	3–12	<p>All Grade Levels</p> <p>III-f. j.; VII-a. b.; VIII-a.; IX-b.</p>	Free	No
<p>Outbreak at Watersedge <i>mclph.umn.edu/watersedge</i></p> <p>Outbreak at Watersedge is a mystery game where the player takes on the role of a public health specialist. It is foremost a game for introducing the field of public health as a potential career, but does introduce the terminology and role of public health officials, and therefore could be useful in starting discussions on the role of government.</p>	9–12	<p>High School</p> <p>VI-b. c.</p>	Free. Also available on CD by calling 612-626-4515.	Yes, website includes a brief description of objectives and appropriate use of game; also provides a free download of Adobe Flashplayer 10 (needed to play the game).
<p>People Power: The game of civil resistance <i>peoplepowergame.com</i></p> <p>People Power is a simulation game that puts the player in the role of managing a nonviolent conflict, trying to overthrow dictators and corrupt governments using nonviolent strategies. This game is by the makers of A Force More Powerful (AFMP), a similar earlier game no longer available for purchase.</p>	9–12	<p>High School</p> <p>V-f.; VI-a. b. c. d. f. g. h.; IX-b. f.; X-d. e. g. h. i. j.</p>	\$10	Not currently; however, AFMP website has links to lesson plans, book, as well as additional resources that may help.
<p>Ayiti: The Cost of Life <i>ayiti.newzcrew.org/ayitiunicef/</i></p> <p>Ayiti: The Cost of Life was developed by the Global Kids initiative, which encourages urban public school students to reflect on their roles in the world and to develop leadership skills. The game asks the player to pick a strategy from the categories of health, education, happiness, and money (employment) to help manage an impoverished family in Haiti. Players must balance earning enough money for the family to survive while trying to educate them and lead them out of poverty.</p>	4–12	<p>Early Grades</p> <p>IX-d. f.</p> <p>Middle Grades and High School</p> <p>IX-d. f. g.</p>	Free	Yes, lesson plans for using the game are available on the website.

(Continued)

TABLE 8.2 (Continued)

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS	NCSS STANDARDS (see Appendix)	COST (per copy)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>Global Conflicts: Palestine <i>globalconflicts.eu</i></p> <p>Global Conflicts: Palestine has the player taking on the role of a reporter in the Middle East. It allows the player to experience real-life stories of the conflict in the Middle East. Students are encouraged to write a news article after playing and to post it for the online community.</p> <p>An excellent video explaining the educational concepts behind this series is at www.youtube.com/tch?v=gRVOB5dOHME&NR=1</p> <p>Global Conflicts also has the following versions available: Latin America, Child Soldiers (Uganda), Sweatshops (Bangladesh), and Peacemaker (Israeli-Palestinian conflict)</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades and High School</p> <p>II-a.b.c.e.f.; IV-e.f.g.; VI-f.h.; IX-a.b.f.</p>	\$20 Cost is higher for educational version with teaching materials.	Yes, teacher resources are on its website.
<p>Making History <i>making-history.com</i></p> <p>Making History is a World War II turn-based strategy game allowing for customizable win goals and teacher modifications of gameplay. In it, players can play against each other or the computer in setting policy, creating treaties, and planning military strategy.</p>	9–12	<p>High School</p> <p>II-b. c.; III-a.; VII-h.; VIII-a.; IX-b.</p>	Single download = \$39.95 Educator copy plus 5 licences = \$199.95	Yes, teaching materials are available with the educational version.
<p>Darfur Is Dying <i>darfurisdying.com</i></p> <p>Darfur Is Dying is an activist game that seeks to educate people about the genocide in Darfur. Players control the members of a refugee family in Darfur, seeking to avoid rebel bandits in order to gather water for the camp. Players try to grow food, get medicine, and rebuild destroyed buildings while surviving as long as possible among the attacking rebels. The game is free to play and provides additional resources for those interested in Darfur-related activism.</p>	3–12	<p>All Grade Levels</p> <p>III-j.; V-g.; VII-b. g.; VIII-a.; IX-b. f.</p>	Free	No.
<p>Freedom Force '56 <i>freedomfighter56.com</i></p> <p>Freedom Force '56 (FF '56) is more like an interactive comic book than a video game. It seeks to educate players about the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, albeit with a very pro-revolutionary stance. There are mini-games available within the narrative, as players take on the roles of several revolutionaries.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades and High School</p> <p>II-e.; IX-b.</p>	\$29.95	No, although a supporting nonfiction book with interviews of those who escaped and survived the 1956 revolution and a graphic novel, <i>The Hungarian Freedom Fighters of 1956</i> , are available.
<p>Whyville <i>whyville.net</i></p> <p>Whyville is an online, multiplayer virtual world with available mini-games focusing on art history, science, journalism, civics, and economics.</p>	5–8	<p>Middle Grades</p> <p>II-c.; III-a.</p>	Free.	No.

(Continued)

Using Political Games for Social Studies Education

Simulations of political organizations have been in use since before the creation of the United Nations (UN), and more than 400,000 students participate worldwide in the Model UN simulation each year (UNA-USA, 2004). In simulations such as Model UN, students prepare position papers, put forth resolutions, conduct debates, and adhere to established rules of procedure as they represent a country at conferences. In doing so, students take on the roles of real-life UN representatives and have the opportunity to experience firsthand how the UN operates.

A number of political video games and simulations are available that deal specifically with democratic and governmental issues. These games, a mixture of COTS games and free online games, allow players to take part in electoral and governmental simulations. Due to the number of games available on political issues, reviews of available games that are useful tools for teaching and learning in social studies classes are listed in the next section.

History Lessons: Perspectives on the Effective Use of Video Games

This section provides a brief look at two ongoing studies to provide current perspectives on the use of video games for teaching social studies. The first study communicates the perspectives of a high school teacher and his students on the use of Making History, an educational game for teaching World War II history. The second study presents the perspectives of game developers who are designing National Pastime, an educational game for teaching about the internment experience of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Making History: Teacher and Student Perspectives on Using an Educational Game

Described in Table 8.2, Making History is an educational game developed by Muzzy Lane for teaching about World War II. In this section, I describe the perspectives of a teacher and students using Making History in a high school classroom.

The school is a small, rural high school in the Midwest. The social studies teacher has been utilizing Making History in his unit on World War II for several years. He initially agreed to be a beta-tester for the company and has continued using the game after seeing how engaged his students were when playing it.

To capture teacher and student experiences playing the game, we observed and video recorded classes before, during, and after the game was used. The teacher stated that his biggest reason for using the game was how engaged the students became. In observing the teacher in action, he seemed to be very skilled, firing questions to his students at a rapid pace rather than lecturing to them. Despite the teacher's approach, some students were clearly disengaged in the regular classroom: heads were down on desks and eyes were unfocused.

TABLE 8.3 ► Political Games for Teaching Social Studies

GAME SUMMARY	GRADE LEVELS	NCSS STANDARDS (see Appendix)	COST (per copy)	CURRICULAR SUPPORT
<p>Democracy 2 <i>positech.co.uk/democracy2/</i></p> <p>Democracy 2 is a political simulation, turn-based strategy game allowing players to adjust policy variables, for example, to set taxes and educational spending.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>V-e.; VI-a. b. e. f.; X-a.f.g.</p>	\$22.95	No
<p>President Forever 2008 + Primaries <i>theoryspark.com/political_games/president_forever/info/</i></p> <p>President Forever is a presidential election simulation game with data from presidential and primary elections from 1980 to 2008, with additional releases planned for the future, such as the California gubernatorial race in 2010, which will be available to download by purchasers for free.</p> <p>Players campaign, run ads, and set policy positions in an attempt to be elected.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>V-e.; VI-a. b. e. f.; X-a. f. g.</p>	<p>Single license—\$19.95</p> <p>Site licenses: # users/cost</p> <p>5 users/\$65 10 users/\$120 25 users/\$275 50 users/\$500 100 users/\$870</p>	No
<p>Senate Seeker <i>senateseeker.com</i></p> <p>Senate Seeker is a free, weekly web-based game, requiring weekly voting as players represent political parties and seek votes, using forum discussions.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>V-e.; VI-a. b. e. f.; X-a. d. f. g. i.</p>	Free	No
<p>The ReDistricting Game <i>redistrictinggame.org</i></p> <p>The ReDistricting Game is a political game that focuses on helping the player to understand gerrymandering, redrawing voter district maps to gain a political advantage.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>VI-b. f.; X-f.</p>	Free	No
<p>Particracy <i>classic.particracy.net</i></p> <p>Particracy is a free, web-based game where players create political parties in a fictional nation, propose legislation, and vote on bills to garner votes and set policy.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>V-e.; VI-a. b. e. f.; X-a. d. f. g. i.</p>	Free	No
<p>NationStates <i>nationstates.net</i></p> <p>NationStates is a web-based, somewhat cynical yet realistic political game created by Max Barry, author of the novel <i>Jennifer Government</i>. Players create a fictitious nation and answer a short questionnaire to determine the ideologies of that nation. Each day the player is asked to decide on a policy issue, and the nation evolves based on the player's responses. Players can also join international debates on the website forums.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>V-e.; VI-a. b. e. f.; X-a. d. f. g. i.</p>	Free	No
<p>The Oval Office</p> <p>The Oval Office is a political simulation where players play the President of the United States and can choose over 80 different policy changes, take polls to determine public opinion, balance the budget, and deal with special interest groups.</p>	7–12	<p>Middle Grades & High School</p> <p>V-e.; VI-a. b. e. f.; X-a. f. g.</p>	\$8.65	No

The atmosphere of the classroom when the game was being played was drastically different, with a tumult of noise as students chattered to each other about what strategies they should use in the game. After his first experiences, the teacher settled on the following method for using the game: students were divided into teams, each team controlling a country, and the team members were rotated during gameplay so that each had a turn at using the computer to control the team's actions. The different student teams played against each other, playing through the time period just before World War (WW) II broke out.

The teacher noted that he always used the module before WWII broke out with his students because it focused heavily on the treaties among the different countries and the causes for the war, which were the learning objectives he wanted the students to reach, rather than focusing solely on the warfare itself. That being said, he noted how his classes almost always went to war earlier than actually happened in history, but he felt this was an important learning opportunity for them, as students playing the role of Germany, for example, would often find themselves quickly defeated if they rushed off to war before they had developed enough resources to carry out their offenses.

“Teachable moments” was a term frequently used by the teacher in his description of teaching with the game. He noted that many teachers might feel that using the game would mean less work for them, but actually, he was required to be much more active when teaching with the game, as he circled the room, asking students questions and stopping gameplay to highlight these “teachable moments” and tie back in what was going on in the game with what actually happened.

The students universally preferred gameplay over traditional instruction. While many had reservations about stating that they would want to play video games in all subjects at school, noting that it might not be appropriate for some subjects, they were universal in enjoying the gameplay experience and felt that they better understood the World War II unit because they were more attentive to it. They noted how they discussed strategy in groups at lunch and outside of class, and none of the students found the game too difficult to play or understand.

One clear lesson from this experience was that technical challenges have to be overcome when using games in the classroom. First, as *Making History* was played as a multiplayer game, the classes had to move into a computer lab, which created scheduling challenges. Second, despite the fact that the teacher had taught with the game for several years, technical problems (before they were straightened out) wasted the first day of gameplay for the early classes. He noted that there always seemed to be technical problems no matter how much time and effort he and the lab manager spent in preparation.

The most visible conclusions we made from observing the use of *Making History* in the classroom was how active the classroom was when playing the game. Students were excited, and the teacher was racing around the room the entire class period, answering questions and posing his own, as well as stopping the entire class to point out important issues. After finishing play, the class had a debriefing session, talking about strategies the countries tried, how they differed from history, and what conclusions could be drawn. Students noted their own engagement, pointing out how some of their peers usually slept during class but were actively involved when the video game was used.

It should be noted that this study focused on capturing the experience of the teacher and students in using the game, not on evaluating their learning. That being said, the students and the teacher pointed out that the students were more likely to learn if they were engaged and attentive, which was the case when the game was used.

National Pastime: Designer Perspectives on the Creation of an Educational Game

National Pastime is an educational game being designed to teach high school students about the internment of Japanese-Americans in the United States during World War II. In this section, I offer a brief overview of the initial experience of designing National Pastime. First, I present a brief overview of the design process, followed by challenges faced during the process and lessons learned from the experience.

I completed the initial design of the game with a team of four graduate students enrolled in one of my courses. I previously developed a design process, the Games for Activating Thematic Engagement (GATE) model (Watson, 2007), which provided the guidelines for the design process. The design process began with defining learning objectives based on the topic of internment. We reviewed a great deal of the literature on the internment experience and sought to represent the experience in the game. Social studies standards were also immediately identified to ensure that they were reflected in the learning objectives.

We highlighted specific internment experiences we uncovered in the literature to inform the game's atmosphere and narrative. We also conducted interviews with several middle school and high school social studies teachers to identify challenges they faced in implementing a game in their classroom. Consistently, lack of time was the universal challenge the teachers raised. Under pressure to cover more content in less time, the teachers were consistent in their concern about not being able to devote more than a class period or two to the game.

An example was one teacher who covered the entire history of the United States in one semester. The majority of the teachers interviewed did not teach about the internment of Japanese-Americans, with one teacher spending "about five minutes" on it during his World War II unit. All stated the relevance of the game to current events but again cited the lack of time and the amount of content they were required to cover. Because of this, an important decision made in the game was to divide the games into "chapters," which would allow teachers control over how much of the narrative their students would play through, while allowing flexibility for a much longer gameplay experience for students who might play the game outside the classroom environment.

Another concern of teachers was the technological requirements the game would have. While the initial design did not focus on development, teachers' concerns were noted, and strong recommendations were recorded to develop the game using technology that would be readily available for schools, such as a web browser-based game.

Two high school students who had completed a unit on the internment were interviewed and asked (a) what they felt they had learned about the internment; (b) what, if any, relevance they saw in regard to the internment and current events or their own lives; (c) their preferences in video games; and (d) what specific aspects of video games engaged them. Neither student had retained much from the unit on the internment and could only provide the barest summary of the internment. Neither student could describe why the history of the internment was relevant to current events. The relevance of the internment history as well as history in general to the students was highlighted by the teachers interviewed as a primary goal they would have for the game. They wanted to develop an appreciation of history in their students and a realization of its relevance, and in interviewing the students, it was clear that this was currently lacking for them.

Because of these interviews, the design decision was made to create distinct bridges between the internment history and the attitudes and actions of the U.S. government following the September 11, 2001 attacks. We decided that the game would open with a game character looking at news of the terrorist attacks before flashing back to the attack on Pearl Harbor as a means to connect current events to the historical events of the internment.

The design moved forward to creating a narrative for the game, implementation guidelines for teachers to use the game in different ways and in different environments, as well as a scoring system to provide assessment and feedback within the game. Gameplay examples of successful commercial video games were discussed as models for engagement, along with the comments of the students interviewed and what aspects of certain games engaged them, such as the ability to customize their characters and have control over where they went and what they did.

We created and tested a paper prototype of a single chapter of the game to generate feedback on the initial design. Reflecting on the experience, we noted several design challenges, including the lack of gaming experience of several members of our team, who would struggle with understanding when other team members used commercial games as examples. The non-gamers on the team noted that gamers used an entirely different language in meetings, and the non-gamers initially struggled to understand due to their lack of gaming experience. These non-gamers felt much more comfortable as they played more games themselves to get a firmer grasp on the gamer vocabulary.

Other challenges faced were the issue of wanting to represent history accurately while ensuring the game was appropriate for students to play. For example, gambling was an important part of the internment experience; however, at one point, it was realized how strong a role gambling played in the game, and it was decided that this could be a problem for teachers and students' parents.

Ultimately, the game is undergoing revisions on its design based on the initial experience and the testing of the prototype. The design process calls for frequent iterations of testing and revision, and design team members commented that looking back, they would have benefited from conducting even earlier and more frequent testing. The challenges of designing an immersive gameplay experience that can promote critical thinking and problem-solving while ensuring the flexibility today's teachers need to be able to incorporate games into packed curricula and hectic schedules were strong lessons learned.

Lessons Learned

In this final section before the conclusion, I discuss lessons learned from reviewing the available games for teaching social studies and conducting two studies to capture the experience of designing and using video games to teach social studies. I begin with guidelines for choosing an appropriate game, followed by guidelines for implementing a game effectively, and conclude with guidelines for tying games to standards.

Guidelines for Choosing an Appropriate Game

In reviewing games for this chapter, a number of guidelines arose for choosing appropriate games, whether they are educational games or COTS games. The following guidelines are important to consider before choosing a game for educational use.

Be familiar with the game. While the teacher in the Making History study had never had any parents or students complain about his use of the game in the classroom, when he first started using the game, he actually thought it might happen. A teacher does not want to be unaware of any questionable content that might be in a game that parents or students might find objectionable. Furthermore, the teacher found the lack of any realistic violence an important factor in using Making History. While waging war is represented in the game, it is done in an abstract manner, which was important for him. While he found each year that his students were all able to understand and play the game with relative ease, it was important for him to know how to play the game because he needed to assess what he could expect from gameplay to identify opportunities for “teachable moments” and to best plan for how to use the game.

Identify learning objectives. It is important to know what learning is desired from the game. In the Making History study, having a game that depicted the outbreak of the war was extremely important to the teacher, as it matched his learning objectives for his larger curriculum. If the game only depicted the war itself, it would be much less useful in meeting his desired learning objectives. Furthermore, he had found that his students seemed to have a better grasp of world geography after playing the game, a learning outcome he had not expected. It is important to know what learning is desired from a game and then to determine whether a particular game can help meet those learning objectives or not.

Consider cost, time, and technical requirements. It is very important to consider how much a game will cost, how much time is required to play it, and whether or not available computers can support the game. Issues, such as how often a game allows players to save or how much minimum time the game requires to be meaningfully played, are important to understand to determine whether a game is appropriate for the specific learning environment. Furthermore, technical challenges will likely arise, and it is important to assess what available support exists to overcome such challenges.

Consider how the game will be used. Some limitations, such as time, can be creatively overcome by having students play games outside the classroom at home or in school labs. However, also consider whether students will play on teams or if it is also important for the game to provide single-player experiences. Plan how the game will be implemented, and create lesson plans

beforehand to guide its use. Remember that not all aspects of a game have to be used for it to be effective.

Consider what standards the game can be tied to. It can be important to identify appropriate standards to link with the game. It is possible that some could see the use of video games for education as frivolous, and it is important in the current climate to tie the game to standards to identify its learning goals and how it fits into a district's existing curriculum.

Guidelines for Implementing a Game Effectively

Plan ahead. It is important to create a plan for how the game will be used. Research suggests the need to support gameplay with sound instructional strategies for learning to be effective (Leemkuil, de Jong, de Hoog, & Christopher, 2003; O'Neil, Wainess, & Baker, 2005; Wolfe, 1997), so it is important to have a plan for debriefing and connecting the gameplay experience to broader lessons. Also, technology is challenging, and it is important to be prepared to address these challenges as they arise.

Promote active learning. Games are being promoted for learning because of how they engage and require action on the part of the learners. However, it is important that the game is not the only place where learners are required to think and act. Try to create an environment in the curricular activities surrounding the game that also requires action and engagement on the part of the learners. Look at what games do well to engage: choice, interactivity, self-expression, problem solving, feedback, and trial and error. Structure an environment for assignments tied to the game or surrounding debriefing and learning from the game that includes similar features. Do not tell students what they learned but require them to demonstrate what they have learned by problem solving and being creative.

Plan for student interaction and reflection. Video games can be frenetic in their pacing; thus, it is important that students have the opportunity to reflect on their choices and game outcomes. Consider having students work in pairs or groups when playing a game. Plan for how the debriefing of the gameplay experience will be facilitated and supported.

Assess the game and its implementation. Much can be learned by evaluating the implementation of a game. Assess what the students learned from the game and how the implementation of the game worked or could be improved. Commit to improving the students' experience with the game by evaluating its implementation after each use.

Guidelines for Tying Games to National and State Standards

Consider not just the game but how it will be used. Identifying standards a game may meet can be a challenge because learning may not be effective in a game without additional sound instructional strategies supporting the gameplay experience. By only focusing on what objectives are clearly embedded in the game, the opportunity for teaching additional standards through activities surrounding the game may be lost. As mentioned in the guidelines for choosing a game, become familiar with the game, identify appropriate learning objectives for it, plan how the game will be used, and combine these to identify appropriate standards to be met by gameplay.

Identify “teachable moments” and where learning may occur. A point really stressed by the teacher in the Making History study was how student errors, inaccurate conceptual understanding, and disconnects with actual history were actually prime opportunities for learning to occur. Plan for and be alert for “teachable moments” that arise during gameplay to hit on the target standards.

Establish or join a professional learning community. Some games have established online communities for educators using the game, and some games offer their own communities to support educators. Consider joining or establishing a community to share strategies for game use, identifying appropriate standards, and meeting them. Collaborate with fellow educators and practitioners.

Conclusion

Citizenship education, often a fundamental aspect of public education, is gaining recognition for its importance. With low voter turnout, an increasingly pluralistic society, and citizens who are passive in allowing their government to make choices for them, it is vital that today’s students not only learn about the rights and responsibilities of being citizens, but also become engaged and encouraged to be active citizens.

Digital video games are being increasingly highlighted for their power to engage. With COTS and educational games available, many of them for free, the time is now for citizenship educators to utilize video games to educate and engage their students.

While video games hold great potential for citizenship education, it is important that citizenship teachers reflect on how best to utilize the games in their classrooms. My own experience in school, playing *Oregon Trail* in the 1980s, involved being asked to play the game during a class period and nothing else. With no discussion or reflection on the gameplay experience, little else was gained from the experience other than the knowledge that people died of dysentery and the experience that digital deer and rabbits are fun to shoot. The games should be used to foster discussion and debates, allowing students to solve problems actively and reflect on their experiences and what lessons can be learned.

Just as citizenship teachers are asking their students to learn to be active citizens and to reflect on their roles in society and responsibility to be informed, it is important that the teachers themselves are active and reflective in their incorporation of video games into the existing curriculum. Students should not only be asked to play the games, but also to reflect on their gameplay experiences, discuss what meanings can be drawn from those experiences, and actively participate in their own learning.

Video games offer great potential for engaging learners. In this chapter, I have noted and discussed a wide variety of video games available for citizenship education. The next steps are for teachers to implement the games, share their experiences with others, and create communities to support and improve the application of games for citizenship education.

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NCSS Content Standards

NCSS Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

(This is an abridged list of the standards. Please see www.socialstudies.org to obtain a complete list of standards)

I. Culture

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- a. explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns;
- b. give examples of how experiences may be interpreted differently by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- c. describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture;
- d. compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions;
- e. give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Middle Grades

- a. Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns;
- b. Explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- c. Explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture;
- d. Explain why individuals and groups respond differently to their physical and social environments and/or changes to them on the basis of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs;
- e. Articulate the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

High School

- a. Analyze and explain the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns;
- b. Predict how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- d. Compare and analyze societal patterns for preserving and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental or social change;
- g. construct reasoned judgments about specific cultural responses to persistent human issues;
- h. explain and apply ideas, theories, and modes of inquiry drawn from anthropology and sociology in the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

II. Time, Continuity, & Change

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- a. demonstrate an understanding that different people may describe the same event or situation in diverse ways, citing reasons for the differences in views.

- b. demonstrate an ability to use correctly vocabulary associated with time such as past, present, future, and long ago; read and construct simple timelines; identify examples of change; and recognize examples of cause and effect relationships.

Middle Grades

- a. Demonstrate an understanding that different scholars may describe the same event or situation in different ways but must provide reasons or evidence for their views;
- b. Identify and use key concepts such as chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity;
- c. Identify and describe selected historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the rise of civilizations, the development of transportation systems, the growth and breakdown of colonial systems, and others;
- e. Develop critical sensitivities such as empathy and skepticism regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts;
- f. Use knowledge of facts and concepts drawn from history, along with methods of historical inquiry, to inform decision-making about and action-taking on public issues.

High School

- a. Demonstrate that historical knowledge and the concept of time are socially influenced constructions that lead historians to be selective in the questions they seek to answer and the evidence they use;
- b. Apply key concepts such as time, chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity;
- c. Identify and describe significant historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the development of ancient cultures and civilizations, the rise of nation-states, and social, economic, and political revolutions;
- e. Investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and persistent issues, while employing empathy, skepticism, and critical judgement;
- f. Apply ideas, theories, and modes of historical inquiry to analyze historical and contemporary developments, and to inform and evaluate actions concerning public policy issues.

III. People, Places, & Environments

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- a. construct and use mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape;
- f. describe and speculate about physical system changes, such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle;
- j. observe and speculate about social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought;
- k. consider existing uses and propose and evaluate alternative uses of resources and land in home, school, community, the region, and beyond.

Middle Grades

- a. Elaborate mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape;

- e. Locate and describe varying landforms and geographic features, such as mountains, plateaus, islands, rain forests, deserts, and oceans, and explain their relationships within the ecosystem;
- f. describe physical system changes such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle and identify geographic patterns associated with them;
- h. examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes;
- j. observe and speculate about social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought;
- k. propose, compare, and evaluate alternative uses of land and resources in communities, regions, nations, and the world.

High School

- a. Refine mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape;
- e. describe, differentiate, and explain the relationships among various regional and global patterns of geographic phenomena such as landforms, soils, climate, vegetations, natural resources, and population;
- f. use knowledge of physical system changes such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle to explain geographic phenomena.
- h. examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes;
- j. analyze and evaluate social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought.

IV. Individual Development & Identity

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- c. describe the unique features of one's nuclear and extended families;
- e. identify and describe ways family, groups, and community influence the individual's daily life and personal choices;
- h. work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

Middle Grades

- c. describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity;
- e. identify and describe ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives;
- f. identify and describe the influence of perception, attitudes, values, and beliefs on personal identity;
- g. identify and interpret examples of stereotyping, conformity, and altruism;
- h. work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

High School

- c. describe the ways family, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, and other group and cultural influences contribute to the development of a sense of self;
- e. examine the interactions of ethnic, national, or cultural influences in specific situations or events;
- f. analyze the role of perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs in the development of personal identity;

- g. compare and evaluate the impact of stereotyping, conformity, acts of altruism, and other behaviors on individuals and groups;
- h. work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals;

V. Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- g. show how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good, and identify examples of where they fail to do so.

Middle Grades

- e. identify and describe examples of tensions between belief systems and government policies and laws;
- g. apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good.

High School

- e. describe and examine belief systems basic to specific traditions and laws in contemporary and historical movements;
- f. evaluate the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change.

VI. Power, Authority, & Governance

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- b. explain the purpose of government;
- c. give examples of how government does or does not provide for the needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict;

Middle Grades

- a. Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare;
- b. Describe the purpose of government and how its powers are acquired, used, and justified;
- c. Analyze and explain ideas and governmental mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, and establish order and security;
- d. Describe the ways nations and organizations respond to forces of unity and diversity affecting order and security;
- e. Identify and describe the basic features of the political system in the United States, and identify representative leaders from various levels and branches of government;
- f. Explain conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations;
- g. Describe and analyze the role of technology in communications, transportation, information-processing, weapons development, or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts;
- h. Explain and apply concepts such as power, role, status, justice, and influence to the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

High School

- a. Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare;
- b. Explain the purpose of government and analyze how its powers are acquired, used, and justified;
- c. Analyze and explain ideas and mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, establish order and security, and balance competing conceptions of a just society;
- d. Compare and analyze the ways nations and organizations respond to conflicts between forces of unity and forces of diversity;
- e. Compare different political systems (their ideologies, structure, institutions, processes, and political cultures) with that of the United States, and identify representative political leaders from selected historical and contemporary settings;
- f. Analyze and evaluate conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations;
- g. Evaluate the role of technology in communications, transportation, information-processing, weapons development, or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts;
- h. Explain and apply ideas, theories, and modes of inquiry drawn from political science to the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

VII. Production, Distribution, & Consumption

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- a. give examples that show how scarcity and choice govern our economic decisions;
- b. distinguish between needs and wants;
- g. explain and demonstrate the role of money in everyday life;
- h. describe the relationship of price to supply and demand;

Middle Grades

- a. Give and explain examples of ways that economic systems structure choices about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed;
- b. Describe the role that supply and demand, prices, incentives, and profits play in determining what is produced and distributed in a competitive market system;
- c. Explain the difference between private and public goods and services;
- d. Describe a range of examples of the various institutions that make up economic systems such as households, business firms, banks, government agencies, labor unions, and corporations;
- g. Differentiate among various forms of exchange and money;
- h. Compare basic economic systems according to who determines what is produced, distributed, and consumed.

High School

- a. Explain how the scarcity of productive resources (human, capital, technological, and natural) requires the development of economic systems to make decisions about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed;
- b. Analyze the role that supply and demand, prices, incentives, and profits play in determining what is produced and distributed in a competitive market system;

- c. Consider the costs and benefits to society of allocating goods and services through private and public sectors;
- d. Describe relationships among the various economic institutions that comprise economic systems such as households, business firms, banks, government agencies, labor unions, and corporations;
- g. Compare basic economic systems according to how rules and procedures deal with demand, supply, prices, the role of government, banks, labor and labor unions, savings and investments, and capital;
- h. Apply economic concepts and reasoning when evaluating historical and contemporary social developments and issues.

VIII. Science, Technology, & Society

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- a. identify and describe examples in which science and technology have changed the lives of people, such as in homemaking, childcare, work, transportation, and communication;
- e. suggest ways to monitor science and technology in order to protect the physical environmental, individual rights, and the common good.

Middle Grades

- a. Examine and describe the influence of culture on scientific and technological choices and advancement, such as in transportation, medicine, and warfare;
- e. Seek reasonable and ethical solutions to problems that arise when scientific advancements and social norms or values come into conflict.

High School:

- a. Identify and describe both current and historical examples of the interaction and interdependence of science, technology, and society in a variety of cultural settings.

IX. Global Connections

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and independence, so that the learner can:

Early Grades

- b. give examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and nations;
- d. explore causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as pollution and endangered species;
- f. investigate concerns, issues, standards, and conflicts related to universal human rights, such as the treatment of children, religious groups, and effects of war.

Middle Grades

- a. Describe instances in which language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding;
- b. Analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations;
- d. Explore the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as health, security, resource allocation, economic development, and environmental quality;
- f. Demonstrate understanding of concerns, standards, issues, and conflicts related to universal human rights;

- g. Identify and describe the roles of international and multinational organizations.

High School

- a. Explain how language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding;
- b. Explain conditions and motivations that contribute to conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations;
- d. Analyze the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as health, security, resources allocation, economic development, and environmental quality;
- f. Analyze or formulate policy statements demonstrating an understanding of concerns, standards, issues, and conflicts related to universal human rights;
- g. Describe and evaluate the role of international and multinational organizations in the global arena.

X. Civic Ideals & Practices

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic, so that the learner can:

Middle Grades

- a. Examine the origins and continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law;
- d. Practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic;
- f. Identify and explain the roles of formal and informal political actors in influencing and shaping public policy and decision-making;
- g. Analyze the influence of diverse forms of public opinion on the development of public policy and decision-making;
- i. Explain the relationship between policy statements and action plans used to address issues of public concern.

High School

- a. Explain the origins and interpret the continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law;
- d. Practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic;
- e. Analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy;
- f. Analyze a variety of public policies and issues from the perspective of formal and informal political actors;
- g. Evaluate the effectiveness of public opinion in influencing and shaping public policy development and decision-making;
- h. Evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government;
- i. Construct a policy statement and an action plan to achieve one or more goals related to an issue of public concern;
- j. Participate in activities to strengthen the "common good," based upon careful evaluation of possible options for citizen action.

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