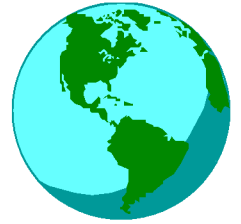




# Social Studies VISION



June 2016

Volume 18, Issue 3

—GEOGRAPHY—

—CIVICS—

—HISTORY—

—ECONOMICS—

The school year is coming to a close, tests have been completed, grades are finished, and books have been packed away. We hope you've had a successful school year and enjoy a relaxing summer. See you in the Fall!



*Ashlawn* third graders proudly pose dressed as famous Americans.



*HB Woodlawn* students meander along the Nile River to visit mapping lab stations.



*Washington Lee* student prepare as they embark on the Treaty of Versailles simulation.

## **Consider This... Redefining Rigor**

Rigor is a term often heard in education. But what is rigor and how might we achieve it in our classrooms? A good start is to dispel what rigor is commonly mistaken for. Here are some common misconceptions about what rigor is.

*Myth - Rigor equals more work both in the classroom and as homework.*

It's not quantity but quality. The quality of an assignment, one that focuses on depth rather than coverage, is what makes it rigorous.

*Myth - Rigor is appropriate for only a selected group of students and providing student support reduces rigor.*

Not true. Studies show that **all** students can learn at high levels and with the right support any student can reach higher levels. Moreover, provided the right scaffolds, students respond to higher expectations and achieve.

*Myth - All you need are the right resources for rigor.*

Resources do not ensure rigor, rather it is how a teacher uses those resources that makes the difference.

Real rigor as defined by Barbara Blackburn, a leading expert on the topic and author of *Rigor is not a four-letter word*, true instructional rigor is "creating an environment in which each student is **expected** to learn at high levels, each student is **supported** so he or she can learn at high levels, and each student **demonstrates** learning at high levels. (Blackburn 2012). [*bold added*] Rigor requires active participation from both students and teachers and is worth striving for. Using Blackburn's work and definition, here are some ways teachers can increase rigor in their classrooms.

### **Expectations**

Having high expectations of all students means increasing wait time, increasing opportunities for student talk about the content, insisting students provide high quality answers to higher-order questions, and positively encouraging students to continue their work. Expecting rigor requires not settling for superficial student answers but rather building habits in the classroom that look for understanding. In this issue's *Differentiation Corner*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Lauren Gautier shares tips for laying the ground work in the classroom for more rigorous learning. She also shares tips for persistent questioning and describes two types of wait time that reinforces high expectations for all students.

Continued on page 2

## Consider This....(cont.)

### Redefining Rigor cont.

#### Support

Expecting all students to think at higher levels may require support and scaffolding for some. There are various effective scaffolding strategies to help students reach higher levels of understanding. Consider modeling, use of graphic organizers, chunking information, and drawing relationships between concepts as effective learning tools. Over time, as students become more proficient with the task or skills, it's important to gradually remove those supports and allow for independence.

#### Demonstrate

Assessments can take many forms and don't have to be a "test." Rigor pushes students to not only know information but also to apply and demonstrate their understanding of that information in ways that require reflection and analysis. These kinds of assessments often address multiple intelligences and can include: advertisements, annotated illustrations, book covers, a Facebook page, a caricature, commemorative markers, political cartoons, postcards, and report cards to name a few. Writing is an authentic way to demonstrate learning at higher levels. In this issue's *Strategy Spotlight* teachers, who participated in this year's DBQ training sponsored by the Social Studies and Gifted Services Offices, share how they scaffold for writing in their classrooms. The strategies address student assessment in the elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.

Rigor does not require throwing away everything you're doing. Rather, it means reconsidering the kinds of instruction you are providing and the type of responses you are asking of your students. By expecting and supporting high levels of thinking for all of our students, we prepare them for college-career readiness and beyond.



To our lead teachers  
who are stepping down,  
we give a big

**THANK YOU for your service!**

Anna Valle – Key  
Carolyn Crumpler – H-B Woodlawn  
Jeff D'Onofrio - Jefferson  
Maura Fuller - ATS  
Nicole Schofield – Jamestown  
Sarah Stewart - Swanson

### End of Year Teacher Share

At the Social Studies end of the year county wide meeting, secondary teachers came together to celebrate the end of the year, recognize their colleagues leaving the division, and share their Site Based Initiatives (SBIs). This marks the office's third year implementing SBIs. Using school data to drive their choice, teachers worked in teams to address a professional development initiative that informed their instruction to improve student achievement. Over 30 SBIs were presented at the countrywide meeting with all SBIs focused on the theme of differentiation. Topics included: implementing online resources for differentiation, utilizing language and content objectives to implement effective instruction, developing vocabulary and writing scaffolds, and participating in book studies on advancing differentiation.



# Social Studies into the Summer

Many of our colleagues are continuing professional learning into the summer. Here is a sampling of their adventures!

**Michael Palermo** of Yorktown was selected to participate in the 2016 National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshop: "Stony the Road We Trod: Alabama's Role in the Modern Civil Rights Movement."

**Tom Lenihan** of Yorktown will be participating in a 3 week seminar at the National University of Ireland-Galway, "Education, History and Culture of Ireland." Approximately 30 teachers from across the U.S. participate. Participants are paired up with an Irish teacher mentor and it includes site visits, lectures, research, etc.



**Rachel Payne** of Jefferson will participate in a four-week institute this summer through the National Endowment for the Humanities studying the Gilded Age and Progressive Era at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Facilitated by leading historians and framed by the sometimes-competing concepts of capitalism and democracy, the institute asks how the nation addressed the rapid changes that occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A group of **Wakefield** teachers will be participating in the Advance Placement Summer Institute. Participants focus on curriculum challenges, share and discuss teaching strategies, and review the contributions of research to content, instruction, and labs. **Denis Babichenko** will be attending for AP World History and **Laurel Sheridan** and **Greg Campbell** will participate for AP Government. Teachers from W-L and Yorktown will also participate in these AP

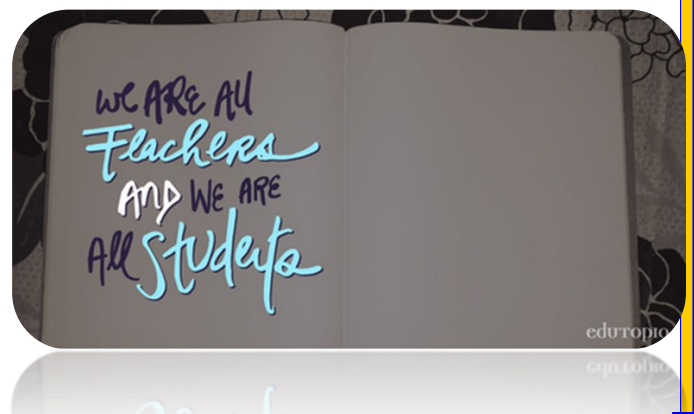
**Kira Jordan** of W-L has several pd opportunities lined up for the summer. In July she will participate in the Belfer Conference on Teaching the Holocaust. Participants will work closely with Museum staff, historians, and expert educators; have exclusive access to Museum exhibitions when the Museum is closed to the public; obtain lesson plans that focus on teaching diverse audiences and the relevance of the Holocaust today. Kira will also be participating in the James Madison's Montpelier Seminar on Suffrage in America. In August, she is registered for the Street Law Seminar.



**Michelle Cottrell-Williams** of Wakefield, **Jennifer Burgin** of Oakridge, and **Diana Jordan** of DOI have been selected to serve as Teacher Trainers for the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) history and social science office. As a VDOE Teacher Trainer, they will participate in the Train-the-Trainer Workshop this summer and present best practices alongside other Teacher Trainers from Region IV during the History and Social Science Fall Institutes during the fall of 2016.

**Nita Wade** of Science Focus will participate in the development of SOL assessments by serving on VDOE Assessment Committee for Virginia Studies. This committee is tasked with reviewing test items and forms to ensure that they measure student knowledge accurately and fairly. We are grateful for Nita's service to this committee and representation of our division.

**Margaret East** of W-L will participate in a two day, DC area International Baccalaureate workshop for Geography teachers. The two day experience has multiple sessions plus a 3 hour E learning component.



# Differentiation Corner

Advancing a growth mindset directly links to instructional rigor as it supports risk-taking by reinforcing progress, effort, and grit. This issue's Differentiation Corner comes from **Lauren Elkins McKinley's 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and Social Studies Lead**, who bases her classroom instruction on this philosophy.



"In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment." - Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*

The idea of "growth mindset" has become increasingly popular in education these days. Here are four brief strategies teachers can easily incorporate into their practice to push kids to grow their thinking about social studies.

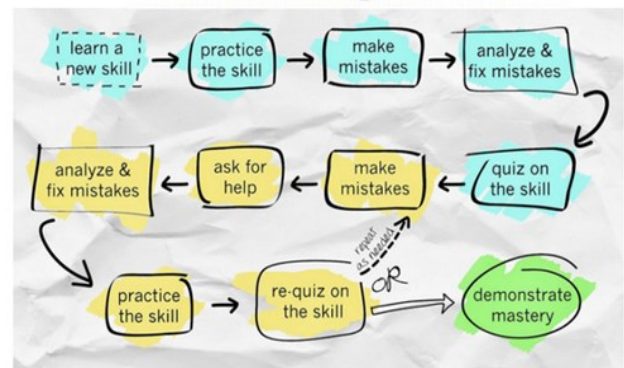
- Lay the Groundwork** - The first essential thing in teaching a growth mindset to students is to lay a foundation and to be explicit. Tell them what a growth-mindset is; talk to them about the research that's being done; and let them know that we can all work together to grow our thinking. Years ago, I heard this mindset distilled into three behaviors: hard work, strategy selection, and perseverance. Today, I have a poster in my room called "Are You Smart?" that highlights these three traits, see below. As teachers, we can hang a lot of posters on our walls, but we all know that it's the ones we look at, talk about, and use that really make the most difference for our students' learning. I encourage you to post these traits up in your classroom and to challenge yourself every day for at least a week to talk about them with your students. Make up a chant, create a movement for each motion, or find some other creative way to interact with the ideas.



And then, perhaps most importantly, look for these behaviors in your students and point them out. "Dion, I noticed you studied that map for a long time before coming to an answer, and when your first try wasn't correct, you went back and studied it again. That hard work and perseverance sure is smart!" When we acknowledge certain behaviors, students demonstrate them more frequently.

- Mistakes as Part of the Learning Process** - Another poster (see below) I use in my classroom all the time is a graphic of the learning process. This poster shows students that making mistakes is part of the journey towards mastery of a concept. It helps to reframe students' perceptions of mistakes, not as obstacles to be afraid of but as steps towards further learning. It also helps them better understand how to make steps towards learning by analyzing their mistakes, asking for help, and continuing to practice. Hard work, strategy selection, and perseverance in action! Refer to this poster with all types of assessments - from exit tickets to processing assignments to tests and more.

## The Learning Process



"Mistakes are the portals of discovery." James Joyce

**Persistent Questioning** - We all know that inquiry is such an important part of our social studies instruction, and it would be difficult to count how many questions - big and small - we pose to our students in a single class period. One quick and easy way to promote a growth mindset in our classrooms is to practice persistent questioning. By this I mean asking a series of spiraling questions to a single student - pushing them to think through an issue and/or solve a problem and to support their thinking with evidence.

(continued on page 5)

## Differentiation Corner cont.

**Persistent Questioning (cont.)** - Instead of bouncing from one student to another, a couple times a class period, force yourself to stick with one student for a series of persistent questions. After they give their first answer, ask a follow-up question based on their response. Do this again four to five times with the same student, and watch them deepen their ideas. These times of persistent questioning can be wonderful opportunities to highlight a student's perseverance on a topic to the class, and it helps build a community that honors inquiry and a growth mindset.

**Two Kinds of Wait Time** - In our busy days and with the SOLs, I know that I have to remind myself about wait time all the time! There are two important kinds of wait time. The first one that we normally think about is that three to five second pause we give after asking the class a question and before having students respond aloud. The second kind of wait time is equally important but more often forgotten. This is the pause you create after a student responds and before you make your next teacher comment. Both kinds of wait time can be amazing tools for supporting a growth mindset in your classroom. The first type communicates the message that you expect all students to persevere in their thinking to try to come up with an answer, and it gives you a great opportunity to notice and reinforce that behavior. "Class, I noticed that as I waited, more and more hands went up. This shows me you were really thinking and working hard to come up with an answer. Smart work!" The second type of wait time is a way to honor student ideas and to demonstrate your own thinking process. When students know we care about what they have to contribute instead of just buzzing through to cover everything in our plans, their thinking really starts to take off!

Good luck as you work to help kids expand their minds and become more creative and persistent thinkers! And as you do, remind yourself of what you're teaching them: *On our journey, mistakes will come, but as we work hard and try new strategies, we can be sure to accomplish great things!*

**SUCCESS IS ALWAYS A PROCESS.  
NEVER AN EVENT. FAILURE IS ALWAYS  
AN EVENT. NEVER A PERSON.**

- Manolis Votsis, Edutopia Facebook Fan

edutopia

**Hats off to our teachers who  
were their school level 2015-  
2016 Teacher of the Year**

**Anna Valle, Key  
Jenna Pertl, Glebe  
Jennifer Kelly, Gunston  
Patricia Carlson, Williamsburg  
Patty Conroy, Arlington Mill  
Steven Brown, W-L**

Special Congratulations to  
**Jennifer Burgin of Oakridge,**  
our 2015-2016 Division Wide  
Teacher of the Year!!

Special Kudos to **Les Ablers** of **W-L** who was named high-school teacher of the year by John Lyon Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 310 Arlington, and subsequently was named teacher of the year for VFW posts across Northern Virginia. He moves on to compete at the state level. Ablers was presented with his award by Tenth District Commander Gary Kelch and Auxiliary President Betty Gimble at a recent ceremony.



*Ablers (center) is presented with the Post's Teacher of the Year certificate.*

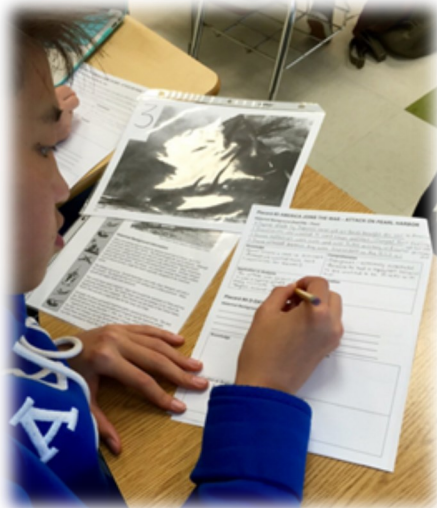
## History Comes Alive!



**Ashlawn** third graders decide what to barter – gold, salt, ivory, cloth - as they study the Empire of Ancient Mali



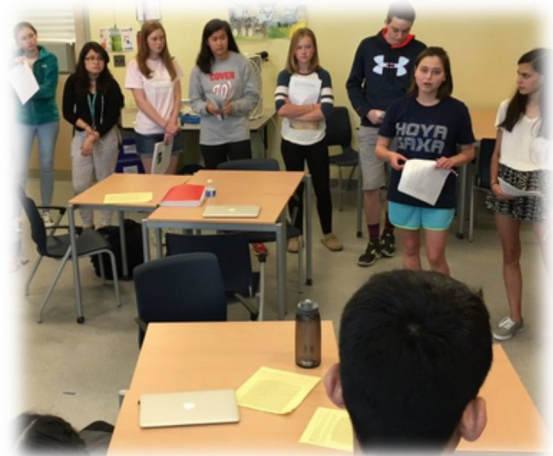
4th Grade **Hoffman Boston** students re-enact the Emancipation Proclamation at the Decatur House



**Wakefield** 9<sup>th</sup> graders students uncover key events of WWII by analyzing primary and secondary sources.



**Discovery** 4th graders perform as a library of living books.

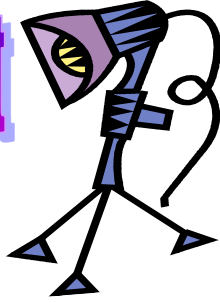


**W-L** World History students participate in a simulation on dodging the Vietnam draft.



**McKinley** students participate in a visual discovery of the Lakota Indians?

# Strategy Spotlight



## Do You DBQ?

The Document Based Question, or DBQ, asks students to evaluate primary sources, apply higher level thinking questions, and use this information to defend a thesis. The DBQ has been central to advanced placement classrooms specific to high school. **That is, until now.**

Thanks to the *DBQ Project* and professional development offered by APS Social Studies Department and the Department of Gifted Services, elementary and middle school teachers have been introduced to this rigorous questioning and discussion technique and are trying it out in their classrooms.

At **Glebe Elementary**, 4<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher, **Jenna Pertl**, RTG **Stephanie McIntyre**, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts teacher **Amigh Mariani** collaborated on their first DBQ on the American Revolution. McIntyre stated, “Participating in the DBQ workshop, I knew immediately that this was something that could be adapted for elementary school. I knew our students could do this.”

Pertl shared her enthusiasm with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts teacher Amigh Mariani, who saw the DBQ experience as a way to build on what she was teaching in reading. “The document based question provides an authentic opportunity for what I want my 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to do when they read—question, evaluate, think, respond.”

Mariani recognized the opportunity for a natural cross-curricular collaboration and wanted to work with 4<sup>th</sup> grade teammate and Social Studies lead teacher, Jenna Pertl. “The DBQ allows us to go beyond the text,” says Pertl, “and to dig deeper into the content using an engaging interactive approach.”

The three teachers collaborated on the American Revolution unit and implemented all phases of the DBQ: evaluation, bucketing the evidence, and the thrash-out. The unit was a highly successful and students came away with a fuller understanding of the American Revolution. They learned that this was not simply a battle between good guys and bad guys—Patriots and Loyalists. “Once I started studying it a little bit more, I learned that the Revolutionary War was a lot more complicated than I thought,” said a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student.

Interested in learning how to implement the DBQ in your elementary Social Studies classroom? This group of Glebe teachers will be presenting a half-day session at this year’s Festival of the Minds, “DBQ for the Elementary Classroom.” Join them and learn how you too can DBQ!



*Glebe 4th graders debate the complexities of the Revolutionary War as they evaluate primary sources.*

### *At the Middle School level Jennifer Kelly from Gunston shares how she has incorporated strategies from DBQ.....*

Finding current/primary resources to use in the classroom is a constant challenge. The *DBQ Project* training I attended in April provided me with a number of primary resources and activities which helped introduce my 8<sup>th</sup> graders to the DBQ process using the DBQ, Wealth in Brazil. By starting this process in middle school, my students are being prepared for the increased rigor of high school classes.

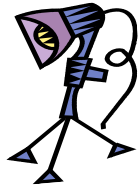


These activities/resources include:  
 Interesting “hook” activities that led to a free flowing debate/discussion on current issues  
 Clearly written background essay, which provided all students with essential knowledge  
 Primary resources that were timely and well selected  
 Guiding questions to help struggling readers identify key information within each of the documents  
 Ways to adapt the DBQ to fit the students’ level – for example, since this was the first time attempting a DBQ my students followed the process but used the evidence to write a reflection instead of the full structured essay.

(continued on page 8)

## Strategy Spotlight Cont.

At the High School level, Chrissy Steury from W-L shares how she has incorporated the writing strategies from DBQ.....



Teaching different levels of any subject can pose a challenge when attempting to incorporate rigorous writing in the classroom. The *DBQ Project* training I attended last month provided some great strategies to scaffold for more rigorous writing for all students. These include:

- Incorporating clearly outlined requirements that all students need to complete before essay writing.
- Providing proper context through either a guided essay and questions about the topic or a version, for more experienced writers, with minimal guidance.
- Scaffolding questions for each document to support all writers. The last few questions always take students back to the DBQ prompt asking them to find specific evidence in the document to support both sides of the argument.
- Activities to help less-experienced students understand how to analyze and group documents.
- Group activities for all students to verbally discuss/debate their ideas before they write.

The Social Studies Office and Gifted Services are committed to continued training in DBQ to expand opportunities for critical thinking and rigor for all our students.



*Chrissy Steury with her World History students.*

## GET TO KNOW

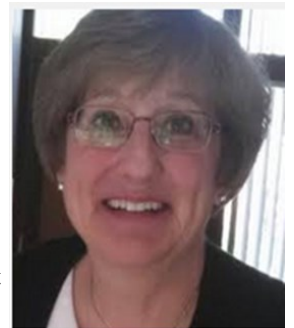
### APS SOCIAL STUDIES LEAD TEACHERS

**Anna Valle** has been teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade at **Key School** for four years. She received the Teacher of the Year award this year at Key, and could not be more excited about it! Teaching is Anna's passion. She studied Elementary Education at Loyola University Maryland, and received my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her favorite thing to teach in Social Studies is the Famous Americans unit. When she am not teaching, she loves to run marathons, cook and spend time with my family and friends.



**Mercedes Dean** has been teaching for APS for many years, and this is the second time she has been the Social Studies Lead Teacher at **Henry**. She has taught 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and is currently teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Teaching Virginia Studies for the first time this year has been an enjoyable experience, she says. When not learning about Virginia history, Mercedes enjoys spending weekends at the beach.

**Maryellen Meden** is currently serving her second round as the Lead Social Studies teacher at **Nottingham**. This year, she teaches second grade and has been teaching at Nottingham for 24 years. Maryellen has always had a passion for history and teaching Social Studies is one of her favorite subjects to teach. She has an article called "History Comes Alive" published in the Social Studies Magazine as well as an on line geography lesson plan on the regions in Virginia published on ERIC. When not teaching or reading, Maryellen enjoys doing just about anything outside and spending time with family and friends.



Cathy Hix, Supervisor  
Diana Jordan, Teacher Specialist  
Barbara Ann Lavelle, Editing



**Summer is around the corner.  
The Social Studies Office staff  
hopes you have a  
relaxing break.**