Chapter 4
Philosophical Guidelines for the Social Studies: Enhancing Intelligence with Digital Tools and Artifacts

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this chapter is to place the use of Digital Tools and Artifacts (DTAs) within the context of John Dewey’s philosophy, and along the way, articulate guidelines for integrating technology in the Social Studies. Despite persistent calls for the integration of DTAs, social studies researchers still report low-level cognitive uses and overwhelmingly traditional teaching methods. By constructing a philosophical framework based on Deweyan thought, one can test research and ideas, perhaps leading to the more purposeful and effective use of these tools and artifacts in teaching and learning. Philosophy is an instrument for criticizing and reconstructing human activities, and scholars belatedly credit Dewey as a pioneer in the technology branch.

INTRODUCTION
Despite persistent calls for the integration of digital technologies, Social Studies education researchers still report low-level cognitive uses and overwhelmingly traditional teaching methods (Beck & Eno, 2012; Combs, 2010; Shively & VanFossen, 2009; Shriner, Clark, Nail, Schlee, & Libler, 2010; Whitworth & Berson, 2002). Subsequently, they often point out the barriers to technological integration such as inadequate teacher training, teacher attitudes about technology, teacher demographics, the availability and accessibility of technology, and limited school technology support services (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012; Journell, 2009; Lacina, Mathews, & Nutt, 2010; Lee, Doolittle, 2010; Whitworth & Berson, 2002). Subsequently, they often point out the barriers to technological integration such as inadequate teacher training, teacher attitudes about technology, teacher demographics, the availability and accessibility of technology, and limited school technology support services (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012; Journell, 2009; Lacina, Mathews, & Nutt, 2010; Lee, Doolittle, 2010; Whitworth & Berson, 2002). Subsequently, they often point out the barriers to technological integration such as inadequate teacher training, teacher attitudes about technology, teacher demographics, the availability and accessibility of technology, and limited school technology support services (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012; Journell, 2009; Lacina, Mathews, & Nutt, 2010; Lee, Doolittle, 2010; Whitworth & Berson, 2002).
& Hicks, 2006; Waring, 2010). Furthermore, the Social Studies and technology research compendium almost exclusively justifies technology integration for two main reasons: First, technology is ubiquitous in the world beyond school walls, and therefore provides an opportunity to engage in authentic instruction, particularly for the younger generations already immersed in its affordances. And second, constructivist learning theory offers a way for understanding how students acquire knowledge using digital tools and artifacts (DTAs) (Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). Over the last several decades, public officials and educators have expended considerable amounts of money, time, and energy to address the barriers to technology integration, yet the results have been uneven at best. Perhaps it is time to view the problem through a philosophical lens.

Philosophy, in its broadest sense, is a systematic and rigorous means to study, criticize, reconsider, and affect a perceived problem. As such, it is never the answer to a problem or an end to something. Instead, philosophy is a tool for casting a wider net, considering expanded ranges of options, and evaluating consequences against a backdrop of a longer time period or in light of overarching phenomena (Dewey, 1929b). Because the Social Studies as a formal body of knowledge (i.e., content) emerged from the philosophy of John Dewey (Egan, 1983; Fallace, 2009; Rossi, 1995; Vinson, 1999), it can also logically serve as a useful means (i.e., method) for addressing the problem of why DTAs have not transformed Social Studies teaching and learning. In fact, one of the most defining—and perhaps least understood—characteristics of Deweyan philosophy is its flexibility in describing content as method in the context of human experience in the natural world. As individuals attempt to make meaning of the world, they are testing experiences and growing through intelligent action. Consequently, within this philosophical paradigm, educators have failed to fully naturalize DTAs in Social Studies experiences to enhance intelligence.

BACKGROUND

Dewey and Social Studies Aims

As a central aim of the Social Studies, scholars often address Deweyan epistemology (theory of knowledge) in the context of preparing students for democratic citizenship (Carpenter, 2006; Parker, 2010a, 2010b; Provenzo Jr., 1979; Stanley, 2010; Thornton, 2005). Throughout his long and fruitful life, Dewey articulated a theory of knowledge where individual citizens make meaning by coming together, and then identifying and solving the problems of associated living. While the ordinary experiences of everyday life offered the richest sources for educative experiences, Dewey (1916/2007) insisted that modern living was too complex, and only schools could effectively provide the conditions for personal growth for young learners.

For Dewey (1916/2007), schools served as an extension of home life and as a societal laboratory for providing experiences for the immature mind. Despite the “superficial” nature of school organization (p. 8), no other social institution so closely mimicked the wider relationships of communal living. Dewey recognized that each student had unique interests, and it was important for the teacher to use those interests as a springboard for intelligent growth resulting in discipline and more growth. The curriculum, which was an inherited collection of subject matter, functioned as a method for this movement forward. And further, to make the environment as natural as possible, teachers were to value practical and manual activities over abstract ones because they connect more fully to occupational life.

First, the teacher’s role was to methodically facilitate learning experiences through a spiraling curriculum where certain ideas and themes would be revisited in a deeper and more intellectual fashion. Further, these learning experiences favored manual and practical activities because they offered more direct natural connections to human