

# Pedagogical Practices and How Teachers Learn

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## PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AND HOW TEACHERS LEARN

The multiple crises that have unfolded in the year 2020—from the COVID-19 pandemic to the killing of George Floyd and subsequent protests—have underscored the urgency of the core civic question: “What should we do?” How should we balance the health of our global community with economic needs? How should we redress the long history of violence and police brutality against Black Americans? These crises have further exposed existing fractures in society and heightened the need to address long-standing questions such as: How should we address economic inequality? How should we rectify the education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006)? What should we do about climate change? The myriad complex and pressing questions we face call attention to the importance of fostering civic reasoning in our diverse and interdependent society—a task that schools can play a significant role in supporting. Pedagogical and curricular efforts must be centered on developing citizens’ capacities to live in a diverse society, where citizenship offers protections for the interests of all members of a given society (Banks, 2017; Howard, 2004).

In this chapter, the authors consider what research suggests about how educators might best cultivate young people’s civic reasoning and discourse in school settings. As Stitzlein (Chapter 1 in this report) lays out in the opening chapter, learning to reason civically and engage in civic discourse involves a wide range of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. Because “civic reasoning is the reasoning we do about what we should do” in a pluralistic society (Stitzlein, Chapter 1), it includes many complex skills and dispositions, such as the willingness and ability to listen to others, seriously consider new evidence and reasons, communicate effectively, give reasons for one’s view, be fair-minded, share the discussion space, and seek fair and just solutions to complex problems. Furthermore, to reason civically relies on historical, political, and many other forms of knowledge—as well as having the tools to inquire to gain additional knowledge or evidence, and knowing how to discern the relative value of various pieces of evidence. Engaging in civic discourse—discussion and deliberation—draws on and facilitates civic reasoning.

Identity is also central to civic reasoning: *who* we are is central to *how* we reason. Importantly, although deliberation in the public domain may begin from positions that prioritize individuals’ personal well-being, democratic deliberation includes an expectation that people do not advocate positions from pure self-interest; instead, they seek solutions that are attentive to the common good (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). In this way, civic reasoning involves seeking solutions that promote a fair and just society and rectify current injustices—although what constitutes a fair and just society is itself an important matter for deliberation.

Given the complex range of capacities we aim to foster in young people, here the authors examine the pedagogical and curricular practices involved in developing civic reasoning and discourse in the context of K–12 schools. Specifically, this chapter explores three central questions:

- What pedagogical and curricular scaffolds are effective to help young people develop civic reasoning and participate effectively in high-quality discussion, deliberation, and debate?

- How do students' identities (racial, ethnic, political, etc.) influence how they experience and learn to engage thoughtfully with others about critical controversial issues?
- How can we best prepare and support educators to provide high-quality learning opportunities so that *all* students can further develop their civic reasoning, discussion, deliberation, and debate skills?

In what follows, the authors examine the research to date that sheds light on these questions. This analysis draws heavily on research conducted within the realm of social studies education, given the field's strong affiliation with civic education; however, the authors also point to scholarship from other domains that informs these questions and illustrates how educators can foster civic reasoning and discourse across the disciplines.

### PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR SCAFFOLDS TO SUPPORT CIVIC REASONING

To ground these questions, we must first consider the broader goals toward which pedagogical and curricular scaffolds are oriented and the aims of schooling in a pluralistic democracy. An essential goal of a school curriculum is to educate students so that they will develop the knowledge, dispositions, attitudes, and skills needed to help create, sustain, and live in a diverse democracy, public spaces, and global community in which all groups can and will participate with equal protection under the law. To that end, pedagogical and curricular interventions in schools must be reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and lived experiences that students bring to the classroom (Howard, 2003, 2020). Furthermore, civic reasoning should seek solutions that promote and sustain a more just democratic society.

Moreover, effective curricula must offer a comprehensive historical lens and a more inclusive accounting of history that acknowledges historic injustices in U.S. history, such as those that have led to marginalization of multiple groups (Brown & Brown, 2010). Finally, effective curricular and pedagogical scaffolding must be centered on a quest for democratic, equitable citizenship—a quest that is tied to the need to recognize, respect, and embrace people's participation in multiple cultural practices associated with race/ethnicity, language, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and assumptions about ability.

There is good reason to think strategically about how to establish the classroom conditions for civic reasoning and discourse; research illustrates that courses such as those in government, democracy, law, history, or economics clearly support students' civic learning (Gould et al., 2011; Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017). In particular, classroom civic learning opportunities have a significant impact on students' commitments to civic participation (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). In fact, Kahne and Sporte (2008) found that classroom-based experiences had the most significant impact of those factors tested (e.g., extracurriculars) with predominantly low-income students of color when controlling for other background experiences and demographics. This suggests that focusing on pedagogy and curricula in courses that offer civic learning opportunities may support students who have not always had a voice or felt empowered to participate in our democracy (Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Lo, 2017). However, what pedagogical

and curricular scaffolds allow teachers to establish the conditions for high-quality civics learning in the classroom?

### Curricular Scaffolds

In order to support the development of high-quality civic reasoning and discourse in youth, research points to a variety of curricular supports that may be generative. The research discussed below suggests that curricular scaffolds can support civic reasoning and discourse by providing an inquiry orientation, identifying authentic controversies to investigate, and providing models of how to leverage students' lives, experiences, and knowledge to become a part of the curriculum.

A key overarching approach across high-quality civics learning opportunities found in the literature is an emphasis on the value of inquiry-oriented instruction focused on deeper learning. However, across the curriculum, there is a persistent orientation to content knowledge as fixed information, which implies that the teacher's role is to impart that information and the student's role is to memorize it. State standards and high-stakes assessments tend to reify this orientation. For example, a comparison study conducted by the Education Commission of the States (n.d.) showed that existing civics standards focus primarily on the historic origins of the Constitution and its structures and functions. While having background knowledge is certainly important and impacts how students think about civic issues (e.g., Shreiner, 2014), an emphasis on knowledge alone can lead to imparting information without question and distilling civics down to a series of vocabulary terms along with rights and responsibilities of citizens. Furthermore, emphasizing the acquisition of fixed bodies of knowledge comes at the cost of supporting other aspects of civic reasoning and discussion, deliberation, and debate: when information is fixed, there is typically little to debate and diverse voices can be marginalized or silenced. Thus, if civic reasoning, discussion, deliberation, and debate skills are not explicitly called for, teachers may not prioritize them.

Research suggests, then, that one important way to support high-quality civic reasoning and discourse is through a reorientation of curricular frameworks and state requirements. The National Council for the Social Studies' C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013) demonstrates one effort to increase opportunities for civic reasoning through the framework's foregrounding of inquiry as a curricular anchor. The C3 Framework is intended to serve as a guide for states that are revising their state standards and for practitioners creating curricula so that an inquiry orientation becomes the norm of social studies and civic learning. The Inquiry Design Model (Swan et al., 2018) is another resource to guide teachers in developing inquiry-oriented curricula. Similarly, some states have begun to implement curricular requirements that mandate the teaching of various elements of civic reasoning and discourse. The state of Illinois, for example, recently passed legislation that requires high school students to take a semester of stand-alone civics that includes not only instruction on government institutions but also current and controversial issues discussions, service learning, and simulations of democratic processes (see Illinois General Assembly HB 4025, 2015). While these curricular changes offer promise, research has not yet explored the extent to which these changes will impact teachers' practice.

In addition to foregrounding inquiry and featuring elements of civic reasoning and discourse in curricular frameworks, because high-quality civic reasoning and discourse rely on the participation and inclusion of diverse citizens, the curricula and perspectives that are represented in civic education spaces should reflect our pluralistic democracy. This can happen through making the formal school curriculum more inclusive and less White and Eurocentric, selecting civic topics that highlight democratic complexity, and using youth themselves—their knowledge and experience—as curricula.

Indeed, it is not only knowledge of traditional civic education topics (e.g., political institutions), but also knowledge of history and the framing of dominant narratives within societies that shape youths' conception of their role and opportunities for civic participation (see Bellino, 2015, 2016; Busey & Walker, 2017; Ho, 2010; Santiago, 2017; Vickery, 2017). History is replete with accounts of how the "other" has been excluded and marginalized in a pluralistic and increasingly diverse society (Banks, 2017; Crocco & Davis, 2002; Marable, 2002; Parker, 2003; Santiago, 2019; Yosso, 2002). School curricula cannot avoid difficult issues, stifle diverse viewpoints, or prioritize the voices and histories of some at the exclusion of others (Tyson, 2003). For centuries, discrimination, exclusion, prejudice, and injustice have been challenged, protested against, and seen as a black eye in the nation's pursuit of becoming truly democratic (see Marable, 2002). Because prekindergarten–12 public schools are typically the most diverse spaces that youth frequent, these schools hold promise as settings to instill the appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions for living in a diverse and inclusive democracy (Parker, 2010). As Banks (2008, pp. 131–132) wrote:

When universal citizenship is determined, defined, and implemented by groups with power and when the interests of marginalized groups are not expressed or incorporated into civic discussions, the interests of groups with power and influence will determine the definitions of universal citizenship and the public interest.

Civics curricula should incorporate the interests, viewpoints, and voices of all members of our diverse society.

Furthermore, to advance civic reasoning and discourse, research indicates that curricula must include the authentic controversies and contradictions that animate our democracy (Abu El-Haj, 2007). In civic education, teachers are typically hesitant to discuss controversial issues in the classroom (e.g., Hand & Levinson, 2012; Hess, 2009a; Journell, 2011) and instead tend to focus on the "facts:" the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the three branches of government, or any concept on a laundry list of important, albeit sanitized, ideals of our democratic values (Brown & Brown, 2011). The current polarized political climate has made teachers and administrators even more reticent about bringing up "sensitive" or "political" issues in the classroom (Rogers et al., 2017), often avoiding them in an effort to stay neutral or non-partisan (Sue et al., 2009). This is particularly true when the controversial issues focus on race and racial identity (e.g., Bolgatz, 2005; Sue, 2015; Walsh, 2008), or other "hard history" about racism, sexism, genocide, and oppression (Shuster, 2018)—despite the fact that civic educators have been calling for engaging with such issues for decades (see Hunt & Metcalf, 1968).

Although democratic ideals are important for students to learn (Parker & Lo, 2016a)—helping students develop high-quality civic reasoning requires that teachers

help students examine such ideals in all their complexity (Lo, 2019). While some students may see the principles laid out in the Constitution as foregone conclusions, other students' life experiences may cause them to view the Bill of Rights as a list of hypocrisies. As Cohen et al. (2018, p. 7) explain, race, ethnicity, and identity are significant influences on young people's daily experiences with civic life; for example, they note that "youth of color often have political knowledge regarding the unequal implementation of democracy that white youth do not have or do not recognize." Yet, existing civic education programming typically fails to capitalize on the experiential political knowledge that youth—especially those whose experiences have typically been marginalized—bring to classrooms.

Thus, in order to support high-quality civic reasoning and enable students to make sense of their lived experiences in an inequitable system, the knowledge that young people themselves bring to the civics classroom needs to be viewed as important curricular material. Teachers must strike a balance between highlighting democratic ideals and acknowledging realities of lived experiences (e.g., how do students deal with issues of police brutality when the Constitution says that all people are created equal or that there is due process?), and curricula should include deep discussions about the conflicts that exist between democratic ideals and students' lived experiences. The proposed "Lived Civics" approach to civic education is one example of how educators might bring race, ethnicity, and identity to the forefront and explicitly address how power and oppression operate (Cohen et al., 2018). Curricular approaches that center youth experiences should position students to both critically examine sources of injustice they experience and examine the history of resistance in their communities so that they gain an understanding of the political pathways others have taken to push against structural injustices and develop new policies and practices.

One example of a curriculum that centers youth knowledge is the action civics program Project Soapbox, in which youth choose a community issue of importance to them and then develop and deliver a speech to their peers and community members, often drawing on and incorporating personal experiences to build a case for action. Research among predominantly youth of color demonstrated that students who participated in the curriculum reported increased confidence in their rhetorical skills as well as greater empathy for others—dimensions of civic reasoning that were shaped in part by the personal experiences that many students drew on in crafting and delivering their speeches (Andolina & Conklin, 2018, 2020).

### **Pedagogical Scaffolds**

Attention to the nature of the curriculum provides one avenue to support high-quality civic reasoning, but scaffolding students' civic reasoning skills and enabling them to participate effectively in high-quality discussion, deliberation, and debate also necessitates careful consideration of the pedagogy that brings students into conversation with that curriculum. In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938, p. 13) argued that "all genuine education comes about through experience." Discussion, deliberation, and debate, much like democracy, needs to be experienced by students in order for them to internalize democratic values, ideas, and beliefs. Four initiatives recommended by civic education experts (Gould et al., 2011; Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017)

work against the content-as-fixed-information norm by presenting different instantiations of inquiry-oriented instruction focused on deeper learning that enable students to experience civic reasoning and discourse, including deliberation and discussion of controversial issues, simulations, action civics, and news media literacy. Next, the chapter highlights examples from each of these areas of work, along with additional pedagogical approaches that demonstrate promise for supporting students' civic learning: scaffolded listening and case studies.

### *Deliberation and Discussion*

Engaging young people in the deliberation and discussion of public issues has gained traction as one important pedagogical approach for fostering their civic learning. Open discussion of issues in society and classroom discussion, including the discussion of controversial public issues, predict a wide range of valuable civic outcomes, including increased political knowledge, efficacy, political interest, tolerance, trust, participation, and expected and actual electoral participation (see Barton & Avery, 2016; Hess, 2009a; Kahne et al., 2013). Hess and McAvoy's (2015) study of political discussions in high school classrooms illustrated, for example, that participation in high-quality political discussions led students to place significant value on hearing the diverse perspectives of their peers, see disagreement as a normal part of democratic life, and view political issues as being more complex than they had previously thought. Other studies have shown that students who engage in thoughtful deliberations around race are more capable of understanding discrimination, prejudice, and injustice (Milner, 2013; Nagda et al., 2003; Parker, 1998); they tend to listen to and learn from multiple perspectives (Hess, 2002); and research suggests that they are more likely to become the kinds of leaders who are motivated and equipped to make institutional change through battling racism and transforming racist institutions (Flynn, 2012; Howard, 2003; Nagda et al., 2003). While much of this research has centered on social studies classrooms, research has illustrated that this important civic learning can occur across the curriculum, such as through students' engagement in analysis of literary texts that focus on civic issues (see Mirra, 2018) and through structured student dialogue that alternates between verbal and written exchanges focused on social issues (see Kuhn, 2019).

However, teaching students to "effectively" participate in classroom deliberations, discussion, and debate is complex because participation requires appropriately using a collection of skills, including self-regulation. A participant needs to make judgments about how to say something, when to say something, and when it is best to say nothing. Classroom discussion also differs from public discussion because, in the K–12 setting, it is a discussion among novices. Consequently, a teacher needs to nurture the willingness to participate while also developing the skills of good participation.

A robust body of research has demonstrated that controversy is a teaching tool that can be used effectively to support students' learning to discuss and deliberate political and public policy issues (e.g., Hess, 2002, 2009a, 2009b; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Hess & Richardson, 2017/18). Through study of successful teachers, Hess has identified key principles that support teaching of controversial issues in the classroom. These include creating a classroom climate that welcomes all students and their perspectives; explicitly teaching students *how* to participate effectively and thoughtfully in

discussions of controversial civic issues (e.g., how to ask clarifying questions, how to use different kinds of evidence to support a claim); planning discussions carefully, including identifying open (not settled) political or public policy issues without a single right answer; providing students with opportunities to learn about the topic of discussion and with a model for discussion to structure their work together; providing multiple opportunities for discussion; and investigating issues that have meaning for students (Hess, 2009a, 2009b; Hess & Richardson, 2017/18). This chapter briefly explore some of these principles in greater detail.

**Setting the classroom climate.** In *Talking to Strangers*, Danielle Allen (2004) notes the important role that trust plays in a democracy. Attending to the classroom climate is necessary for building the trust that students need for discussion to go well, and indeed, the literature is clear on the importance of discussion and open-classroom climate in civics classrooms (e.g., Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983; Hess, 2009a; Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013; Levinson et al., 2012; Torney-Purta, 2002). To that end, students should build relationships by learning each other's names, getting to know each other's interests, laughing together, and becoming a learning community. Laying this groundwork to create a classroom climate that welcomes all students, including the multiple and conflicting views they may bring, is an often neglected but vital part of preparing students for discussion.

**Planning for discussion.** Parker and Hess have made significant contributions to understanding the kind of planning that is involved in supporting successful discussions of civic issues. Parker's (2003) work identifying generative texts and questions to discuss, and Parker and Hess's (2001) typology of different possible forms and purposes for classroom discussions have supported novice and veteran teachers in planning for and leading effective discussions.

**Providing structure.** Parker and Hess (2001) argue that a helpful starting point is for educators to teach "with" and "for" discussion. Teaching with discussion treats discussion as a learning activity that helps students deepen their understanding of the content. Teaching for discussion involves making the norms and skills related to discussion explicit. Importantly, it treats discussion as a skill to be learned and improved on (Hess, 2009a; Parker & Hess, 2001). Using structured discussion strategies such as those identified by Parker and Hess (2001) help students develop the skills associated with civic reasoning.

There is a growing body of discussion protocols that engage students in discussions that include Socratic seminar, Structured Academic Controversy (SAC), fishbowls, pinwheels, town hall meetings, and structured peer-to-peer, technology-mediated discourse (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012; Gonzalez, 2015; Kuhn, 2018, 2019; Parker, 2003; Ritchhart et al., 2011). Of these, SAC, developed by educational psychologists Johnson and Johnson (1993), is one protocol that has been frequently studied because it scaffolds students to engage in what the creators term "constructive controversy" (Johnson & Johnson, 1979). In a SAC, students move from low-risk paired discussion to a small group discussion with assigned roles, to more freeform small group discussion, and lastly to whole class discussion. Students work from common materials, know when

and for how long they will speak, and engage in argumentation. This protocol has been implemented widely across the curriculum and across age levels, from science deliberations focused on energy and environmental issues (see Johnson & Johnson, 1988) to social studies deliberations focused on juvenile justice and fair trade (see Avery et al., 2013, 2014).

Johnson and Johnson (1993) studied SAC and found that the strategy improves students' ability to engage in perspective taking, which is understood as being able to identify why others might reason differently about an issue. More recently, Avery et al. (2014) studied teachers using the SAC to investigate whether, post-participation, students reported improved knowledge about the issue and whether they showed more ability to engage in perspective taking than a control group. Their findings show that when compared to control classes that did not engage in SAC, participants scored significantly higher on a measure of perspective taking. This measure asked students to list reasons for and against an issue that they had not discussed.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that the skill modeled in the SAC had some transference when considering another issue. Second, they found that in deliberation classes, there was less variation of opinion after participating in the SAC, which suggests that the strategy may help people find common ground.

Hess and McAvoy (2015) also observed that these sorts of structures have an equalizing effect on discussion; the structures force those who talk too much to hold back and make space for those who hesitate to share and get into the conversation. Structures also reinforce the norms of discussion, often providing students with language (e.g., sentence starters) that models how to disagree.

Similarly, Kuhn and colleagues have studied a form of structured, peer-to-peer discourse that alternates between verbal and written exchanges (Kuhn, 2018, 2019; Kuhn et al., 2013, 2016). Paired students verbally discuss a social issue with each other, engage electronically in writing with successive pairs with opposing views, participate in a whole class debate, and finally craft a written argumentative essay in the form of a newspaper op-ed. Studies of this curriculum have demonstrated that students learn to uphold norms of discourse as participants in this community of practice and develop both argumentative writing skills and dialogic skills (Kuhn, 2018, 2019; Kuhn et al., 2013, 2016).

### *Simulations*

Simulations and role-plays have a long history in the social studies (Baranowski & Weir, 2010; Druckman & Ebner, 2008; Shaftel & Shaftel, 1967), and are another set of pedagogical tools that teachers have used to advance students' civic learning. One program of research focuses on augmenting the Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. Government and Politics course by integrating five political simulations. These simulations support in-depth learning and balance the typical emphasis on breadth and factual recall in such a course. The simulations included Supreme Court hearings or Town Hall meetings and involve students playing roles that are "truthful" in reflecting reality, yet simplified (Parker et al., 2018, p. 256). Across a range of studies, Parker and his team

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson and Johnson (1993) looked at changes in perspective taking on the issue discussed.

(2011, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2018) have found that including simulations in the course supported students in learning “21st-century skills” and engaging meaningfully with the content when students also read texts with support during the simulations. At the same time, students in these studies did as well or better than their peers in traditional AP Government courses on the AP exam.

Role-plays and simulations have also shown potential to engage students and defuse some of the controversies that may arise in discussions. Findings from a past research study suggest that assigning roles offers a low-stakes entry point for students to engage with contentious issues (Lo, 2015). In a sense, the role acts as a *portal to plurality*—a gateway into the issues around definitions of “the good life” in a pluralistic liberal democracy. The stakes are low because everyone in the class is assigned a role, and students have the opportunity to try an opinion behind the safety of their roles without needing to “out” their own opinions about the issue. Importantly, not all topics are worthy of role-play, especially if the roles are derogatory, inauthentic, or portray a skewed sense of history that may induce trauma.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, this low-stakes entry into discussing controversial issues may help students practice civil dialogue and civic reasoning while learning to see multiple perspectives.

### *Action Civics*

Action civics has emerged more recently as another approach to supporting students’ civic reasoning and identity development, and a growing consensus of research links action civics curricula and practices to positive outcomes. Action civics practices are grounded in the theory that when youth voice and expertise are valued, and young people have authentic opportunities for expression, engagement, and reflection, then powerful civic learning can occur, thereby narrowing the civic empowerment gap and strengthening our democracy (i.e., Gingold, 2013; Warren, 2019). In action civics, students identify authentic issues of importance to them and their communities and are provided with guidance, skill instruction, and opportunities that enable them to “do civics and *behave as citizens*” (Levinson, 2012, p. 32).

An emerging body of studies focused on various action civics programs establish a link between action civics curricula and a host of promising outcomes, including civic skills such as public speaking. Case studies of a range of action civics programs have demonstrated positive outcomes associated with key action civics components such as an emphasis on student voice, and the creation of open classrooms where students discuss and debate current events (Battistoni, 2004; Berman, 2004; Blevins et al., 2016; Feldman et al., 2007; Kahne et al., 2006; LeCompte & Blevins, 2015; Syvertsen et al., 2009; Walling, 2007). More recently, Andolina and Conklin’s (2018, 2020) study of the action civics public speaking curriculum Project Soapbox identified several factors that shaped students’ greater confidence in their public speaking skills and increased valuing of listening to their peers’ experiences with action civics; these included student interest in the topic under investigation, opportunities for students to practice (in this case, speeches), classroom climate, and scaffolding and resources embedded in curriculum materials.

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2014/tonguetied> for warnings against using role-play to teach about slavery.

In redesigning the U.S. history course to focus on civic education, Rubin (2012) identified five key pedagogical practices, one of which was action civics. In further investigating youth participatory action research, a form of action civics, Rubin et al. (2017) explore key challenges in integrating the goals of action, authenticity, and youth empowerment inherent in action civics within the realities of classroom life that is typically shaped by adults, extrinsically motivated, and content focused. These challenges include preserving authenticity, managing conflicting goals, and navigating tensions around authority. Rubin and Hayes (2010) have also found that connecting students' lives and experiences to the topics under study is centrally important to successful civic learning in different contexts, yet challenging to do well.

### *News Media Literacy*

A relatively new area of research has already shown the challenges students face in careful reading and assessment of online material (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017; McGrew et al., 2017, 2018). This work has made it abundantly clear that people of all ages need to become more media savvy and discriminating when they read materials online. In one study in a university setting, two 75-minute lessons focused on a few heuristics for evaluating the credibility of online materials were sufficient to improve university students' assessment of online content (McGrew et al., 2019). In another study conducted in a high school setting, eight lessons focused on explicit instruction in digital fact-checking strategies supported 11th grade students in significantly improving their assessment of online material (McGrew, 2020).<sup>3</sup>

### *Listening, Transactive Discussion, and Empathy*

While the exchange of ideas through both speaking and listening in political classroom discussions is vital, as noted earlier, civic reasoning involves the ability to listen to others, making listening an essential component of civic reasoning and discourse that should be cultivated. Democratic theorists as well as experts on socio-emotional development have argued that interpersonal practices such as attentive listening—particularly to those different from ourselves—engenders empathy, allows for vulnerability, builds relationships, and develops a sense of connection among individuals, which are democratic orientations that lead, in turn, to broader outcomes, such as building trust and bridging political rifts (Allen, 2004; Cramer & Toff, 2017; Levine, 2013; Weissberg et al., 2015). According to Parker (2010), listening is crucial for discussion, and it is particularly important to cultivate the skills for listening across difference because “Equitable and trustworthy conjoint living is not only a matter of being heard but also of hearing others” (p. 2827).

There is some research that suggests avenues for the cultivation of listening for civic purposes, both empirically and theoretically. Hess and McAvoy's (2015) study, for example, illustrated that high-quality political discussions developed high school students' beliefs in the importance of listening to many sides before developing a position and the recognition that hearing different perspectives helped them clarify their own views.

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<sup>3</sup> These lessons are available for free online at [sheg.stanford.edu](http://sheg.stanford.edu).

Meanwhile, Andolina and Conklin's (2018, 2020) study of Project Soapbox in English and Social Studies classrooms found that features of the curriculum—the expectation that all students deliver their speeches in front of each other and the recommendation that teachers establish an authentic, highly supportive audience—facilitated students' careful listening to one another. Listening to one another, in turn, led students to feel greater connection to their peers, gain a deeper understanding of their peers' experiences, and develop an enhanced appreciation for perspectives other than their own.

One proposal for fostering listening comes from Nucci's (2016) suggestion to revitalize Berkowitz and Gibbs's (1983) seminal work on transactive discussion and combine it with Laden's (2014) notion of responsive engagement. Transactive discussion is "reasoning that operates on the reasoning of another" (p. 402), where individual transacts are moments when individuals engage with the reasoning of their discussion partner (Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983). Representational transacts involve the listener simply restating or representing the speaker's reasoning, and operational transacts involve the listener operating on or transforming the speaker's reasoning. Transactive discussion is similar to Laden's (2014) notion of responsive engagement, in which individuals genuinely consider the ideas and thoughts of their discussion partners. Whereas Laden considers responsive engagement as an active form of social reasoning, Berkowitz and Gibbs see transacts as moments when individuals learn to develop ideas through reasoning. Both contend that genuine listening and reasoning with other ideas are important for the development of new ways of thinking.

Mirra (2018) suggests pathways to cultivating "critical civic empathy"—a form of empathy that acknowledges the role of power and privilege in shaping our interpretation of others' experiences, is public in nature, and leads to a form of empathy anchored by "mutual humanization" (p. 10). She showcases teachers who use stories and literary analysis to foster critical civic empathy, schools that employ debate grounded in humanization to foster students' recognition of multiple perspectives, and educators who engage students in youth participatory action research to cultivate agency and empathy.

### *Case Studies*

Finally, normative case studies (NCS) are a structured way for students to engage in the kind of civic discourse and deliberation that can help support civic reasoning and build understanding of pluralism. NCS are "richly described, realistic accounts of complex ethical dilemmas that arise within practice or policy contexts, in which protagonists must decide among courses of action, none of which is self-evident as the right one to take" (Levinson & Fay, 2016, pp. 5–6). By presenting genuine, open ended dilemmas that have no clear, correct answers (Thacher, 2006), NCS prompt students and teachers to jump into purposeful discussion that embraces complexity and nuance, multiple perspectives, and issues that they may otherwise feel embarrassed or incompetent to talk about (Levinson, 2015).

Across all of these civic education practices, there is a common theme of active engagement in inquiry and investigation and a focus on deeper learning while explicitly supporting the development of knowledge and skills. The research reviewed here suggests that by integrating these pedagogical practices and supports, teachers and

students may engage in productive discussions, dialogue, analysis, and listening in the classroom and support students' civic reasoning.

### **Lessons from Research in Other Areas of Social Studies Education**

Inasmuch as classroom work on civic reasoning involves inquiry into complex issues that have a range of plausible responses, evaluating and learning from complex texts, and discussion or deliberation, lessons learned from work on historical reasoning and social studies education more broadly may be useful. Fred Newmann's (1990) work remains a touchstone for specifying aspects of social studies instruction that create the space for students to engage in authentic intellectual work; arguably, civic reasoning and discussion, deliberation, and debate constitute authentic intellectual work in social studies education. Newmann (1990) and Newmann and Wehlage (1993) highlight the importance of the degree of higher order thinking, depth of knowledge, connection to world, substantive conversation, and social support for student achievement in classrooms where authentic intellectual work is supported.

Research that has focused on other kinds of authentic intellectual work in social studies such as historical thinking with sources, constructing and critiquing arguments, discussion of complex questions and texts, and conveying arguments in writing has found several key design principles to scaffolding students' and teachers' work toward these ends in classrooms (Monte-Sano et al., 2019). These include providing space for students to connect to the topic and extend background knowledge (Epstein, 2000; Goldberg, 2013; Reisman, 2012), along with opening up space for deliberation and interpretation through investigation of compelling or central questions with multiple plausible responses or controversy and offering or seeking out multiple perspectives in the sources under investigation (Monte-Sano, 2008, 2012; Monte-Sano & Allen, 2019; Reisman, 2012). Further design principles support literacy development in the context of historical inquiry—including reading complex texts, listening, speaking, writing (De La Paz et al., 2017; Fitzgerald & Palincsar 2019; Monte-Sano, 2008), and supporting analytical or disciplinary thinking/reasoning about evidence and claims—both their own and those of others (De La Paz et al., 2017; Fitzgerald & Palincsar 2019; Monte-Sano, 2008; Reisman, 2012). Finally, cultivating discussion, deliberation, and discourse about texts that is welcoming to a broad range of students (Applebee et al., 2003; Nystrand et al., 1998; Reisman et al., 2018) and designing assignments to support students' reasoning and provide a real-world purpose and audience for student work products, connecting past with present where possible (Goldman et al., 2016; Monte-Sano & Allen, 2019; Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012; Monte-Sano et al., 2019; Newmann, 1990), are key principles for scaffolding teachers' and students' work. These principles may apply when working toward the goal of supporting students' civic reasoning, though the authors are not aware of research that has tested these relationships.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

Looking across the curricular and pedagogical scaffolds that are effective to help young people develop civic reasoning and participate effectively in high-quality civic discourse, there is considerable research that points to promising practices, both at

broad and finer-grained levels. With regard to pedagogical practices, there is considerable evidence that engaging young people in various forms of deliberation and discussion of public issues provides valuable experience with civic discourse and involves many important aspects of civic reasoning, including critical thinking, listening, and valuing multiple perspectives. This research also gives guidance on key principles and practices for successful teaching of controversial issues, such as creating a welcoming classroom community climate, explicitly teaching students central skills for participating in discussion, planning discussions carefully, identifying generative issues for students to discuss, and providing various discussion models.

Meanwhile, smaller sets of studies provide cases of promising practices, many of which warrant further exploration. Specific forms of political simulations have been shown to foster important skills as well as political knowledge, while research on other forms of role-play and simulation suggests these pedagogies have the potential to offer engaging opportunities for students to engage with the multiple perspectives of contentious issues in low stakes ways, provided that the content of the simulations is selected judiciously. Action civics programs and pedagogies, too, have demonstrated ways of creating open classroom climates, fostering students' public speaking skills and sense of voice, and creating opportunities to listen carefully to others' experiences. Recent work focused on online materials has highlighted the need for students to learn how to reason carefully and discern truth of online information and has suggested some forms of explicit instruction that allow students to gauge the veracity of online materials. Other work points to ways to support careful listening and empathy, while case studies are another promising pedagogy for helping students build understanding of pluralism and practice discussion that engages complexity and multiple perspectives. Finally, work in other areas of social studies education is suggestive of ways to support many civic competencies among students.

While this work has demonstrated some important ways to foster various elements of civic reasoning and discourse, there are many areas that warrant further exploration. For example, there is a need for more research to look at the effects of various models of discussion and the impact of different discussion models on important aspects of civic reasoning. It is also unknown whether students actually get better at argumentation as a result of these strategies. Studies often measure changes in civic attitudes and knowledge, but do participants also become better at identifying good reasons and evidence? Additionally, more research is needed on how the identities of student participants contribute to varying impacts of these pedagogical practices. There has been less work that helps us understand some of the interpersonal aspects of these pedagogical practices and how one might investigate the development of some harder-to-capture aspects of civic reasoning, such as empathy and listening. Furthermore, more research is needed that explores how educators cultivate students' understanding of various democratic values—both their own and others.

In terms of curricular scaffolds for civic reasoning and discourse, there are many suggested paths that would benefit from empirical support. For example, while there is considerable understanding about curricular omissions of diverse communities, the persistent Whiteness of curriculum, the avoidance of complex topics like racism, and the lack of incorporation of students' lived experiences into curricula, less is known about the outcomes of students' engagement with more inclusive curricula

that include topics that highlight and engage democratic complexity, controversy, and contradictions, and use youth knowledge and experience as curricular material. More research is needed that examines how such a curriculum specifically supports students' civic reasoning and discourse. Similarly, current research provides suggestions of how inquiry-oriented curricular frameworks and standards that explicitly call for civic reasoning and discourse may be helpful for prioritizing civic reasoning and discourse, but there is a need to examine the links between the implementation of these frameworks and students' development of civic reasoning and discourse to determine how, if at all, these curricular supports are helpful.

### THE ROLE OF STUDENTS' IDENTITIES

While the previously-mentioned evidence points to various curricular and pedagogical scaffolds that support the development of young people's civic reasoning and enable them to participate effectively in high-quality discussion, deliberation, and debate, as suggested above, young people do not enter the civic realm as blank slates. Identity has always had a significant influence on the manner in which people make meaning of their lives, realities, histories, and day-to-day experiences (Nasir, 2011) and are vital when it comes to students, their learning, and their experiences in schools and society. School curriculum and practices can help to celebrate, affirm, enhance, and build the identities of students (see Banks et al., 2005; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2014), or conversely, can make students feel as if their identities are unimportant, inferior, or non-existent. The complexity of racial, gender, cultural, political, and language identities bears greater importance in a multicultural society (Flenbaugh, 2016). To that end, schools can and should play a central role in creating brave spaces that allow multiple perspectives, diverse opinions, and controversial issues to be discussed and unpacked in a thoughtful, respectful, and civil manner (Hess, 2009a). Thus, students' identities matter, especially in a politically charged climate where issues such as immigration, homophobia/transphobia, police brutality, racial discrimination, gender inequities, and economic exclusion continue to plague millions of individuals. In the section that follows, the authors explore how students' identities (racial, ethnic, political, etc.) influence how they experience and learn to engage thoughtfully with others about critical controversial issues.

According to Banks (2017), students are more likely to develop a shared and connected commitment to and identification with a national identity and culture only when they believe that they are a meaningful part of the nation and that it acknowledges, reflects, and values their history, culture, and them as individuals. Students who have a strong sense of self, in which their identities are developed, are more likely to find positive ways to contribute to their communities and society. Therefore, school curricula can reinforce age-old ideologies of pathology, indifference, and exclusion, or seek to be a transformative agent that sees the contributions of all Americans. This means that the curriculum must do more than merely include diverse representations and identities, but must also teach how members of marginalized groups have resisted oppression and exclusion. Indeed, we cannot get to true problem solving that supports the common good if everyone's perspective is not represented, in part because we have an incomplete understanding of the problems our society faces.

### **Identity Interacts with History and Curricula to Shape Civic Learning**

The development of diverse identities matters because students' understandings about the self, both the public and private, and the important layers of their lives are profoundly shaped by their families, homes, schools, and communities. Learning theory tells us that students' identities, knowledge, and experiences are important bridges to extend their learning (e.g., Nasir et al., 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; National Research Council, 2005). The existence of master narratives and the impact of those narratives on the experiences of students of color in history classrooms has been well-documented (Brown & Brown, 2010; Epstein, 2000, 2010), although youth development is complex and context sensitive, and youth sources of coping are often underexamined (Spencer, 2008). Woodson (2016) explored the impact of such master narratives on Black youths' civic agency among nine low-income youth in a mid-sized Midwestern city participating in a work readiness program and identified with a behavioral or mental health diagnosis, and found that emphasis on risk and dehumanizing values and the de-emphasis of historical agency and collective agency undermined Black youths' sense of civic agency. Woodson (2016) has called for a dismantling of the master narrative and the establishment of a critical and race centered narrative that highlights both the diversity of civic activists who have engaged in racial struggle and the multiple forms of civic activism that are possible.

Meanwhile, in post-war Guatemala, Bellino (2016) found that the different ways in which curricula presented information about historical injustice shaped youths' civic identity in the present. Bellino documented the ways in which this phenomenon played out differently within two communities—Indigenous and rural compared with urban and elite—in ways that reflected the identities of students and adults in those communities and resulted in different conceptions of citizenship. Hence, talking to students, hearing their realities, and listening to their social, political, and cultural concerns will be vital to the manner in which the nation continues to create a more inclusive and diverse notion of civic discourse centered on students' identity and agency (Woodson, 2016).

Thus, much of the disconnect that occurs between home, school, and the community is a result of the manner in which the cultural realities that students experience in the home and community are not consistent with what is taught and valued at school (Howard, 2020)—a disconnect that students from varied cultural, religious, political, etc., backgrounds may experience depending on the particular schools that they attend. As a result, conflicting values, beliefs, and behavior that are taught by the school challenges the very idea of how students respond to the fundamental question of "Who am I?" This question becomes particularly salient during adolescence, when youth identity is often coalescing. Many U.S. schools continue to be centered on core values that do not reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic realities of many of today's students. Indeed, across time, the role and function of school has struggled to keep up with the country's ever-changing demographic realities. Thus, the idea of whose narrative will shape civic education remains.

Additionally, the "hard history" about racism, sexism, genocide, and oppression is generally absent from the curriculum (Shuster, 2018). Given the false representation of history such omissions convey, teachers' general unpreparedness in discussing these issues is damaging to all students but can be particularly detrimental to students of color (Brown & Brown, 2010, 2011; Combs, 2016; Lo, 2019). Some call it implicit bias

(Greenwald & Krieger, 2006), but Bonilla-Silva (2012) uses the phrase “racial grammar” to describe rhetorical moves that “[structure] cognition, vision, and even feelings on all sorts of racial matters” (p. 173). He suggests that racial grammar “[normalizes] the standards of white supremacy as *the* standards for all sorts of everyday transactions [thereby] rendering domination almost invisible” (p. 174). According to this view, racial grammar has the potential to shape and distort how students see themselves and one another. At the same time, Spencer (2008) highlights youths’ agency in making meaning of their lives and the importance of attending to youths’ coping strategies in the face of adversity. Considering the complex and context-sensitive nature of youth development (Spencer, 2008), in order for students to fully engage in all of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democracy, teachers may need to help them recognize and debunk the racial grammar that exists within the civics narrative while also building on youths’ existing sources of coping and resilience.

Finally, a great deal of work in history education highlights the intersections of youth identity and their learning of history as well, but does not connect these ideas specifically to civic learning (e.g., Bordonaro, 2016; Epstein, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Porat, 2004; Schweber & Irwin, 2003). Additionally, students engage with history in substantive and meaningful ways outside of the classroom, but do not always see the place for such engagement inside the classroom (Rosenzweig, 2000). Connecting the study of history and civics more explicitly could offer students opportunities to orient themselves in the world more fully through investigation into the past and present, enabling students to understand present challenges more completely and therefore positioning students to be better equipped to address current issues.

### **Learning Opportunities That Embrace and Build on Students’ Identities and Experiences**

Rubin (2007) and Rubin et al. (2009) report how youth from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds have widely divergent daily civic experiences that shape how they engage with and make sense of classroom-based civic learning opportunities. Based on her research, Rubin argues for connecting in and out of school civic experiences so that schools can support students in becoming active citizens. Similarly, in postwar Guatemala, Bellino (2015) found that two schools with historically oppressed Indigenous groups used their students’ daily experience with oppression as a way to study civic issues and that students in those contexts weigh the costs and benefits of political participation as they consider their role. In an elementary setting focused on a class project, the degree to which two students saw their own knowledge and experiences as relevant and were well positioned by the teacher in their interactions impacted their learning and sense of efficacy in “making a difference” (Mayes et al., 2016). Still, others argue that youth may participate more actively than adults perceive, but not in ways recognized by adults (e.g., Wood, 2015), particularly if those students have been marginalized in school or society.

Based on her research with diverse youth in urban contexts, Rubin (2010) suggests four overarching design principles to support students’ civic identity development in the context of social studies courses—in this case, the principles were tested successfully in U.S. history courses. According to Rubin (2010), civic education should “build upon

students' own experiences with civic life, including daily experiences with civic institutions," "provide opportunities for students to consider and discuss key controversies in civic life," and "build students' skills of discussion, analysis, critique, and research" (p. 144). Furthermore, "civic education should build students' knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a way that connects directly to their own concerns" (p. 145). Clay and Rubin (2019) develop these ideas further in defining *critically relevant civics* as an approach to civic learning rooted in the resources that students carry with them to school, grounding civic learning in the identities and experiences of students—a similar approach to the Lived Civics approach described earlier (Cohen et al., 2018).

### Differential Access to High-Quality Civic Learning Opportunities

Students' identities matter not only in relation to their experiences with curricula but also in terms of their access to high-quality civic learning—as well as their opportunities to be heard when high-quality civic learning opportunities are made available. In a large-scale study of civic learning opportunities in high school, White students, students going to college, and students who attended higher socioeconomic status (SES) high schools had more high-quality civic learning opportunities available to them than students of color and students in lower SES schools—a consequential "civic opportunity gap" (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Even when high-quality civic learning opportunities do exist—such as opportunities to engage in discussion and deliberation of public issues—students engage in these opportunities from unequal social locations. In *Talking to Strangers*, Allen (2004, p. 96) has this to say about the challenge of discussing public policy issues in an unjust society:

Debates over these issues (unemployment, welfare, taxes, affirmative action...) are politically divisive not only because they are substantively difficult but also because they give citizens superb opportunities to reveal what their fellow citizens are worth to them.

Allen (2004) and other political theorists have critiqued deliberative democratic theory for its initial lack of attention to how speakers are differently heard within a deliberative forum (Sanders, 1997; Young, 2002). This research draws attention to the fact that the perspectives of minoritized communities can be easily dismissed by a majority that finds their needs inconvenient and/or threatening to their privileged positions. As a result, the expectation of "reasonableness" can become a tool for exclusion. As Allen's (2004) quote reveals, these discussions also make the most vulnerable people in society the subject of discussion, at times positioning them as a problem to be solved and in other instances questioning the legitimacy of their identities. Both of these problems appear when teachers bring political issues into the classroom.

#### *The Problem of Who Is Heard*

When public policy issues come into the classroom, educators need to be aware of the ways in which social inequalities related to class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, ability, and language may affect who speaks and how they are heard. As one example, Hess and McAvoy (2015) describe the ways in which discussions in one

teacher's non-tracked classroom were affected by race and class. A White, male student who came from a two-professor household, had been accepted to an Ivy League college, and had spent a semester in Washington, DC, as a congressional page (p. 165) dominated discussions. In contrast, another student in this teacher's class was the daughter of immigrant parents from Southeast Asia, and rarely spoke in discussions because:

[other students] use a lot of hard words that, I mean, like when I talk, I like to use just simple words. But since they talk really professional, I don't want to, you know, talk to them. (p. 175)

Despite the teacher's efforts to create a classroom in which students felt comfortable with one another, the confidence and privilege of some students resulted in the silencing of others. Experiences such as these may deepen a sense of civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012) in students of color, who can feel as if the system works against them, even as they recognize their supposed membership within the system. This same study found that English Language Learners and students from lower SES backgrounds were significantly more likely to report that they hesitated to speak because they worried that they would be judged by their peers.

Students may also hesitate to speak because they hold minority views. Beck (2019) provides an in-depth discourse analysis of how one student, Jake, experienced a unit of study on same sex marriage. Jake, the only African American student in the class, was the one student who reported in a pre- and post-survey that he was opposed to marriage equality because it went against the moral teachings of his church. In an analysis of Jake's participation in class, daily reflections, final paper, and interview, Beck describes the ways in which Jake adopted a liberal anti-same sex marriage stance (based on a reading he had been assigned, written by a lesbian activist) and avoided making his religious beliefs explicit to the class. In the end, he was publicly supportive of marriage equality to his classmates, but in his final written reflection he said he was against legalizing same sex marriage. Beck notes that part of Jake's classroom behavior could be a response to holding the minority view in a class that was otherwise unanimously in favor of same sex marriage. Jake never exposed his true beliefs to his classmates and this seemed to preserve his sense of belonging with his peers. Others have found that students may not express their true beliefs if they hold a minority view or worry about peers' reactions (Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Journell, 2012).

### *The Problem of What Gets Said*

The other major concern related to identity and political discussions is the issue of fairness in the classroom. "Is it fair," many educators wonder, "to discuss an issue like same sex marriage (or transgender rights, affirmative action, or immigration) if the discussion is going to be sensitive to students who are already vulnerable in society?" The primary worry is that minoritized students will have to listen to (and possibly respond to) their classmates' ignorant comments about them. One study on microaggressions in college classrooms showed that students of color often experienced White students rejecting their experiences, subtly questioning their intelligence, and associating people

of color with criminality (Sue et al., 2009). This same study found that students of color also reported frustration with instructors who did not hear the insults or know how to respond when they did hear them. Research on high school discussions has found similar problems (Beck, 2013; Hess & McAvoy, 2015).

The relationship between fairness and discussions of controversial issues related to social justice involves many ethical questions and is an area still in need of research. Teachers need to think carefully about how they frame issues for discussion, how they will structure the talk, and whether they have prepared students with enough context for the discussion. An affirmative action discussion, for example, cannot be fair or worthwhile if students do not understand the history of racism and public schooling (past and present) as well as the complexities of policy implications, such as how affirmative action in college admissions privileges African American students from middle class backgrounds while students from low income backgrounds remain persistently underrepresented regardless of race/ethnicity.

Finally, considering deliberation and issues of social justice, the microaggression problem identified in the research shows that privileged students often do not know how to listen to minority views—particularly ones that make them uncomfortable. Intercultural dialogue is a different sort of democratic discussion most often associated with social justice education, because the aim is to create awareness about how people experience social exclusion/inclusion and power differences based on their identities (Kaplowitz & Griffin, 2019). While there is differential impact on particular populations of students when others fail to listen to minority views, the difficulty of listening to minority views pervades many classrooms and warrants attention across contexts: a White student in an ethnic studies class, for example, may feel reluctant to express beliefs that may not be shared by peers in the class. The tools and skills associated with dialogue may be essential precursors to effectively engaging in policy discussions.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

Looking across what we know about how students' identities influence how they experience and learn to engage thoughtfully with each other about critical controversial issues, research points to the importance of students seeing their identities represented in curricula and learning how all members of the nation have participated civically in the past and the forms of civic engagement that are possible. Some research in this area also offers cautions that master narratives and the ways curricula present information about historic injustices can shape youths' sense of agency and identity in important ways, sometimes diminishing youths' sense of civic agency—particularly if the curricular emphasis is on youth risk rather than agency and resilience. Research in this area also highlights the general absence of hard history in the curriculum and some teachers' problematic participation in the use of racial grammar.

While evidence points to many ways that students' identities are not valued in classroom spaces, researchers have also highlighted curricular and pedagogical tools that center youth knowledge and identities and allow young people—particularly youth of color—to see themselves and be seen as valued and capable civic participants. There are some existing practices that have shown how schools can support students' civic identity development by building on students' identities and civic experiences, although

more research is needed in this area that documents the impact of such approaches on students' civic reasoning. Some research has identified ways in which students' social identities and positioning shape their participation in deliberation, often reinforcing existing social hierarchies and enabling dominant perspectives to dominate classroom discourse. There is a need to have more work that explores the relationships between inequities and civic reasoning, examining questions such as how do inequalities create challenges for civic reasoning? Can civic reasoning help to address inequalities? If so, how? Under what conditions? Research in this area would also benefit from studies that take up the complexity of students' multiple, intersecting identities and opportunities to engage in civic reasoning and discourse in varying contexts, given the dynamic, context-sensitive nature of youth development (Spencer, 2008). Similarly, the field would benefit from more research that explores children's agency and the ways in which youth actively resist and make sense of the civic messages that surround them (see Corsaro, 2020). We also need research that examines how teachers can authentically and equitably engage all voices in the classroom and find ways to disrupt existing social hierarchies. Some of this work may need to happen through the preparation of educators, the topic that this chapter turns to next.

### **PREPARING AND SUPPORTING EDUCATORS TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY CIVIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Given that providing high-quality civic learning opportunities often rests in the hands of educators, this chapter now turns to research that illuminates how to best prepare and support educators to facilitate this learning. Although legislated civics requirements have gained momentum across the country and provide one leverage point for shaping civic learning practices, social studies teachers have not always been given support to teach these new requirements (Shapiro & Brown, 2018). Support is sometimes provided by school districts, but often the resources come from nonprofit organizations (e.g., Facing History and Ourselves, Mikva Challenge, Teaching Tolerance, etc.), which are not equally distributed across the country. Thus, teachers are not always equipped to engage students in civic reasoning, high-quality discussion, deliberation, or debate. The next section outlines research on what is known about the substantive aspects of equipping teachers with these capabilities, closing by highlighting the necessary policies and funding that must accompany these supports.

On an individual level, teachers' goals and dispositions, knowledge and understanding, and ability to enact instructional practices shape students' opportunities to learn (e.g., Hansen et al., 2018), suggesting domains for supporting and preparing educators. This section begins with an overview of these ideas before considering how to best prepare and support educators to develop the knowledge and skills needed to support students' civic learning.

#### **Teacher Goals, Visions, and Values**

Teachers' goals for teaching their particular subject matter likely have a role in shaping students' classroom experiences. For example, many social studies educators view their work as being grounded in four major disciplinary areas with the overarching

goal of preparing citizens (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013). Teachers typically have a range of goals for teaching their subject matter, and may reserve the most challenging goals for students in more advanced classes (Raudenbush et al., 1993). In addition, standardized, high stakes assessments *may* influence teachers' goal setting; therefore, the focus of these assessments can shape students' learning experiences (e.g., Grant, 2001; Kelly et al., 2007). *If* civic reasoning, discussion, deliberation, and debate are core goals for teachers, how teachers conceive of citizenship, for example, can shape students' opportunities to learn in the classroom (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2004).

Just as Hess (2009a) found that skilled teachers of controversial public issue discussions carefully linked their purposes and practices, teachers aiming to support the development of students' civic reasoning should have both a vision and a set of practices that are consistent with democratic ideals such as justice, equality, and human rights (Joshee et al., 2017; Law, 2017). Reaching such goals has become increasingly challenging in the face of extreme political polarization, yet though the challenge is greater, the task is more important today than in recent memory.

Thus, teachers should also value engaging students across worldviews and lived experiences. Within a diverse and increasingly stratified society, students in the cultural mainstream as well as those on the margins of society must be informed of the realities of the "others" and must be introduced to tools, strategies, and disposition to understand, discuss, and ultimately address realities different from their own. In an era where unprecedented mass migration continues to shape the global landscape (Suárez-Orozco, 2019), students' ability to understand circumstances and challenges drastically different than their own will play an important role in addressing complex global problems such as climate change, worldwide hunger, poverty, xenophobia, and racism. Furthermore, teachers who successfully engage students in discussions about racism are more likely to become educational reform leaders (Buehler, 2013) and social justice leaders who promote an anti-racist stance (Ford, 2017). These embody the deliberative and civic skills that we hope young people can engage with in schools. Thus, teachers must prioritize having students learn about the range of human experience.

### **Knowledge of the Social Context of Civic Reasoning and Discourse**

In addition to their purposes, there are many important bodies of knowledge and understanding that teachers should possess. Given their role within the broader social and political context, educators who engage students in civic reasoning and discourse should have a deep understanding of the broader context in which their instruction is embedded and how contextual factors such as structural inequality, patterns of human migration, and inter/intra-national conflict may interact with their efforts at building students' civic capabilities (see Rubin, Abu El-Haj, & Bellino, Chapter 5 in this report, for further discussion).

### **Teachers' Identities, Self-Awareness, and Racial Literacy**

Another vital aspect of teacher understanding is a teacher's awareness of his or her own sociocultural identity and how that identity may shape his or her interactions in the broader world and in the classroom. Recent work in teacher education has

called for centering the subjectivities of both teachers and students to consider how these subjectivities shape classroom interactions (see Daniels & Varghese, 2020). Just as students' identities shape their engagement with civic reasoning and discourse, so, too, do teachers' identities shape the instruction that unfolds around civic reasoning and discourse. Thus, the preparation of educators for facilitating civic reasoning must attend to teachers' various subjectivities as well as teachers' racial literacy—the ability to discern and ask critical questions about the contemporary role of race in institutional structures and practices and the recognition that, despite being a social construction, this construction has tangible and deep impacts on student experiences and outcomes in education (e.g., Flynn et al., 2018).

### **Knowledge and Understanding of and Orientation Toward Students**

In addition to these sets of consciousness, teachers' knowledge and understanding of students shapes students' opportunities to learn civic reasoning and deliberation. Teachers' awareness of students' funds of knowledge, including the resources and experiences students bring to the classroom, can shape the learning opportunities they provide (Moll et al., 1992). Additionally, as illustrated in earlier sections of this chapter, of particular importance in social studies is teachers' understandings of how students identify with the historical or social issues being studied and how students might experience the representations and silence embedded in curriculum materials or texts (e.g., Epstein, 2010; VanSledright, 1998; Woodson, 2015, 2016). Rubin et al. (2016) found that integrating youth participatory action research into teacher education coursework effectively supported novice teachers in understanding their students better and responding to their students productively in instruction, while Andolina and Conklin (2020) found that some teachers used the Project Soapbox curriculum to learn about their students and guide their curriculum.

### **Knowledge of and Orientations Toward Civic Content**

Another central element for consideration in the preparation and support of educators is their understanding of civic knowledge, including knowledge of important silences in a curriculum, given that teachers' knowledge and understanding of social studies has direct implications for students' learning and classroom experiences (e.g., Fitchett & Heafner, 2017). This includes teachers' orientation to social studies as knowledge that is constructed and interpreted through inquiry (e.g., Monte-Sano, 2012) and therefore continuously recreated, critiqued, recycled, and shared (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2001). With regard to teaching controversial issues through discussion, in particular, teachers must understand what constitutes a discussion (and what discussion is *not* [e.g., recitation, lecture with periodic questions]) and what constitutes a controversial issue (e.g., topics that are not settled nor have one right answer) (Hess, 2009b).

Teachers' understanding should also include a broad framework that recognizes the ways in which racial oppression and systemic inequalities have shaped American history, our current society, and the civic curriculum and practices that are most typical in American schools (see Brown & Brown, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Thus, in a subject like social studies, content area knowledge also includes an awareness of dominant

narratives embedded in textbooks and other instructional materials (e.g., Patterson & Shuttlesworth, 2019) that can reify Whiteness and privilege dominant groups' histories while marginalizing, trivializing, or making invisible the role that oppressed groups have played in history (see Brown & Brown, 2011, 2015; Picower, 2009). While some teachers and students may feel uncomfortable with expanding the narrative to include accounts that expose the unequal access to core U.S. values, such as freedom, justice, fairness, and equal protection under the law, it is important to uncover the histories, stories, and experiences that have been told by countless people on the political margins about their struggle for and political organization for equal citizenship in the United States. Teachers need to be able to choose curricula that include the perspectives and influences of diverse groups as well as curricula that represent the particular students and cultural contexts in which they teach (see Banks et al., 2005). This might involve, for example, teachers engaging students in examining the complexity of culture and identity through learning about how some Indigenous cultures conceptualize gender and sexuality (Sheppard & Mayo, 2013), having students read literary texts authored by and centered on people with diverse gender, ethnicity, and cultural statuses to explore social, cultural, and political tensions (see Mirra, 2018), or having students examine the impact of a local coal power plant on neighborhood pollution (see Morales-Doyle, 2017).

### Knowledge of Pedagogy

Teachers also need knowledge of pedagogy, how students may think about the content, and how to connect the content and the student in meaningful ways through instruction (Ball et al., 2008; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Shulman, 1986). Being able to connect content and students requires teachers' racial literacy (e.g., Flynn et al., 2018), understanding of culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2014), and racial pedagogical content knowledge (Chandler, 2015; King & Chandler, 2016)—“teachers' racial knowledge and how it influences content and pedagogical choices” (King & Chandler, 2016, p. 6).

Also involved in teachers' knowledge of pedagogy is their need for language to describe particular pedagogical practices. Grossman and McDonald (2008) revisit Lortie's (1975) argument that teaching needs to develop a “common technical vocabulary” that will allow both novice and experienced teachers to talk about common practices (p. 123), asserting that without such a framework for teaching, research on teacher education cannot progress toward improving practice. Classroom discussion and deliberation is one common practice in need of a vocabulary.

Teachers must also have the inclination and skills associated with teaching—and not avoiding—challenging or difficult topics. A number of scholars have offered important insights on how best to address controversial issues, discussion, and debate in the school curriculum (Hess, 2008, 2009a, 2015; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Ho et al., 2017; Journell, 2016; McAvoy, 2016). Inherent in these important works have been reframing school curricula using an approach that is concept and issues-based, centered on high-quality public talk, and a pedagogical stance that challenges the traditional narrative of U.S. history and respects multiple viewpoints. As a result, concepts such as fairness, equality, meritocracy, and justice are reinterpreted and understood in a more critical lens.

### Knowledge of How to Enact Instructional Practices

Closely tied to teachers' knowledge of pedagogy—and linked to all of their other understandings—is teachers' knowledge of how to enact instructional practices. That is, teachers must not only know and understand; they must be able to enact instructional practices that support student learning (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Fogo, 2014; Grossman et al., 2009). Instructional practices range from eliciting, listening to, and responding to students' thinking to working with families in support of students to setting up and managing small groups to facilitating classroom discussions (e.g., Conklin, 2019; Davis & Boerst, 2014; Fogo, 2014). One instructional practice that is central to supporting civic reasoning is discussion facilitation. The specification of different structures and purposes for classroom discussion, how to select texts and questions for discussion, and how to identify controversial issues are all part of the instructional practice of discussion facilitation that must be learned (Hess, 2002, 2009a; Parker, 2003; Parker & Hess, 2001). Reisman et al. (2018, 2019) specify particular instructional moves that new teachers enact within discussions of history content.<sup>4</sup>

Attention to and ability to enact instructional practices in ways that support *all* students' learning is deeply rooted in teachers' knowledge and understanding as previously articulated (e.g., Conklin, 2019; Hess, 2009a, 2009b; Kavanagh & Danielson, 2019; Kavanagh et al., 2019). For example, to be able to facilitate a discussion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, teachers rely on different forms of knowledge (e.g., how their students might identify with DACA and personal experiences or knowledge that students would bring to this discussion; knowledge of what DACA is—its history, reasons for it, arguments for and against it—as well as knowledge of how the U.S. government is structured, executive actions, and checks and balances; knowledge of different pedagogical approaches to setting up a discussion of a controversial issue) *and* the ability to facilitate a discussion and implement discussion moves that welcome and value students' ideas and multiple voices, that acts on awareness of authority and positioning across participants, that positions students to listen to each other and build on or challenge each other's ideas, and that uses content and disciplinary understanding as resources. In facilitating productive discussions, teachers think about and conceive of using content as a space for inquiry and interpretation as well as know how to facilitate a discussion with a diverse group of students in a classroom space. To do this complex work, teachers need opportunities to learn about their students, about the content, and about pedagogy so that they have the understanding and the skills to enact this work in the classroom (e.g., what is civic reasoning, what can I do to enact civic reasoning in the real world, what civic reasoning resources and knowledge do students bring with them to the classroom, how do students develop civic reasoning over time, what instructional moves support students' civic reasoning and participation in discussion).

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<sup>4</sup> Although there have been important critiques of practice-based teacher education (e.g., Philip et al., 2018), a focus on instructional practice with new teachers does not necessarily sacrifice a focus on justice (e.g., Conklin, 2019; Kavanagh, 2016, 2018; Kavanagh & Danielson, 2019).

### Preparing and Supporting Educators

The previous discussion highlights the knowledge and abilities that research suggests teachers should have in order to support students' civic reasoning. The final question for this chapter, then, is how to prepare and support educators to do this important work. How do we cultivate teachers' capacities?

Teacher learning involves acquiring, modifying, or fine-tuning skills, knowledge and thinking, and sociocultural and situated understandings (e.g., of norms, identities, roles, and tools in educational contexts [see Russ et al., 2016]). In professional development (PD) opportunities, the teacher, the school, and the learning activities interact in different ways to influence teacher learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

#### *Cultivating Socio-Political Awareness*

Research in teacher education has highlighted some promising approaches to fostering teachers' awareness of their socio-political contexts. For example, teacher education programs have deliberately structured program coursework and experiences to help teacher candidates gain a complex understanding of the many overlapping layers of policy, geographic, and local district, school, and socio-cultural contexts (see Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Williamson et al., 2016). Other approaches have focused on creating opportunities for novice teachers to form genuine relationships to learn with and from local communities (e.g., Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Lee, 2018).

#### *Broad Approaches*

Research grounded in preservice teacher education has found particular pedagogies that are useful in supporting teacher learning, particularly conceptual tools and practical tools (Grossman et al., 1999, 2000). Conceptual tools include "principles, frameworks, and ideas about teaching, learning, and English language arts that teachers use as heuristics to guide their instructional decisions" (Grossman et al., 2000, pp. 633–634). Ideas about what constitutes discussion or controversy might be examples of conceptual tools for civic learning (e.g., Hess, 2009a, 2009b, 2015, 2017/18). Practical tools include strategies, practices, or resources that can be used directly and immediately in teaching (Grossman et al., 1999, p. 14). Examples of practical tools to support teaching civic reasoning might include structures for different discussions that are clearly laid out and tied to articulated purposes (e.g., Parker & Hess, 2001), along with approaches to critically examining texts, constructing and examining arguments, applying knowledge to new problems, and developing knowledge of text structures.

In teaching the instructional practices, a pedagogical approach of representing, decomposing, and approximating the target strategy or practice can support teachers in using practical tools in their classrooms (Grossman et al., 2009). Representations of a practice involves using examples of expert teaching and making hidden components that contribute to expertise visible. Decompositions involve identifying the work that is central to expert practice so that teachers can see and learn the practice. Approximations of practice include simulations of different aspects of teaching so that teachers can rehearse, gather feedback, reflect, and continue to improve. These pedagogies support teachers in learning the particular work and thinking involved in teaching (Grossman et al., 2009).

Another promising approach to teacher learning involves focusing on student work and thinking (e.g., Little, 2004). In studies across math, science, and social studies, researchers have found that attention to student thinking via analysis of students' written work or talk via video has created opportunities for teachers to develop their understandings of content, students, and pedagogy (Kazemi & Franke, 2004; Monte-Sano et al., 2017; Van Es & Sherin, 2008; Wilson, 2009; Windschitl et al., 2011).

In terms of structuring teacher learning opportunities, researchers have identified five features of effective PD, including a focus on deepening teachers' content knowledge; active learning opportunities for teachers to engage in meaningful analysis of teaching and learning (e.g., review student work, teach and receive feedback); coherence of PD with teachers' goals and expectations of teachers; sustained duration (including contact hours and span of time); and collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level (Desimone et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2008; Yoon et al., 2007). The National Academy of Education's Teacher Quality White Paper (Wilson, 2009) recommends that policy makers abide by these five features of effective PD and provide access to high-quality PD. The White Paper specifies that courses or programs of 40 hours over 12 months (or more) are most effective (p. 6). Archibald et al. (2011) agreed with these five features of effective PD and added teacher buy-in and time for PD embedded into the school day as core features of effective PD that policy makers should keep in mind. In subsequent work, Desimone and Garet (2015) shared new insights, specifically that improving teachers' content knowledge and inquiry-oriented instruction is harder than changing procedural classroom behaviors, that teachers vary in response to the same PD, that PD is more successful when it is explicitly linked to classroom lessons, that PD research and implementation must address contexts where there is high student and teacher mobility, and that leadership plays a key role in supporting and encouraging teachers to implement ideas and strategies that they learn in PD.

Different types and models of professional development reflect a range of purposes. As Kennedy (2006) explains, PD that is focused on transmission is less likely to increase teachers' professional autonomy and expertise whereas transformative PD is more likely to increase teachers' professional autonomy. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that transformative PD is more often found in high-performing countries and involves practices such as scheduling time for collaboration regularly in the school day, collective planning and assessment, including teacher research as part of the regular work load, and including teachers as leaders in PD. Perhaps similarly, Desimone et al. (2002) argue that reform-oriented PD (e.g., coaching, mentoring, study group or network) tends to include more of the features of effective PD than traditional PD (e.g., workshop, conference).

### *Specific Models*

Within civic reasoning, discussion, and deliberation, Hess's professional development work integrates many of the ideas raised (e.g., Hess, 2009b): explicit instruction in conceptual tools such as discussion and controversial issues, offering practical tools such as models for discussion, giving teachers opportunities to develop as adult learners by experiencing discussions of controversial issues, offering materials to

support instruction, and support for teachers as they learn to do the work of discussion facilitation in classrooms.

### *Learning to Lead Discussions*

Parker and Hess (2001) explained how having preservice teachers experience a good discussion using a SAC model was not enough for them to know how to use it, nor were they able to identify how the structure was modeling important features of a good discussion. This led Parker and Hess (2001) to articulate the distinction between “teaching with discussion” and “teaching for discussion.” Teaching for discussion happens when teachers make explicit the skills and norms of good classroom discussion. This is an important starting point for helping future teachers to understand the features of discussion. Parker and Hess (2001) also contribute a typology of three types of discussions: deliberation, seminar, and conversation. Making these (and other) distinctions clear, helps teachers to understand how each has a different purpose/aim, lends itself to a different type of question, and requires a different set of materials.

Such explicit instruction about the purpose of different types of discussion is an important first step toward providing teachers with the language and skills needed to engage students in discussion, but research shows that teachers who want to use discussion often struggle with designing and facilitating discussion. There are a number of complex skills that teachers need to develop in order to lead a *good* discussion. Being able to identify these skills and the micro moves that teachers make to deepen learning within discussions are necessary for supporting novice teachers.

Learning to prepare open ended questions is one important skill. Hess (2009a) helps teachers move toward this understanding by distinguishing between a “topic” (an event, place, or process) and an “issue” (a question of public policy) (p. 40). A further distinction can be drawn between an open issue and a closed or settled issue (Hess, 2009a; Hess & McAvoy, 2015). Ideally, teachers should aim for discussions about open questions. Kohlmeier and Saye (2019) identify the difficulty teachers have with identifying discussable questions in a study of four teachers learning to lead seminars. Even after collectively designing the discussion about the constitutional question of flag burning, two of the four teachers struggled to ask open ended questions that lead to real engagement with the text and the issue (they were also the two with the least amount of experience with seminars). In these two cases, the open question about whether flag burning is protected speech did not lead to genuine discussion because the teachers did not know how to ask questions that invited argumentation. Their overreliance on factual questions in a recitation style is a well-documented problem within the field (Nystrand et al., 2003; Reisman, 2015; Reisman et al., 2018). Helping teachers to name and recognize this as *not* being discussion is important for developing the skills for proper discussion. Another discussion move that could be explicitly taught includes Nystrand et al.’s (1998) use of the term “uptake” to describe moments in which a student’s comment is incorporated into a follow-up question by the teacher.

Additionally, in leading controversial issues discussions, teachers must learn to navigate incredibly complex decision making that is sensitive to the contexts in which they teach. Pace’s (2019) cross-national examination of teacher educators who work in polarized settings to prepare novice teachers to lead controversial issues discussions

offers important insights and raises crucial questions about how to help novice teachers navigate the risky territory that they may be embarking on. In societies that are culturally, religiously, and socio-politically divided, teachers must learn to weigh questions such as whether to avoid the “risk of inflammatory speech” and/or “allow more extreme voices to be heard” (Pace, 2019, p. 255). Much more research is needed to get at the range of complex skills that teachers need to lead discussions.

Some recent work on leading open discussion in the history classroom demonstrates where future research on facilitating controversial issues discussions could go. These studies also illustrate the type of explicit instruction about discussion that is often lacking in teacher education programs. In a set of papers on preparing teachers to engage students in text-based discussions in the history classroom, Reisman et al. (2018, 2019) and Kavanagh et al. (2019) developed a framework for facilitating historical discussions, consisting of four practices: “(a) engaging K-12 students as sense-makers, (b) orienting K-12 students to each other, (c) orienting K-12 students to texts as sources of historical knowledge and evidentiary warrants, and (d) orienting K-12 students to the interpretive practices of the discipline” (p. 280). The first two parts of this framework help form the concept of discussion as a “collective inquiry” and not recitation (Bridges, 1988). The second two give purpose to the discussion, which in this case is deepening disciplinary knowledge (Kavanagh & Rainey, 2017). These researchers were studying a particular type of discussion, the purpose of which is “to build collective knowledge and allow students to practice listening, speaking, and engaging in historical interpretation” (p. 279). This is a discussion that would fall under Parker and Hess’s (2001) label of a whole-class “seminar.”

Reisman et al. (2018) found that novice teachers faced some common struggles when learning to facilitate. First, some candidates had trouble “engaging students as sense-makers” because they were not asking open, interpretive questions during discussion and instead resorted to asking recall questions (p. 284). Second, without open ended questions, students do not have opportunities to build on each other’s ideas. Finally, novices had difficulty staying in what Reisman (2015) labels the “historical problem space.” In other words, they were not able to raise the discussion to historical interpretation and argumentation. The researchers conclude by noting that the candidates did not receive explicit instruction on how to facilitate this higher level of discussion, because much of the methods courses in this study focused on planning and enacting lessons that used discussion. They hypothesize that more explicit instruction about facilitation moves that “are tied to disciplinary questions, concepts, and skills” may help develop this skill in novice teachers (p. 290). A later study shows that students became more proficient when they entered their field placements and had additional support for facilitating discussion (Reisman et al., 2019).

The research related to teacher education and learning to facilitate discussion shows that this is one of the most difficult skills for novice teachers to develop. It looks as if teachers can become competent in executing particular discussion strategies (SAC, fishbowls, etc.), but they often struggle to move from the activity to a larger discussion that allows for true argumentation. In part, this is because discussion requires improvisation—the teacher needs to be ready to respond to an idea (or help students to respond to each other) in a way that deepens the speaker’s thinking and moves the discussion along for other students.

The research highlighted here focuses primarily on disciplinary reasoning and text-based discussions in the social studies classroom. There is more work to be done to investigate strategies that help students develop arguments (and not merely give reasons) within political discussions. More research on the effects of various discussion strategies (beyond seminar and SAC) would be helpful. Furthermore, it would be generative to explore how to develop argumentation skills in teachers. Part of good facilitation requires the teacher to get inside the arguments that students are giving and, on-the-fly, respond with a question that might provide a counterpoint, new piece of evidence, or identify a logical error. This requires some high-level thinking on the part of the teacher, and research could help the field learn how to develop these skills.

Outside of civic learning-focused PD, promising PD models (e.g., the National Writing Project, lesson study, and Learning Labs) that bring teachers together in community around content, students, and instructional practice may offer ideas that could be applied to supporting civic learning outcomes. The National Writing Project has been one of the most successful teacher networks to foster communities of educators coming together to develop as writers and as teachers of writing and ongoing learning together (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Lieberman & Wood, 2002).

Lesson study is another powerful tool for fostering teacher collaboration and learning. Originating in Japan and having been adapted in U.S. contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Fernandez, 2002; Lieberman, 2009), lesson study includes teams of teachers collaborating on lesson planning, teaching and observing the lessons, reflecting together on the lessons' strengths and areas for improvement, and revising and teaching the lesson again. In the United States, one of the major benefits has been creating communities of practice and inviting others into one's classroom, thus changing professional norms of teaching (Lieberman, 2009). Lesson study has been used successfully to support and transform practice across content areas, including, for example, to scaffold teachers' increased use of authentic pedagogy with social issues over time (Kohlmeier et al., 2020).

Another PD model, Learning Labs, is also embedded in the school day and involves teams of teachers working to plan, enact, and reflect on teaching as they investigate aspects of teaching; however, Learning Labs do not focus on ideal or perfected lessons enacted by one teacher (Kazemi et al., 2018). Instead, Learning Labs involve teachers working together to enact a lesson as co-teachers by providing teachers with the opportunity to learn about some focal content together and then integrate it into a lesson that they immediately try out in a classroom with students. Learning Labs are structured around a "learning cycle" framework for teacher learning (McDonald et al., 2013; see University of Washington, n.d.)<sup>5</sup> in which teachers focus on a new area of learning—this may be content knowledge, student thinking or new understandings about students, or an instructional practice—and prepare to enact that new learning or integrate it into a lesson, co-teach that new learning in a live, supported environment with colleagues participating in PD, and analyze data gathered from the co-teaching of that new learning in preparation for teaching it again (e.g., examine video recording, samples of student work). Learning Labs challenge traditional norms of teaching in the

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<sup>5</sup> The Learning Cycle framework for teacher learning is also a core component of practice-based teacher education, which foregrounds learning instructional practices (or learning to do the work of teaching) in preservice teacher education while simultaneously focusing on equity, content, and students.

United States by offering tools and structures to encourage teachers to talk and think together about practice and students in each other's classrooms (e.g., "Teacher Time Outs") and to integrate new learning into classroom practice (Gibbons et al., 2017). Learning Labs originated in elementary mathematics and extended to science at the University of Washington (Thompson, 2017). Monte-Sano et al. are in the process of developing a model of Learning Labs for middle school social studies teachers learning to teach inquiry and argument writing with sources through their Teaching Reasoning and Inquiry Project in Social Studies, a Teachers as Learners project.

### *Contextual Factors as Supports and Barriers*

In addition to the design of learning experiences for teachers, particular contextual factors likely support or impede teachers' focus on civic reasoning and discussion, deliberation, and debate. Access to high-quality curriculum materials created by professionals with deep content and pedagogical knowledge appears to support more expert instructional practice in social studies (e.g., Andolina & Conklin, 2020; Hess, 2009b; Reisman & Fogo, 2016). Standards that emphasize factual information and assessments that reinforce memorization of that information may work against teachers or at least create barriers for providing meaningful civic learning opportunities (Grant, 2001; Hess, 2009a), although such frameworks do not *have* to prevent teachers from doing this work (e.g., Parker et al., 2018).

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

Considering what is known about how to best prepare and support educators to help all students develop their civic reasoning and discourse capacities, there is a strong research base that outlines various domains for supporting educators. These domains include helping teachers gain an understanding of the social and political contexts in which they do their work, gain awareness of their subjectivities and own racial identity, develop goals and values that are consistent with civic reasoning and democratic ideals, and develop orientations toward students that help educators see the civic resources and experiences that students bring. Additionally, supporting educators involves attending to their orientations toward and knowledge of social studies content, helping them develop an awareness of dominant narratives and curricular silences, fostering their knowledge of pedagogy that supports civic reasoning and knowledge, and providing practice with enacting such instruction.

Research points to some suggested approaches for how to cultivate teachers' capacities, including providing educators with conceptual and practical tools, offering opportunities to engage in specific practices, focusing on student work and thinking, and engaging in high-quality professional development. We have gained important insights, for example, into how to support teachers in engaging in and leading deliberations and discussions of public controversial issues. There are also promising professional development models such as Learning Labs and lesson study that offer forms that PD could take.

While there is important research that has been done on helping educators learn to facilitate discussion of controversial issues and other forms of discussion, preparing

educators to cultivate students' civic reasoning is an area in need of further research. We need considerably more attention paid to the specific practices that support teachers in becoming skilled in implementing the complex practices that facilitate students' civic reasoning. We need more research that examines how to help teachers engage students who occupy unequal social positions with one another so that all students have opportunities to listen, speak, and be heard—and such research likely needs to address how teachers are prepared to examine their own social locations and subjectivities. Similarly, we need research that examines how teachers can be supported to foster students' empathy, their willingness to listen to others, and their examination of democratic values. It would also be fruitful for scholars to explore teachers' own roles as civic actors and agents of change—how they engage in their own civic reasoning, model these practices with students, and use their agency to navigate the systems within which they do their work.

Furthermore, in order to foster civic reasoning and discourse among all young people, scholars need to devote more attention to supporting teachers in what it means to do this work across varied grade levels and contexts. Much of the research in this area focuses on secondary teachers and teachers working in urban and suburban U.S. schools. As such, the education community would benefit from research that explores the support of teachers who are fostering civic reasoning in a range of contexts, such as in rural areas and across varying cultural, political, and national contexts (see Hahn, 2015; Pace, 2019). Furthermore, we need more scholarship that illuminates how to support elementary teachers aiming to engage younger children in consideration of and deliberation over how to live justly together.

In addition to the research that is needed in these areas, teachers also need access to high-quality curricular resources—which requires financial support—as well as substantial investments in time, funding, and district support to allow them to learn and practice new skills. In order for teachers to be able to engage in collaborative learning and planning, they need dedicated time available to participate in this work regularly, across time. Furthermore, school districts and states should attend to where and how such learning can occur through in-person, building, and district-level collaboration, as well as through the burgeoning opportunities made possible through online and virtual reality PD. Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted new possibilities for online learning to connect civic educators in their collaboration and growth. Thus, districts must create policies and structures that enable such PD to take place, along with the substantial funding that makes such activity possible. These policies, structures, and funding, in turn, require policy action and advocacy at local, state, and federal levels.

## CONCLUSION

Taken together, the body of research examined in this paper provides considerable evidence for practices that support the development of young people's civic reasoning while also pointing toward a rich terrain that warrants further exploration. Supporting the practices that are known to be generative and conducting additional research to deepen this work will require substantial investments—of time, advocacy, curricular resources, and financial support. Yet, perhaps like no other time in recent history, our democracy depends on continuing, expanding, and funding this vital work.

### Recommendations for Practice

1. **Access to high quality civic practices and curriculum:** For students to develop civic reasoning, they must have access to high quality civic practices and curriculum. This means participating in classroom experiences that allow them to engage in construction of knowledge through inquiry-oriented instruction that leverages students' identities, background knowledge, and lived experiences. It also means access to diverse interests, viewpoints, and voices of all members of our society. Teachers should create access for students through careful planning and structuring of discussions, deliberations, and activities that help students engage with pluralism—and through curricula that offer such opportunities.
2. **Access to various sources of knowledge and multiple points of view:** Knowledge here is not limited to content (historical, civic, or otherwise). While content focused on the structures and functions of government is an important part of civic reasoning, students also need to be aware of multiple perspectives that depict past and current struggles of individuals and groups in society. At the same time, youth themselves hold important knowledge; their experiences can be used as civic curriculum.

Similarly, teachers need to not only have knowledge of content but also pedagogy for how to structure and facilitate discussions, criticality, media literacy skills, authentic experiences, and student action. Both teachers and students need to develop socio-political awareness and racial literacy so that they can better understand and empathize with different perspectives that arise in the classroom. Furthermore, much of this knowledge should be constructed through facilitated dialogue rather than transferred.

3. **Development of agency through practical experiences:** Whether real or simulated, students need opportunities to experience what it means to be a part of the polity. Teachers should intentionally include these types of activities in their classrooms. With pedagogical practices that help students experience what it means to be civic actors, students will not only develop a better understanding of how politics works in real life, but also see themselves as part of the solution. By learning through doing, students can develop a sense of agency and feel like their voice matters.
4. **Structured opportunities to engage students with authentic public issues:** Pedagogical practices that give students opportunities to engage with authentic controversies or contradictions that exist in society can help them examine and understand differing perspectives. Not only will students see that multiple perspectives exist on important societal issues, well-structured discussions of controversial issues and explicit instruction on deliberations may allow students to develop more empathy, listening skills, and a deeper understanding of the complexities of public life.
5. **Open classroom climate:** A key aspect of helping students engage with controversial issues or various pitfalls in our current system is to structure the classroom as a space where all students feel like they are able to openly share their ideas, even if they disagree with others in the classroom.

This open-classroom climate can be achieved through community-building practices: the explicit use of structures and procedures that welcome and respect differing student perspectives, thoughtful interactions, and fairness of discussions. These protocols and processes need to be intentionally planned and should mitigate microaggressions and include basic rules of respect while making way for teachers to ask open-ended questions that leverage students as sense-makers.

6. **Development of criticality:** Given the current political climate, it is now more important than ever to help students develop skills that analyze information and experiences critically. This means utilizing pedagogical skills that help students develop critical and analytical skills associated with media literacy as well as a more reflective criticality toward how to create a more just and equitable society.

Intentional instruction on analyzing information should provide students with opportunities to examine existing systemic injustices while seeking more equitable solutions. To do so, teachers must also be critical of their own biases and develop their socio-political awareness.

7. **Balanced approach to cultivate students' understanding of ideal and reality:** Given that many of the Constitutional Principles students learn are ideals rather than reality, helping students engage in civic reasoning requires the teacher to balance these ideals with current realities.

This means teaching both about the inequities and injustices (i.e., systemic racism) that exist in our society, and the possibilities of a society where all people are created equal. Rather than focusing solely on past injustices or idealized versions of systems, teachers should help students understand how they can transform broken systems into more equitable and just versions.

8. **Understanding of self and others:** An important aspect of civic reasoning requires students and teachers to better understand their own perspectives, realities, and lived experiences, while at the same time seek to understand other's perspectives, realities, and experiences. The ways in which students' identities influence how they experience and engage civically means that teachers should create opportunities for students to hear different voices, see different perspectives, and experience different realities.

Intentional planning and explicit instruction on practices such as well-structured deliberations and discussions can help students develop this self-reflection and build empathy.

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