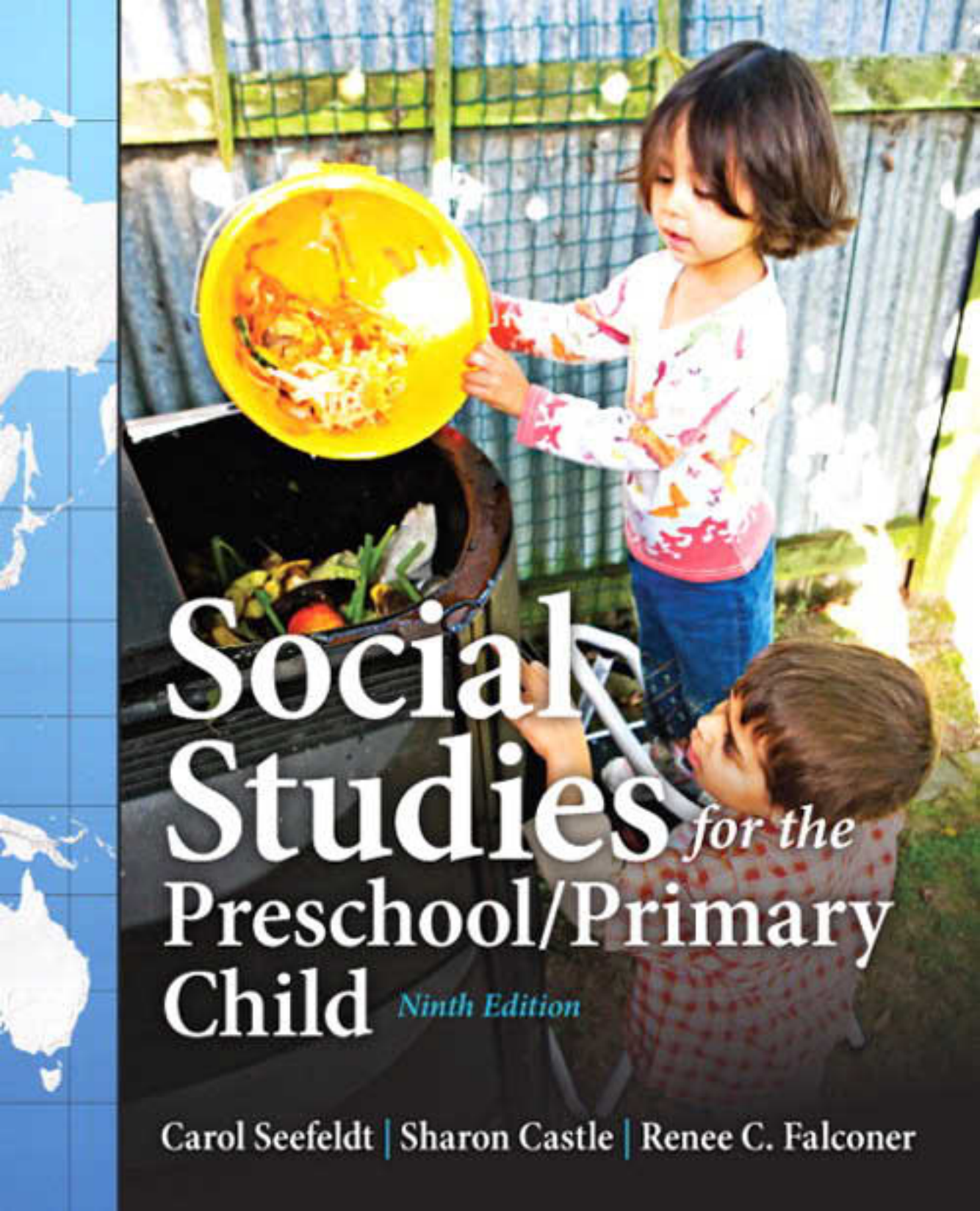

Social Studies *for the* Preschool/Primary Child *Ninth Edition*

Carol Seefeldt | Sharon Castle | Renee C. Falconer

Correlation of Chapter Content with NAEYC® Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

Standard	Key Elements of the Standard	Chapter and Topic
1: Promoting Child Development and Learning	1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs 1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning 1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments	1: Social Studies Today, p. 12 2: Knowledge of Children, p. 27 3: The Children, p. 69 4: Planning Thinking Experiences, p. 114 4: Concept Formation, p. 130 5: Entire chapter, p. 139 6: How Children Learn About Others, p.184 6: How Children Learn Values, p.188 6: Which Theory? p. 192 7: Time, p. 209 8: Geography Skills for Young Children, p. 239 9: Development of Economic Concepts, p. 278 10: Democratic Values, p. 302 10: Political Concepts, p. 311 10: Ownership and Pride, p. 318
2: Building Family and Community Relationships	2a. Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics 2b. Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships 2c. Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning	2: Knowledge of the Community, p. 35 3: The Family, p. 69 3: The Community, p. 73 5: Factors Affecting Social Development, p. 149 5: Relating to Others, p.158 6: Entire chapter, p. 176 7: Change, p. 214 7: The Continuity of Human Life, p. 219 8: The Earth is the Place Where we Live, p. 241 8: Cultural Regions, p. 272 9: Jobs and Careers, p. 293 10: Democratic Values, p. 302 10: Ownership and Pride, p. 318 11: Entire chapter, p. 321
3: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families	3a. Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment 3b. Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches 3c. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child 3d. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues	2: Assessment of the Social Studies Curriculum, p. 57 3: Assessing Field Trips, p. 76 3: Art as Assessment, p. 83 3: Using Digital Photos, p. 95 5: Assessing Self-Concept, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy, p.158 7: Assessing Time Concepts, p. 213 7: Assessing Historical Thinking, p. 232 8: Assessing Geography Concepts/Earth, p. 241 8: Assessing Geography Concepts/Direction and Location, p. 254

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Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child

NINTH EDITION

Carol Seefeldt
Professor Emeritus, Late of the Institute for Child Study
University of Maryland, College Park

Sharon Castle
George Mason University

Renee C. Falconer
George Mason University

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Dedication

In memory of Carol Seefeldt

Dedicated to Iola Powell Cadwallader, my first early childhood mentor; she taught me the wonder of children's development and creativity. —S. C.

Also to Mrs. Goodfellow, my kindergarten teacher many, many years ago in 1949 at Kowloon Junior School in Hong Kong; she taught me that school could be an adventure. —R. C. F.

About the Authors

At her death in 2005, **Carol Seefeldt, Ph.D.,** was Professor Emeritus of human development at the Institute for Child Study, University of Maryland, College Park. She received the Distinguished Scholar-Researcher award from the university and published 25 books and over 100 scholarly and research articles for teachers and parents. Her books include *Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child*, *Active Experiences for Active Children* (Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics), and *Current Issues in Early Childhood Education* (all with Alice Galper). She also wrote *Playing to Learn and Creating Rooms of Wonder*. She coauthored *Early Childhood: Where Learning Begins-Geography* for the U.S. Department of Education.

During her 40 years in the field, Dr. Seefeldt taught at every level from nursery school for 2-year-olds through third grade. She frequently conducted teacher-training programs in the United States, Japan, and Ukraine. Carol's research revolved around program development and evaluation. Her contributions to the field were extraordinary and her influence carries on.

Sharon Castle is a retired associate professor of education at George Mason University. She taught early childhood and elementary social studies, fine arts, creativity and play, and research courses. Her most recent area of research was professional development schools, and her most recent publication was "The Impact of Professional Development School Preparation on Teacher Candidates" in the 110th NSSE Yearbook, *Taking Stock of Professional Development Schools*. She also studied children's creative and artistic development and school change. She received her

master's in child development from Iowa State University and her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Renee C. Falconer is a semi-retired associate professor of education at George Mason University. She still teaches child development and curriculum courses and works with a professional development school. She taught children in countries all over the world (including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Kenya, and the United States) for 20 years and has taught teachers in the eastern, western, and southern United States. She received her master's in early childhood education (ages 3–8) from the University of South Carolina and her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction/early childhood and multicultural education from Utah State University.

Preface

Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child was designed as a text for early childhood pre-service teachers and a resource for in-service teachers, and it has been a standard text in the field through many editions. We are pleased to continue the authorship of the text with the ninth edition and continue to make Carol Seefeldt's fine work available and up-to-date. This edition retains the continuity while addressing contemporary changes in early childhood education and the social studies.

CHILD GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND LEARNING

The ninth edition continues to be based on knowledge of children. Although the world has changed, children have not. Today's children grow, develop, and learn in much the same ways as they always have. This edition of *Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child* is based on a solid theoretical and research foundation of child growth, development, and learning. Each chapter incorporates current research and theory on child growth, development, and learning into all areas of the social studies.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- Newly revised National Council for Social Studies (2010) themes
- New Focus Questions at the beginning of each chapter

- New Children's Literature Boxes, many of which list NCSS Notable Books
- New ideas for using current technologies in today's classrooms, including examples from real classrooms
- New questions for group discussion (online or in person) at the end of each chapter
- Additional developmental theories that explain how children are socialized
- Updated research and references
- Expanded planning and assessment chapter with rubrics and other examples
- More suggestions for expanding and extending teacher candidate knowledge, skills, and attitudes

LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVITY

Play is children's work. This text assumes that all young children will be educated in enriching, stimulating educational environments that foster and promote play as well as mental, physical, and social activities that are known to lead to learning. Research clearly documents that humans learn best when they are active—when they can play with things, objects, others, and ideas. Because play is so critical to learning, it serves as the integrator of the social studies curriculum and is viewed as the basic mode for children's learning. Play and activity are featured in each chapter; however, a separate chapter on resources for children's learning gives teachers ideas for arranging the environment to enable children to learn through their activities.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The wholeness of the child is honored in this text through the advocacy of an integrated social studies curriculum. The wholeness of learning—the intimate relationship between children's cognitive growth and their social, physical, and emotional growth—is recognized and respected.

Social studies are approached as an integrated experience, one that involves the school, parents, and community. The social studies are also presented as a continual experience, one that builds as children move from a child-care setting or a preschool to kindergarten and the primary grades.

Even though the text presents separate chapters for teaching social studies content, it is based on the theory that learning is a continuous, integrated activity. Thus, teaching social studies involves all curriculum content areas. Integrated throughout this edition of *Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child* are suggestions for incorporating content and activities from the visual arts, music, movement, science, health, mathematics, and language arts.

CULTURE, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

This edition features culture, diversity, and inclusion. A separate chapter on culture and diversity offers pre-service and in-service teachers a solid foundation of curriculum methods and practices based on the latest theory on and research into teaching young children to value themselves, each other, and the world we share. The chapters also include ideas and practices designed to celebrate culture and diversity and provide full inclusion into the social studies curriculum for all children, regardless of special needs or individual differences.

CHANGES IN THE FIELD

While children and children's development have not changed since the first edition of *Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child* in 1977, the world has changed—dramatically so. The world has become smaller and our communities more diverse. The world sometimes feels less safe and the economy less secure. The expansion of technology has affected worldwide changes.

Technology brings us closer to information and knowledge as well as each other. Children today have more knowledge of and experience with technology than ever before and at younger ages. Thus, this edition offers teachers ideas for using current technologies in today's classrooms, from using digital cameras to obtaining resources from the Internet.

Changes in the field of early childhood education itself form another underpinning for this text. As the field of early childhood education enters the future, it does so with a sense of professionalism and established standards. The National Association for the Education of Young Children has set standards for quality in programs serving children from birth through age 8, standards for appropriate curricula, and standards for the professional preparation of early childhood teachers. The assumption that all children will be taught by professional, highly intelligent, and qualified early childhood teachers continues in this edition. Teachers are needed who take their cues from children, who understand children and their development, and who know how to follow their lead. This text offers a multitude of practical ideas, suggestions, and guides for teaching social studies; but the most important component of any social studies program is a reflective, thoughtful, highly educated teacher who will plan, implement, and assess the social studies concepts, skills, attitudes, and learning experiences found herein.

STANDARDS

Recognizing the need to prepare children to become effective, fully functioning citizens in a rapidly changing world, authorities have called for reforms in social studies education. National standards and position papers in history, geography,

economics, and civics education suggest the directions for the social studies curriculum. This ninth edition addresses all 10 of the newly revised National Council for Social Studies (2010) themes.

These standards lead to the conclusion that social studies has been a long-neglected topic in schools for young children. *Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child* can remedy this neglect. Structured around the concepts considered key to the social science disciplines—the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values believed essential for citizens of a democratic society—this text presents a multitude of ideas for introducing children to social studies content and experiences. These suggestions will give young children an opportunity to build a foundation of knowledge in history, geography, economics, civics, and other social science disciplines as well as skills and attitudes that will enable them to become fully functioning members of a democratic society in the future.

SPECIAL FEATURES

In this teacher-friendly and student-friendly text, each chapter does the following:

- Begins with focus questions that serve as advanced organizers and objectives
- Concludes with a summary that organizes the information presented
- Includes questions for group discussion at the end of each chapter
- Offers suggestions for expanding and extending teacher candidate knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- Provides resources for teachers
- Integrates children's literature into each chapter; some chapters include a Children's Literature Box as well
- Provides examples and ideas for inclusion and valuing culture and diversity
- Is replete with examples and ideas of how to translate social studies theory and research into practice
- Integrates ideas for using technology

STRUCTURE OF THE NINTH EDITION

Social Studies for the Preschool/Primary Child is organized into three parts. The first part introduces the social studies with chapters on defining the social studies, planning and assessment, and resources for learning (Chapters 1 through 3).

The second part focuses on child development by providing information about thinking and concept formation; social skills; and culture, diversity, and values. Chapters 4 through 6 discuss development of these processes and how teachers foster them through experiences with the social studies.

The third part is devoted to content from the social studies disciplines of history, geography, economics, and civics (Chapters 7 through 10), plus a chapter on global connections (Chapter 11). Current standards and position papers from these fields are reflected throughout these chapters.

INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCES

The following online supplements are available to instructors and can be downloaded at www.pearsonhighered.com:

- Online Instructor's Manual. This manual provides a variety of resources that support the text.
- Online Test Bank. The Test Bank features evaluation items, such as multiple choice, true–false, and short answer questions.
- Online PowerPoint® Slides. PowerPoint® presentations accompany each chapter of the text. These slides can be customized by adding comments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are deeply grateful to the late Carol Seefeldt for this text and for her work on behalf of children and their teachers. She continues to be our standard-bearer and our inspiration.

We thank Joan Isenberg, who encouraged us to take on this task. We appreciate her faith in us.

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Last but not least, we are grateful to our husbands, Dana Pless and Allan Falconer, for the many large and small ways in which they love and support us.

Brief Contents

Contents

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CHAPTER 1

These Are the Social Studies

Focus Questions

After you read this chapter, you should be prepared to respond to the following questions:

- What is the definition of the social studies? Why is it important to teach social studies?
- How were the social studies taught in the past?
- What theories and models have most influenced social studies today?
- What characterizes social studies today?

THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL STUDIES

After the Fourth of July fireworks and parades, Carol Seefeldt's grandfather would take a key from his pocket and open a metal box containing his important papers. From the box he would take a small package wrapped in a soft chamois cloth. Carefully he would unwrap the package. They knew what was inside—a small leather folder holding his citizenship paper. Opening the folder, he would unfold the paper declaring him a citizen of the United States. Then he would tell the story of how he

came to America, his trip across the ocean, and the sorrow he experienced when he said goodbye to parents, brother, and sisters, knowing he would never see them again. He would finish the story by saying, "You do not have to leave your home to be a citizen of the United States. All you need to do is go to school, and there you will learn how to be a citizen of this wonderful country."

Her grandfather was right. By participating in the small democracies of their classrooms, young children gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to become good citizens. Although all of children's early educational experiences are designed to prepare children for the role of citizen in a democratic society, the integrated study of the social sciences—the social studies—is uniquely suited to do so. Through the social studies, children have the opportunity to learn that they are deeply respected as individuals and at the same time learn to give up some of their individuality for the good of the group.

As defined by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), social studies are

> the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. . . . social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, law, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics and natural sciences. (NCSS, 2010, p. 3)

The two main purposes of the social studies—to prepare children to assume "the office of citizen" and to integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes within and across disciplines—distinguish the social studies from other subjects.

It seems overwhelming. The field of social studies is enormous, and children are so young. Preschool and primary children are too new to this earth to be expected to learn all about economics, history, and geography, much less the attitudes and skills necessary to participate in a democratic society. Yet it is because children are so young that the subject of social studies is critical during early childhood. In these early years, the foundation for later and increasingly mature understanding is constructed (National Research Council [NRC], 2000, 2001).

Realizing that children have a long time in which to grow and learn makes teaching social studies in the preschool–primary classroom less overwhelming. During their early years, children need to develop anticipatory, intuitive ideas and interests and gain basic knowledge that will serve as a foundation for the elaboration of more complex understandings, attitudes, and skills (NCSS, 1994; NRC, 2001).

Then, too, social studies learning takes place naturally as children participate in preschool or primary classrooms, which are themselves small democratic societies. Within these classrooms, the rights of the individual are constantly balanced with those of the group; children naturally learn and use the knowledge, skills, processes, dispositions, and attitudes that will serve as a foundation for later social studies learning (Mitchell, 2000; Pohan, 2003).

Looking to the past helps today's educators understand how social studies and young children can be brought together in meaningful, appropriate ways. Over the years, many approaches to social studies education for young children have been developed and implemented and have brought us to where we are today.

Social studies takes place naturally in good schools for young children.

As you read about historic approaches to the social studies curriculum, think about how each of these approaches continues to influence today's social studies. You might recall your own experiences with social studies education or observe how social studies is being taught in today's schools.

PAST APPROACHES TO THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Progressive Education and the Here-and-Now Curriculum

Before the 1930s, the social studies were concerned with an unchanging body of facts—facts to be memorized. Appalled by this dry memorization of things children knew nothing about and had no experience with, Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1934) developed a practical and detailed account of the ways in which teachers could enlarge and enrich children's understanding of the world around them and their place in it. Mitchell was encouraged and influenced by the child development theory and progressive education movement of John Dewey (1900a, 1902, 1944), who described the importance of an education that is child centered, active and hands-on, choice based, resource rich, and directed toward "doing" social studies rather than memorizing social studies facts. Based on Dewey's philosophy, Mitchell created a curriculum that was a direct attack on the elementary school's concentration on facts totally unrelated to children's lives.

Mitchell's basic educational concept was that children need to experience things for themselves. She believed that the social studies curriculum should be based on children's experiences and their discovery of the things and culture of the world around them—on the "here and now."

Mitchell believed it was dangerous to teach anything to children before they had an opportunity to experience it. The teacher should not pour in information

Children's world expands to the study of the community.

but should provide experiences that would enable the child to absorb information through firsthand manipulation and encounter.

In some ways, the dominant organizational pattern for sequencing social studies topics has been based on Mitchell's work (Wade, 2003). For example, the typical social studies curriculum began with the child in the neighborhood and then expanded as the child was introduced to societies farther away in time and space. This is known as the spiral curriculum or the expanding horizons/expanding communities curriculum.

Grade	Emphasis
K	Home and neighborhood
1	Community and community helpers
2	United States
3	People in other lands

Unfortunately, many misinterpreted Mitchell's theories and ideas. Although convinced that social studies for young children should be solidly based on the here and now of children's lives, teachers ignored the complexities of children's here-and-now world. Instead of focusing on the relationships of things in the environment or the web of interdependency within it, social studies instruction revolved around the trite. Kindergarten children learned that they live in a family, first-graders that firefighters help them, and third-graders that they live in a neighborhood. In the end, Mitchell's strong concern for relationship thinking and intellectual development was ignored (Wade, 2003).

Mitchell (1934), however, saw the children's world—"whatever and where ever it may be"—as complex and full of opportunities to enhance their knowledge and foster thinking (p. 16). At first glance, her suggestion that geography learning begins with children's explorations of their immediate environment seems preposterous because the environment is too complex. "Modern children are born into an appallingly complicated world. The complications of their surrounding culture, however, instead of making this attack impossible, make it imperative" (p. 8). By enlarging and enriching children's understanding of their immediate environment,

their world, and their place in it, Mitchell aimed to develop children's intellectual capabilities in terms of "relationship thinking, generalization from experience and the re-creation of concrete experience through symbolic, dramatic play" (p. 11).

Mitchell's insights into the intellectual processes of young children—in terms of relationship thinking, generalizing from experience, and re-creating concrete experience through symbolic or dramatic play—are consistent with the theories of Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) and Vygotsky (1986). Further, the philosophy articulated in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) is congruent with Mitchell's ideas. Subsequent research and theory (NRC, 2000, 2001; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1986) support the principles she first advocated:

- The younger the child, the greater the need for firsthand sensory experiences.
- One experience, fact, or idea needs to be connected in some way to another; two facts and a relation joining them are and should be an invitation to generalize, extrapolate, and make a tentative intuitive leap—even to build a theory.
- What children learn must be useful to them in some way and related to daily life.
- Play and active learning are necessary.

Certainly, nothing can be more potent for fostering intellectual development than real experiences, and the here and now of children's lives can provide a foundation for social studies experiences—that is, if the total of children's here-and-now lives is considered.

Today, children's here-and-now world has expanded; it is increasingly diverse, multicultural and global. "Will my school get bombed?" asked 5-year-old Kala after the bombing of Baghdad. This does not mean that 5-year-olds should study maps to locate Iraq, but it does mean that the spiral/expanding horizons curriculum may be overly simplistic in our global, technological society. Today's teachers should recognize the complexities and totality of children's here-and-now environment. Building on children's interests and fostering their understandings of both their immediate world and what is far away in space and time are part of teaching social studies to young children.

Social-Living Curriculum

As Mitchell (1934) was formulating her theories, Patty Smith Hill (1923), in an attempt to apply the principles of democracy to school organization, initiated a curriculum with the goal of habit and social skill development: Training children in the skills and habits necessary to function in a democratic society would prepare them to participate in a democracy. Her book, *A Conduct Curriculum for the Kindergarten and First Grade*, specified all the social skills and habits that children should learn, stated in measurable form. It focused primarily on the realm of moral and social conduct.

Hill's social-living curriculum grew from child development and psychoanalytic theories coupled with the growing concern in the 1930s about education for citizenship. The social-living approach maintained that young children are developmentally ready to learn skills required for them to live with a group. Having learned in infancy and early childhood who they are and how they fit into their family unit,

children were then ready to develop the social skills necessary for nursery school and kindergarten.

Psychoanalytic theory, with its strong emphasis on the psychosocial segment of life, lent support to the social-living curriculum. The concepts that children should learn to express feelings and to find emotional and social support in the school situation were readily translated into the social-living curriculum.

Curricula in many nursery schools established in the 1930s and 1940s were based on the social-living curriculum. Some of these schools were established by faculty wives at universities to provide socializing experiences for their young children; others were established for children of immigrants or poverty-stricken families. They shared the goal of supporting and fostering the social and emotional growth of young children by leading children to do the following:

- Learn to share materials and ideas
- Develop healthy relationships with others
- Become self-reliant
- Feel responsibility for their own behavior
- Develop interest and attention span
- Cooperate with others in a friendly, willing spirit
- Appreciate the worth and contribution of others
- Develop self-concept and self-respect

Implementation of these goals led to social studies programs that included large blocks of time for free play, interaction with others, discussions of feelings, emphasis on sharing, and cooperating behaviors and rule learning. Rather than becoming a strong, interdisciplinary, interrelated curriculum based on an individual's relationship with others and the environment or focusing on complex social studies concepts such as interaction, cooperation, and interdependency, the social studies curriculum called social living became a curriculum of benign neglect. Children were given a rich environment of toys and materials and left alone to learn to live with themselves and others. Even worse, in some programs elaborate plans and procedures were developed and implemented to teach children how to share, hang up their coats, take care of materials, blow their noses, tie shoes, and cooperate, with little concern for their intellectual development.

Through the 1930s, the social studies curriculum continued to revolve around the promotion of social skills (Freeman & Hatch, 1989). Only recently has the social skills curriculum been pushed to the background. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 and increasing pressure for academic accountability, the social-living approach to the curriculum has all but disappeared. Increasingly, the focus is on literacy and mathematics skills to the exclusion of social skills.

Perhaps the real failure of the social-living approach in social studies was proponents' inability to view the child holistically. Many teachers failed to understand that learning to relate to others, see another's point of view, and understand the complex social rule system are cognitive as well as social tasks. Relating to others requires communication—a facility with language. The abilities to express ideas, share thoughts with others, listen, and speak are cognitive skills. Nevertheless, fostering children's

To express ideas and to work with others are both social and cognitive skills.

language development, enhancing their cognitive growth, and even developing concepts of rules, moral values, and understandings—which should have been an integral part of the curriculum designed to foster social living—were neglected or ignored.

Holiday Curriculum

Another common approach to social studies in early childhood education—a total embarrassment to those teachers who guide children through valuable learning episodes—is the holiday curriculum. Celebrating holidays is an enjoyable diversion from the regular school routine. Unfortunately, in too many cases these celebrations have become the basis for teaching social studies. Year after year, the same celebrations are repeated without much concern for the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values gained from them (Myers & Myers, 2002).

Commercial companies have fostered the holiday approach with unit plans, posters, and entire curriculum packages, all centering on the celebration of holidays. Children follow a pattern to make Pilgrim hats, cut out a pumpkin at Halloween, sing songs, and listen to contrived stories that are more myth and legend than fact. Given this curriculum, children's social studies learning is superficial—an unrealistic perpetuation of myths that are untrue at best, and stereotyping groups of people at its worst.

This does not mean, however, that there is no place for the recognition of holidays in the social studies curriculum. Celebration of holidays can promote identification with family, community, and nation (Vygotsky, 1986). Further, acquaintance with the holiday customs of many lands, when appropriately introduced, fosters an appreciation of other cultures and global connections. The use of stories, videos, role-playing, music, bulletin boards, and discussions to clarify the meaning of virtues such as honesty, bravery, and kindness can help children develop historical understandings (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994; NCSS, 1998).

Figure 1.1 summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of historical approaches to the social studies.

Date	Approach	Concept	Weakness	Strength
1920s–1930s	Social skills	Social skills are necessary for living in a democracy.	Translated into habit training and formation. Ignored the complexities of social learning.	Social skills are required to function in a democracy. The ability to cooperate, share, negotiate, and give up some of oneself to consider the rights of others is necessary.
1934	Here-and-now	Children's learning is firsthand, based on experiences in their immediate environment.	Misunderstood and translated into meaningless simplistic units of "my family," "community helpers," etc.	When complexities of the immediate here-and-now world are considered and used to support thinking, this approach is current and supported by both theory and research.
1930s+	Holiday curriculum	None	Stereotypic and sterile in content, ideas; limits thinking, problem solving.	None

Figure 1.1 Historical foundations of social studies in early childhood education.

Social Forces and Theories Affecting the Curriculum

In the middle of the twentieth century, two major social forces influenced the social studies curriculum: the Soviet Union's launching of *Sputnik* and the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Theories, especially those of Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) and Vygotsky (1978), also influenced the curriculum.

Sputnik's Challenge

After the launch of *Sputnik*, the first satellite to circle the earth, educators in the United States began reevaluating their theories and practices. In 1959, the famous Woods Hole Conference was held, where scientists and educators met to determine the content of various disciplines and how to present that content to children. After this conference Jerome Bruner (1960) stated that the "curriculum of a subject should be determined by the most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of the underlying principles that give structure to that subject" (p. 31).

This idea—that curriculum content should emphasize the structure of a discipline—caught the imagination of curriculum planners and educators and has guided

curriculum development since that time. Concepts and theories key to a discipline became the core of the curriculum, and inductive thinking became the method of teaching. Many mathematics, science, and social studies curricula were developed based on this notion.

In 1965, Robison and Spodek published *New Directions in the Kindergarten*, a description of a program for 5-year-old kindergarten children that focused on the structure of subject matter and included curriculum content from science, mathematics, language, and social studies. Robison and Spodek concluded that young children could successfully learn concepts that once were believed to be beyond their grasp.

The ideas of the past are reinforced with current knowledge of how children learn (NRC, 2001):

- Children develop ideas and concepts about their world when they are very young.
- The embryonic concepts or pre-concepts children bring to school are the foundation for new and more conventional knowledge of their social world.
- Children's learning is continual. They deal with ideas over long periods of time.
- Children think. They pose questions and gather information in many ways.
- Children use the tools of the social scientist.
- Children transfer their understandings when approaching new situations.

Civil Rights

As this reexamination of curriculum and educational practices was taking place, Americans were becoming aware of the inequality of opportunities for many people in our society. The recognition that large groups of people had been systematically discriminated against for many years led to organized efforts to gain full civil rights and educational opportunity for all citizens, regardless of ethnic background or race. This drive for civil rights was manifest in the Johnson administration's War on Poverty.

The War on Poverty included the Elementary-Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Head Start program. Using the theories of J. McVicker Hunt (1961) and Benjamin Bloom (1963), who believed that intelligence was malleable and could be influenced by early, enriching educational experiences, the government looked to early childhood education as a means of increasing children's intelligence and as an instrument to break the poverty cycle. Preschool programs that were enriching and stimulating and involved the child's total family were thought to increase young children's intelligence as well as change their attitudes and the attitudes of their families toward school. Thus, early childhood education was designed to increase children's motivation to learn and achieve while improving basic cognitive skills; all of this would, in turn, lead to success in later school experiences and in a chosen career.

Of all the programs within the War on Poverty, the Head Start program has had and continues to have the most influence. The program is not only popular with families, educators, and members of the community but has demonstrated long-lasting positive effects (NRC, 2001). Twenty years after participating in a model early-intervention program, children had repeated fewer grades, were less likely to be placed in special education programs or to be involved in delinquency,