

## ICSS QUARTERLY

### **“EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING ILLINOIS STATE CULTURE STANDARDS”**

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Whenever K-12 teachers address topics about our NCSS and Illinois State Social Studies standards at national and state conferences or at local teacher in-service programs, they will generally discuss the problems of including too many classroom activities. Many teaching and learning experiences involve time, money, and efforts that engage computer costs, guest speakers, field trips, video-clips, plays, artifacts, games and puzzles and other significant lesson plan ideas. If the basic tenant of Social Studies instruction is to “help make our entire classroom experience” as exciting as possible while being “educationally worthwhile,” students do need to explore their Thematic Units with many unique cultural perspectives. Gaining an understanding of their common humanity and American citizenship responsibilities is “serious work!” For all of us who teach the Social Studies, this requires much instructional planning and administrative reorganization.

How can teachers of the Social Studies help their students appreciate their cultural heritage and identity? How can they foster each child’s ability to critically think and problem solve as an “American citizen?” Also, how can their school’s Social Studies education program impact each student’s understanding of such profound concepts as citizenship, culture, identity, and “point-of-view?” By including Social Studies topics with cultural activities such as those found in literature, art and photography, customs and traditions, foods, religions, languages, novels, music, et al., every school curriculum might be required to invest energies and long-range curricular planning work into very practical “subject-area playbooks.” Although there are “time-on-task” problems and other limitations for realizing many instructional opportunities, there are still many wonderful ideas that Social Studies teachers can integrate into their programs while also providing for the needs of many other subject-areas.

From the multiple years of working with “so many” professional educators, graduate and undergraduate students, and school administrators throughout Illinois, here are a few successful ideas for teaching our NCSS and Illinois State “Culture Standards” for your curricular program (\*also, please see attachments):

- (1.) Attend “Social Studies Conferences” that promote multitudes of ideas and products that promote the overall growth and development of our Culture Standards. By listening to the many professional educators that share their expertise, individual teachers can take a leadership position at home to promote Social Studies education, citizenship, civic involvement, and community service programs (check with NCSS & ICSS websites).
- (2.) Consult with area “heritage keepers,” i.e., museum directors, college and university professors of the Social Studies, senior citizens, civic & business leaders, and others who would gladly contribute their ideas, experiences, time, resources, field trips, and other resources for students to learn the many different perspectives about “culture”;
- (3.) “Citizen Educator Programs” should be developed by schools that annually invite special guest speakers into their classrooms that share their enthusiasm for appropriate Social Studies topics like hobbies, collections, sports, culinary delights, art, et al.;

- (4.) “Annual Social Studies Field Trips” that have students see and hear the experiential realities of museum exhibitions, artifacts, business environments, farms, hospitals, police and fire departments, etc., that relate to different thematic topics;
- (5.) Develop annual “Social Studies Budgets” that have teachers and administrators critically think and problem solve serious questions about the overall growth and development and academic achievement of their entire educational program;
- (6.) Create a “Social Studies Library” of books, trade-books, maps, brochures, games and other materials that can be used as curricular resources throughout the school calendar;
- (7.) Organize “Culinary Experiences” for students to cook, taste, and explore the numerous “food and drink” options that humans have shared throughout the many cultures that have inhabited our community, country and planet;
- (8.) Have students democratically experience annual “Mock Court” programs that allow each child address firsthand the critical issues of the day. By imitating court procedures, students can learn to critically-think and problem-solve with each other, follow court proceedings, examine and weigh evidence and significant opinions, and reach justified decisions;
- (9.) With the help of videos, books, and artifacts, have students examine the “Dress & Clothing” requirements of different cultures, different eras, and different moments in the lives of people “everywhere”; and ...
- (10.) Have students interview and video record significant presentations with area citizens, governmental officials, police & fire officers, military, business leaders, parents and others who would like to share their perspectives with children in the classroom (see [foxfire.org](http://foxfire.org)).

\*Also, please refer to our attachments.

Obviously, if public and political reports are suggesting “improvements” in education by, amongst other proposals, integrating reliable research findings into Social Studies coursework and eventual student learning experiences, then evidence of these “kinds of cultural activities” with children should appear in each school program’s evaluative criteria. Teachers would then be able to practically respond to the desired Culture Standards and instructional process behaviors that, in turn, would positively influence student academic-outcome gains. However, if curricular programs do not address any Social Studies Standards, then how will it defend its own explicitly stated educational philosophy when it is reviewed? Hopefully, the ensuing dialogue would benefit many educational Social Studies and K-12 curricular programs, teachers and students throughout Illinois.

## I. CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- (1.) **Anthropology** generally means the scientific study of man or specifically, discovering what it means to be “human.” This includes the study of the origin of our species and of the physical, social, and cultural development and behavior of all human beings.
- (2.) **Cultural Anthropology** studies human-made behavior and those “life-styles,” beliefs, social skills, customs, language abilities, and traditions of organization-cooperation that influences relationships between individuals and groups.
- (3.) **Physical Anthropology** studies science-based theories of biological evolution, artifacts, remains, materials, etc., that in turn, influences the study of human culture. **Archaeologists** are scientists who systematically study the recovered material evidence of past human “life-styles” and cultures.
- (4.) For students studying culture, the **firsthand research methods** of “experiencing,” “making observations,” and “interviewing” will allow each child wonderful opportunities to document, compare, and evaluate different human behaviors and “life-styles.”
- (5.) **Enculturation** means the process or experience of learning a culture that is different than your own. In any society, a **micro-culture** or local culture, is a subculture of a **macro-culture** or larger/more dominant human culture.
- (6.) **Cultural Diffusion** is “the spreading influence” of one culture to another culture. **Traditions** and **Customs** are the accepted behavioral patterns of a culture. **Norms** are accepted behaviors for a particular culture and are sometimes called “the prescriptions for behavior” for an outsider. Finally, **mores** are referred to as the accepted moral behaviors of a particular culture.
- (7.) **Acculturation** is the selective acceptance of certain cultural patterns or behaviors from one culture to another. Usually, acculturation occurs when one powerful culture subjugates and influences other cultures such as the historic and forced cultural changes of Native American tribes adjusting to European traditions, languages, laws, religion, etc.
- (8.) **Ethnocentrism** is the cultural belief of superiority over other human beings, cultures or “life-styles” (i.e., the Nazi belief of a “super race” over others).
- (9.) **Cultural Relativism** means a comparative perspective of one culture to another thereby human understanding is achieved from members of one culture to another. Gaining a complete and appreciative understanding of another culture is acknowledged when behaviors are perceived “from within that group’s culture.” Interviewing members “inside” a culture usually requires to objectively listen and scientifically document the different cultural patterns, meanings, and values of that culture (through traveling, touring, photographing, interviewing, etc).
- (10.) The **“Rite of Passage”** is a traditional ceremony or experience that acknowledges the important times of growth and developmental changes in an individual’s life such as evolving from one **status/role** to another, graduation from one educational experience or accomplishment to another, changes in citizenship rights, age changes, ceremonies for birth, marriage, death, etc.

## II. CULTURAL “CONCEPTS”

Food & Water “Getting”	Social Classes/Castes	Language Skills
Law & Social Order	Status/Role	Housing
Clothing/Ornament	Art/Music	Handicrafts
Education/Schooling	Tools/Technology	Symbols
Marriage/Family	Clubs/Age Groups	Gifts/Inheritance
Life Cycles/Rites of Passage	Ownership of Goods	Religion
Sports/Recreation	Political Organization	Identity
Environment	Artifacts	the Humanities
Conflict/War	Occupations	Foods/Diet
Customs/Traditions	Celebrations	Social Issues
Status & Role	Traditions & Customs	Philosophy
Economic Trade	Wealth & Poverty	Power
Human Rights	Education & Training	Heritage

## III. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS/TOPICS

Field Trips	Archeological Digs	Interviews
Tools/Artifacts	Artifact Boxes	Food Tasting
Observations/Reflections	Collections/Exhibits	“Make a Museum!”
Library Resources	Creating Plays	Scavenger Hunts
Movies/AV Materials	Holiday Celebrations	Murals/Pictures
Language Experiences	Handicrafts/Arts	Dramatics/Puppets
Creating Research Projects	Publishing Findings	Video-Recording
Guest Speaker Presentations	Creating Flags & Murals	Book Reviews
Student Presentations	Creating Bulletin-boards	Explore Sports!
*Integrate other Curricular Subjects with Social Studies thematic topics		

Anthropology-based “research projects” for students have traditionally involved the making of dioramas, murals, library research reports, and oral presentations.

## IV. CULTURAL RESEARCH TOPICS

Geographic Location	Birth & Early Childhood	Education & Training
Natural Environment	Marriage & Weddings	Family Life
Climate & Weather	Artifacts, Pottery	Eating Utensils & Storage
Shelter	War & Weapons	Social Classes & Castes
Clothing	Jobs & Employment	Language
Jewelry & Ornamentation	Handicrafts & Art	Occupations
Food & Diet	Rites of Passage & Honors	Customs & Traditions
Food-Getting Behaviors	Sports & Recreation	Funerals
Water Sources	Religion & Philosophy	Trade & Economics
Animals & Habitats	Music	Status & Roles
Tools & Technology	Clubs & Social Age Groups	Symbols & Flags
Gifts & Inheritance	Dance	Literature & the Humanities
Celebrations & Holidays	Social Issues	Ownership
Political Organizations	Life Cycles	Childhood & Adolescence
Cultural Heritage	Morals & Ethics	Prescribed Behavior
Adulthood	Power	Social Power

\*from James Bank's "Cultural Diversity & Characteristics"