

# The Case for Citizenship Education

## OPINION

By Kelly S. Curtright | April 22, 2015

***Citizenship education is as basic as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Citizenship illiteracy is no less destructive than reading illiteracy.***

Recently, I received a typical email invitation from the National Assessment Governing Board to join them for a webinar to discuss *The Nation's Report Card: 2014 U.S. History, Geography, and Civics*. One of the hook lines was this statement, "Having a firm understanding of these subjects is key to our students' abilities to interpret national and international events and to be responsible citizens."<sup>i</sup> I believe that the National Assessment Governing Board has it backwards. They should have asserted this instead, "Responsible citizens should have a firm understanding of History, Geography, and Civics so they can understand and interpret both national and international events." They have the cart before the horse. Our students are already citizens and we must educate and equip them to become responsibly engaged citizens.

**"Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool . . . ."**

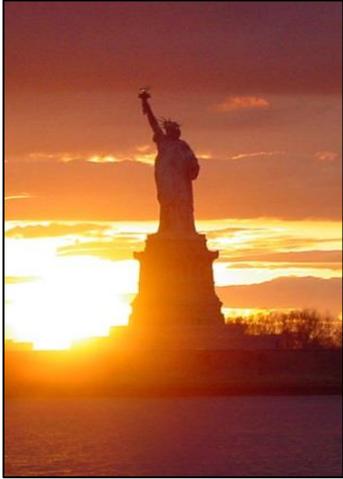
– former U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

In a recent opinion piece for The Washington Post, Fareed Zakaria closed out his argument for a liberal arts education with this point.

One final reason to value a liberal education lies in its roots. For most of human history, all education was skills-based. Hunters, farmers and warriors taught their young to hunt, farm and fight. But about 2,500 years ago, that changed in Greece, which began to experiment with a new form of government: democracy. This innovation in government required an innovation in education. Basic skills for sustenance were no longer sufficient. Citizens also had to learn how to manage their own societies and practice self-government. They still do.<sup>ii</sup>

In regards to citizenship education our nation has unfinished work. We must not fail in this task!

I am writing on behalf of the Oklahoma Council for the Social studies (OKCSS) for which I am the current president. OKCSS represents approximately 1,450 plus social studies teachers statewide. I would like to share with you a few thoughts regarding the larger issues raised by the denigration of citizenship education in Oklahoma and across the nation. By citizenship education,<sup>iii</sup> I mean the essential knowledge bases, concepts, principles, skills, and dispositions that prepare our students for the *office of citizen*.



The Statue of Liberty from the Staten Island Ferry.  
Photo by Kelly Curtright.  
© 2005.

The social studies disciplines have a unique responsibility in developing literate citizens. This mission is the chief aim of all social studies educators. It is the goal of all educators. All four of the “core four” social studies disciplines (civics/government, economics, geography, and history) are especially tasked to focus on the essential knowledge bases, concepts, principles, skills, and dispositions that prepare our students for the *office of citizen*. **Our state and our nation can ill afford to raise up a generation of *civic amnesiacs*. If we do so, we will have failed in passing the torch of freedom to the next generation.**

The concern that “today, we face another threat to our union, the loss of a common frame of reference”<sup>iv</sup> and that citizenship education is at a crisis level is not mine alone, nor is it confined to the public schools. The diagnosis is dire. The malady is contagious! There is not an easy cure for “civic amnesia.” It affects our entire society from our youngest to our eldest citizens.

“These are the times that try men’s souls” are the first few words written by Thomas Paine in his revolutionary pamphlet, *The Crisis*, as he encouraged fellow patriots to take up the work of forging a new nation regardless of the cost. *I believe we face a national citizenship crisis*. The republic founded in revolution, forged in civil war, and tempered by the ongoing struggles for civil liberties is in danger of being squandered. We are one generation away from losing our American Republic. I believe this citizenship crisis is being fostered upon us by short-sighted politicians who in their race to the top are leaving behind our youngest citizens, our nation’s children.

The so-called “business model” of education of the past four decades has failed. It is inadequate to propel America into the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century. The business model has failed because it leaves out the essential role of citizenship education. America’s students must become more than mindless automatons for corporate America.

Citizenship education is the responsibility of the entire Oklahoma public education system. Citizenship education must occur across all subject and discipline areas. Citizenship education is at once both a part of the formal curriculum and the informal school environment. There is a basic set of civic dispositions and knowledge bases that our students must learn in our classrooms in all subjects and especially in the social studies classrooms. Citizenship education is the responsibility of all of us; our families, our schools, our religious institutions, and our communities. Informal citizenship education begins with parents, the most important educators of all, and continues within the school hallways, in the lunchrooms, on the courts and fields of sporting events, on the playgrounds, and in the streets of our cities and towns.



**Not all of our students will become mathematicians or scientists, but it is a certainty that ALL of our students will become citizens.**

I believe many of us would agree on this point. ***Citizenship education is one of the two crucial missions for our public schools.*** In addition to citizenship education, we expect our public schools to teach basic skills for life, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, the fine arts, and world languages. These are the essential subjects our elected representatives have mandated in law time and again over the past three decades.

The current education environment created by high stakes student assessment focuses on reading and mathematics; basic skills. This drives everything instructionally in terms of instructional time, resources, funding, and priorities. How much time is devoted to elementary reading and mathematics? How much money is designated for instructional reading materials and math manipulatives? How much teacher professional development is provided for reading and math teachers? How much instructional time is set aside for providing training for teachers in reading and math?

Several educational research studies have been conducted over the past decade to ascertain the impact of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* on citizenship education. An Oklahoma education blogger wrote the following last spring during the Oklahoma legislative session as several legislators and educational administrators' organizations sought to repeal Oklahoma's four statewide "citizenship assessments." In his lengthy blog, Mr. Rob Miller, a middle school principal, acceded that repealing the four assessments would have a negative impact upon social studies classroom instruction. He then wrote the following summation of some of the significant research surrounding the negative impact on social studies instructional time because of over-testing and high stakes testing environment surrounding reading and mathematics.

OKCSS has a valid concern about the potential loss of relevancy of their subjects. Over the last several years, educators and researchers have examined curriculum narrowing and its effects on education in the United States. Because of the nature of assessment and accountability today, there is a sharp focus on proficiency in reading and math, which has reduced or eliminated instructional time previously set aside for other subjects.

In January 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law. Under the law, states must test reading and math achievement in grades 3–8 and in high school. Science achievement must be tested once at the elementary, middle and high school levels. If schools and school systems fail to meet established performance targets each year in reading and math, they are punished with monetary and administrative sanctions.

The Center on Education Policy (2006) published a report describing NCLB's impact on schools. Among the negative aspects reported was the reduced instructional time in subjects not tested under the provisions of NCLB. Social studies is a content area that was specifically noted as being cut in many schools across the country.

Dr. Mary McFarland, an educational consultant and former president of the National Council for the Social studies, conducted a state-by-state social studies analysis for the state of Maryland in 2005. Here is a small piece of her summary from the Survey of the Council of State Social Studies Supervisors:

#### **Allocation of Time and Resources**

- 60% of responding states report less time being spent on Social Studies instruction in elementary school than in 2002.
- 24% of responding states report less time for Social Studies in middle school.
- 6% of responding states report less time for Social Studies in high school.
- Some states indicate that Social Studies is being combined with other subjects and, in one case, has been reduced to one semester.
- While 70% of Social Studies supervisors report that the amount of time allocated for high-school Social Studies has not changed, some indicate that Social Studies teachers are asked to provide instruction in reading and math to help students pass state tests in those subjects.
- In some cases, Social Studies electives are being dropped to provide remediation in reading and math.

Sadly, this research illustrates the misguided implementation and unintended implications of the testing beast unleashed by NCLB. In many districts across Oklahoma, a stronger emphasis has been placed on tested subjects than on those which are not—especially in elementary grades. Unfortunately, student proficiency in math and reading has become the tail that wags the dog of education. However, this reality provides justification that we need to continue to push back against all federal testing mandates due to the “narrowing of the curriculum” they perpetuate and institutionalize.<sup>v</sup>

**“If background knowledge comes from social sciences, Social studies is not a ‘nice-to-have.’ It is an absolutely core component of instruction that we ignore at our own peril.”**

**– Cheryl Sattler, Ph.D.**

The truth is that reading and mathematics have eaten at the table of plenty for the past seven decades and the other subject areas of citizenship education, the fine arts, and world languages have been tossed curriculum scraps. The continued myopic policies of focusing on reading and mathematics have thrown our education system out of balance. If the educational system is not recalibrated and rebalanced, we are jeopardizing the American Republic and our children’s opportunities to achieve the American dream will be forfeited.

When the citizens of our democracy are deprived of an effective citizenship education, it places our citizens, our democratic principles and institutions, and our Republic at risk. Citizenship illiteracy is no less destructive than reading illiteracy.

Although, reading and math have received a great deal of attention in recent years, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) never was intended to ignore the teaching of social studies. Yet, due to the fact that NCLB does not require assessments for the social studies, the history of our nation, its republican principles of government, and the responsibility of future citizens has been threatened as more and more schools place social studies on the “back burner” of academic instruction.

Professor Daniel Willingham of the University of Virginia asserts that “attempts to teach comprehension without prior knowledge will fail.” In his short video, [Teaching Content Is Teaching Reading](#),<sup>vi</sup> he cites statistics that show 62 percent of classroom time in first grade is spent on language arts and only 6 percent is spent on science and social studies combined. By third grade, those figures are 47 percent and 10 percent, respectively, which Willingham says is still far too much time on reading strategies and not enough on decoding content.<sup>vii</sup>

**“When citizens of a democracy are deprived of an effective Social studies education, it places our citizens, our democratic principles, and our Republic at risk. *Citizenship illiteracy is no less destructive than reading illiteracy.*” – Kelly Curtright**

All Oklahoma students must become literate citizens. That way, they can fully participate as effective, productive, and engaged citizens in both our nation’s economic and political systems. It is a certainty that ALL Oklahoma students will become citizens, but what kind of citizens will they become? **For good or for ill, what kind of citizens they become is dependent upon what they learn while they are in our social studies classrooms.** Oklahoma must be diligent and purposeful in developing citizenship literacy among her **youngest citizens.**<sup>viii</sup>

Our current educational system falls too short of promoting citizenship education. A quality social studies education equips our students with the necessary, basic citizenship skills, citizenship knowledge bases, and citizenship dispositions. The current Oklahoma legislature seems to want to relegate the knowledge of our culture, heritage, traditions, values, historic examples of leadership, and understanding of economic concepts to “second-class citizenship” in the Oklahoma curriculum. Over the years, I have said, “The social studies are the “ugly stepchild” of the curriculum family.” Other colleagues have suggested the term “curriculum orphan” may be more accurate! Yet, I wonder if the term “homeless curriculum” is even more fitting?

We need to design a coherent plan for advancing citizenship education in Oklahoma. Social studies educators need the opportunity to develop a better course for social studies education. Current legislative proposals have been a quantum leap backwards. It seems our elected leaders are intent on turning the educational clock back on citizenship education to the pre 1990s.

A quality social studies program includes the state’s social studies standards, aligned instructional materials, aligned district curriculum, and aligned teacher lesson plans, as well as

aligned assessments, including formative and summative assessments. Of course, the key component in any classroom is a highly qualified, competent, certified teacher who knows the subject area content, the subject area's processes and literacy, and classroom management.

A quality statewide citizenship education plan should include the use of required authentic assessments. This would ensure quality evaluation of student learning in ALL social studies classes and courses. Authentic assessments could be included within the *Oklahoma Academic Standards for the Social Studies* within the Process and Literacy Standards. The professional development our teachers would need to gain expertise in the use of authentic assessments could be funded by re-prioritizing the monies used to administer the current social studies assessments. Four million dollars (\$4,000,000) have been funneled per year for 20 years to the four statewide social studies assessments. **That is \$80 million put into the back end of instruction.** What if that annual \$4 million was focused on the front end of instruction; on high quality, sustainable teacher professional development and for supporting classroom instructional resources? What would that \$80 million have accomplished by being spent on the front end of citizenship education? We must change our educational priorities to include ongoing, sustained funding of citizenship education on an annual basis. We cannot afford to raise up a generation of illiterate citizens.

The state test results for the four statewide social studies assessments have been marginally useful for diagnostic purposes. The results are usually released in September, sometimes October, after schools have already started the fall term. Often, a fourth of the school year is over by the time state results are available. The kind and format of the data returned is marginal for instructional use. In the mid 1990s, we received item analysis of the student tests by standard and objective. Since the late 1990s, test results have been reported as "median percent."

**We Need a Paradigm Shift!**

**"What if we only tested social studies and science?"**

Imagine! What if we flipped the systemic over-emphasis on reading and mathematics? What if we only tested social studies and science instead of math and reading all the time? Would that really change anything? Early elementary education would still teach reading, writing, and arithmetic? If we re-prioritized citizenship education, I do not think reading, writing, and arithmetic would be denigrated and treated like the social studies and science have been treated. I believe instructional time for social studies and science in the elementary levels would increase, along with additional

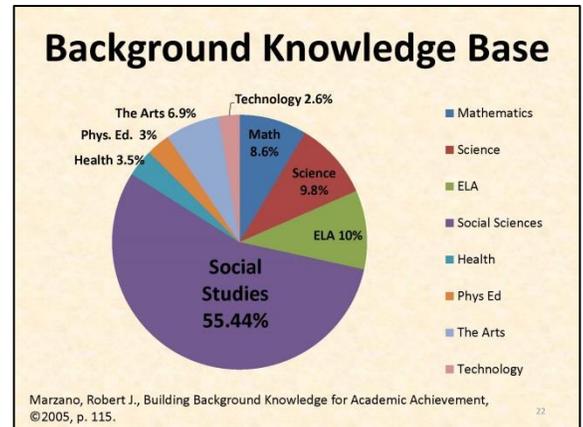
instructional resources, professional development opportunities, and the funding for social studies teachers to attend the professional development.

"What kind of test does the United States Government require of those wanting to become citizens to take and to pass?" Did you think to yourself, "a citizenship test?" That's correct. You mean naturalized citizens do not take an algebra test? Or a reading test? Or a geometry test? Or even a biology test? No! They take a citizenship test!

We must be diligent and purposeful in encouraging citizenship literacy among our youngest citizens.

Educational research indicates that failure to teach social studies in early elementary grades greatly inhibits a child's ability to gain social studies vocabulary, content knowledge base, and concepts. Dr. Robert Marzano's research shows 55% of the content background knowledge comes from the "core four" disciplines of the social studies, history, geography, civics/government, and economics.<sup>ix</sup> See the five pie charts at the end of this article.

Subject or content background knowledge comes from two sources according to Dr. Robert Marzano's research. He asserts that "the ability to process and store information efficiently, and the number and frequency of academically-oriented experiences. Processing and storing information, known as fluid intelligence, determines whether a student who attends a museum exhibit retains new knowledge as permanent memory."<sup>x</sup> Marzano explains that the number of academic oriented experiences adds to those memories over time to create a content knowledge base. Academically-oriented experiences include things like visits to museums, zoos, botanical gardens, wildlife preserves, art galleries, as well as shopping trips that teach economic skills, school-sponsored travel, guest speakers and presenters from the larger community, "virtual or electronic field trips," and family travel. Home-based and school-based field trips are vital to help our students become literate citizens. The truth is that some families simply cannot afford such luxuries as home-based field trips. The schools must step up and make school-based field trips (academically-oriented experiences) possible.



**Social studies background content terminology is absolutely essential to students' continued success in middle level and high school learning environments.**

Our schools must change the way they approach student acquisition of content background knowledge. Schools must redesign and reallocate their time and resources currently devoted to developing basic skills in reading and mathematics to also expanding the academic background knowledge of the students in the social studies and science. This must include as many academically-oriented, school-based field trips as possible! Special attention must be given to those who are most at-risk and who do not come from advantaged backgrounds.<sup>xi</sup> These at-risk students need these experiences to build their content background knowledge, thereby helping to close the achievement gap between themselves and their more advanced peers.

Our at-risk readers need content background knowledge more than the on-level or advanced readers do. The lack of social studies education in early elementary classrooms is dramatically handicapping our students who are from poor, migrant, neglected, delinquent, and/or English-language learner backgrounds. "Children from poverty have fewer academically-oriented experiences, fewer informational conversations with adults, and therefore come to school with less knowledge, and are less able to take in new information."<sup>xii</sup>

Failure to consistently teach social studies in early elementary inhibits our students' abilities to read non-fiction or informational text after Grade 3. Failure to teach social studies in PK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade leads to "curriculum slippage" in upper elementary grades and middle school (grades 4-8). This systemic failure leads to our disadvantaged students falling even further behind their more advanced and advantaged peers. If this state wants to see our students become better readers, our elected leaders, school district leaders, and parents must insist on social studies being taught every day in every elementary school in every classroom!

In a recent [editorial](#) The Oklahoman editorial board asserted, "Oklahoma's educational deficiencies arise early. Only 36 percent of fourth-graders and 25 percent of eighth-graders are proficient in math. Reading proficiency is 30 percent in the fourth grade and 29 percent in the eighth."<sup>xiii</sup> The fourth grade reading proficiency scores indicate that curriculum slippage is setting in due to the lack of content background knowledge. Without consistent and early instruction in social studies our upper elementary students simply lack the background academic knowledge base they need to comprehend what they read.

The Oklahoman's editorial made this point. "State policies play a role in generating these troubling statistics. Of 45,356 third-grade students, about 32 percent weren't reading at grade level last year; 18 percent read at a first-grade level or worse. The report notes that 'students who cannot read by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.'<sup>xiv</sup>

I would expand this argument to include that without the early consistent instruction in grades PK-3 and daily instruction in the social studies and the fine arts, (the humanities in a larger sense) as well as science, our students' academic growth is being stunted. They are unprepared for upper elementary studies, woefully behind as they move to middle levels of learning, and too far behind academically to be successful in high school. In just the area of social studies, a fifth grade teacher cannot remediate five years of untaught history, geography, civics, and economics **AND** teach what the students what is expected of fifth grade students in United States history! That would be six years of social studies crammed into one academic year. In matters of social studies content, that translates as 133 standards and objectives as foundational background content knowledge for the middle level learner and the high school student. We would not visit such educational malpractice on reading or mathematics. Why do we think it is acceptable to do this with citizenship education?

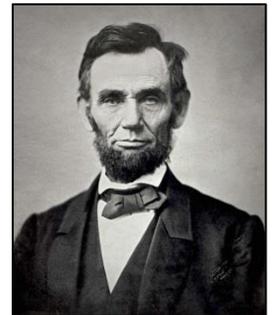
The Oklahoman's editorial also stated, "The challenge is to get more students through high school and college and into those future jobs. Of 50,220 students who started kindergarten in Oklahoma in 2000, just 39,082 graduated from high school and just 9,120 (or 16.5 percent) graduated from college within six years, according to the report."<sup>xv</sup>

Whatever a system values, it allocates resources to support. Since the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957, the United States has poured hundreds of millions of dollars down the tube of reading, math, and science education initiatives. This must change!

So, I ask, “Are the current academic priorities we have, the academic priorities we should have?” My response is a resounding “No!” We must rebalance and reprioritize the public school curricula to legitimately teach citizenship education. We must redesign our students’ educational experiences. Systemically we need to rethink how our nation, the states, and school districts have misallocated in terms of instructional time, funding and release time for teacher professional development, and instructional resources for citizenship education.

In a survey<sup>xvi</sup> released from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of President Lincoln shared the following results and concern that “Lincoln—and much of his legacy—is being lost to the ages”<sup>xvii</sup> on their [website](#).

- Only half the American public could correctly identify when the Civil War took place.
- Just 18% knew the Emancipation Proclamation meant slaves were free in areas still in rebellion.
- More respondents chose a passage from the Declaration of Independence than the lines from Lincoln’s pen when asked to match Lincoln with the famous phrase from the Gettysburg Address *“that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”*
- Nearly one in five Americans failed to identify John Wilkes Booth as Lincoln’s assassin.
- One in three could not identify Lincoln as a leader of the Union Army. Hundreds of respondents chose “Confederate Army,” the Revolutionary War’s “Continental Army,” World War II’s “Allied Forces,” or simply wouldn’t answer.



Lincoln in 1863 at the age of 54 from [Wikipedia](#).

College graduates, too, struggled with the survey.

- One third did not know when the Civil War took place.
- Only 28% knew the effect of the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Only 40% correctly identified the quote from the Gettysburg Address—one of the most famous lines in American history—from Lincoln.

The press release summed up ACTA’s concerns “These results are tragic witness to the alarming level of historical illiteracy in this country,” said ACTA President Anne Neal. “Sadly, we should not be surprised: Our *What Will They Learn?*<sup>TM</sup> study has found that just 18% of the 1,100 liberal arts colleges and universities we survey require graduates to have even a single survey course in American history or government.”<sup>xviii</sup>

In a [Herff Jones white paper](#) from 2012, Dr. Cheryl Sattler stated, “If background knowledge comes from social sciences, social studies is not a ‘nice-to-have.’ It is an absolutely core component of instruction that we ignore at our own peril.”<sup>xix</sup>

NCSS Executive Director Susan Griffin in a letter sent to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in April 2014 quotes former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, "Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. . . . every generation has to learn it and we have work to do."<sup>xx</sup>

We simply cannot afford to raise a generation of civic amnesiacs, because ***Citizenship education IS as basic as reading, writing, and arithmetic.***

***The task is at hand! We have a republic to build! Let's get to work!***

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### ***About Kelly Curtright***

Kelly Curtright lives in Edmond, Oklahoma. Kelly is the current President of the Oklahoma Council for the Social Studies (OCSS) and the Past president of the Council of State Social Studies Specialists (CS4). He has been a social studies educator since 1992. He holds a master's degree in history from the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) in Edmond, Oklahoma. He has taught in junior high school, middle school, high school level in the Putnam City Schools of western Oklahoma City metropolitan area. He has taught as an adjunct instructor of history at UCO. While in the Putnam City Schools, Kelly served as the district's Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator for six years. He began service with the Oklahoma State Department of Education in 2003 and serves as the Director of Social Studies Education and for Personal Financial Literacy Education.

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**Kelly Curtright below deck on the USS Constitution, "Old Ironsides," in Charleston Naval Yard, Boston Harbor, November 2014.**

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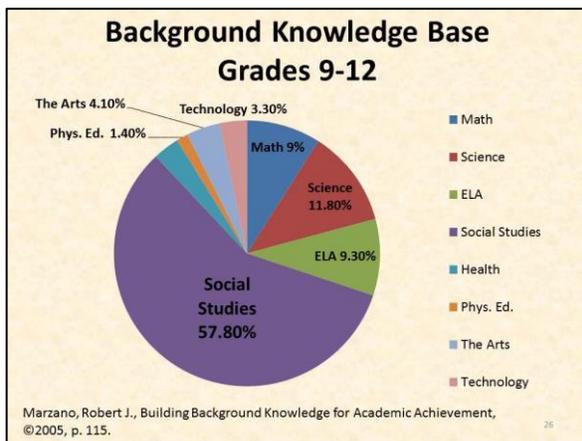
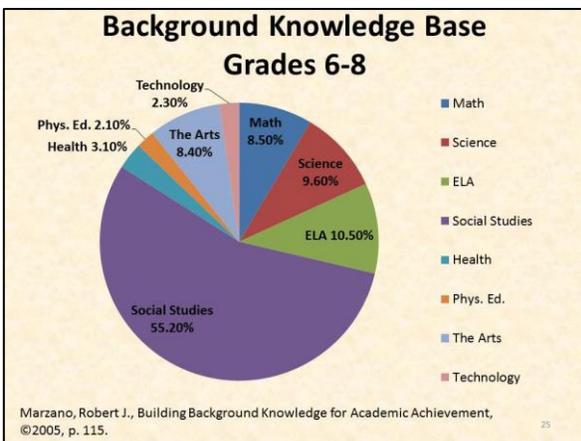
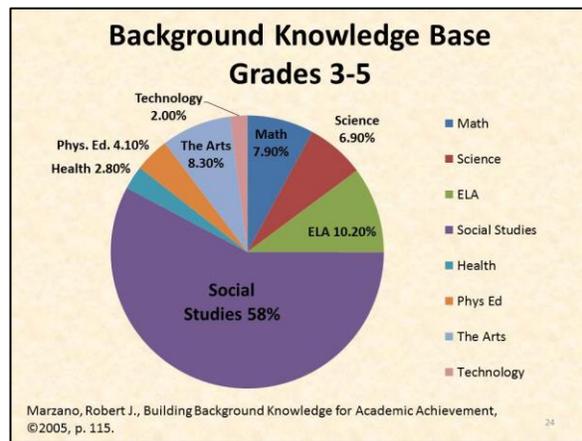
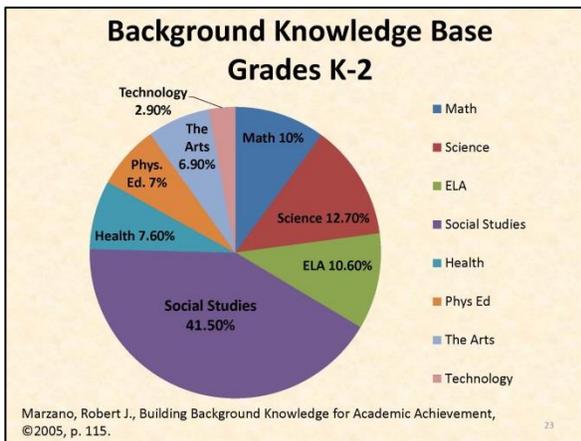
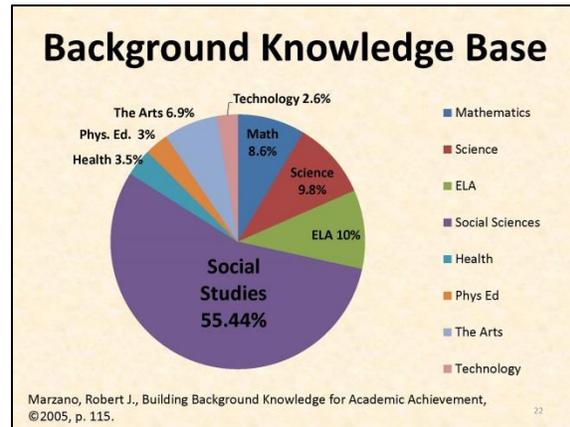
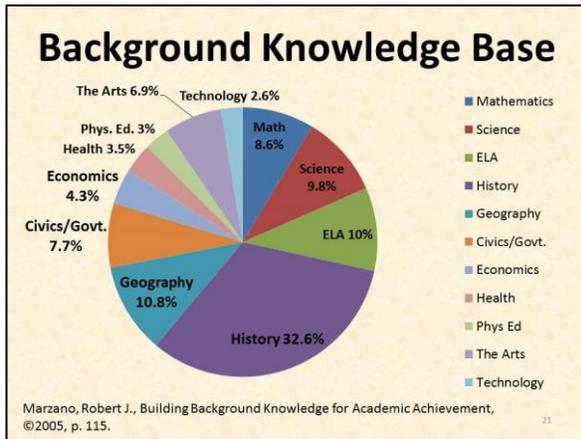
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## Academic Content Background Knowledge Bases Represented by Key Domain Terminology



NOTE: These five pie charts are based from the table from Robert J. Marzano, *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*, ©2005, p. 115. The top left pie chart contains the 11 curriculum areas identified in the table, Figure 6.3 Number of Terms per Level in Each Subject Area, page 115. The top right pie chart combines the “core four” areas of the social studies into “one subject,” giving the remaining four charts eight subjects.

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<sup>i</sup> Harris, S. (2015, April 16). *NAEP 2014 U.S. history, geography, and civics -- latest student achievement results to be announced April 29*. Retrieved April 16, 2015.

<sup>ii</sup> Zakaria, F. (2015, March 27). Why America's obsession with STEM education is dangerous. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved April 15, 2015, from [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-stem-wont-make-us-successful/2015/03/26/5f4604f2-d2a5-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-stem-wont-make-us-successful/2015/03/26/5f4604f2-d2a5-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7_story.html).

<sup>iii</sup> I will use the terms of "citizenship education," "social studies," and "social studies education" interchangeably. In my mind they are one and the same. I have written and presented on this topic. This article represents the ongoing synthesizing of my thoughts and perspective.

<sup>iv</sup> Neal, A. (2015, April 14). Lincoln survey/Fundraiser letter. Retrieved April 17, 2015, from <https://t.e2ma.net/message/6p1rg/apbaef>.

<sup>v</sup> Miller, R. (2014, March 30). Does testing create better citizens? Retrieved April 9, 2015, from <http://www.viewfromtheedge.net/?p=2667>.

<sup>vi</sup> Willingham, D. (2009). Teaching content is teaching reading. Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <http://www.danielwillingham.com/videos.html>.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> Curtright, K. (2012, February 29). The Oklahoma c3 (college, career, and citizen readiness) standards for the social studies: Message from the state superintendent. Retrieved January 9, 2015, from [http://www.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Social studies OK Academic Standards 3-4-15.pdf](http://www.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Social%20studies%20OK%20Academic%20Standards%203-4-15.pdf).

<sup>ix</sup> Marzano, R. (2005). Building background knowledge for academic achievement (p. 115). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xii</sup> Broad knowledge drives literacy: Building a diverse academic knowledge base contributes to the ongoing development of reading and writing skills. (2012, February 1). Retrieved March 25, 2015, from [http://www.herffjones.com/succeeding?utm\\_campaign=hj\\_2012\\_q1\\_display&utm\\_source=nbptssmartbriefs&utm\\_medium=728x90&utm\\_content=Susie&utm\\_term=4\\_30](http://www.herffjones.com/succeeding?utm_campaign=hj_2012_q1_display&utm_source=nbptssmartbriefs&utm_medium=728x90&utm_content=Susie&utm_term=4_30).

<sup>xiii</sup> Report highlights Oklahoma's education needs. (2015, January 1). *The Oklahoman*. Retrieved April 9, 2015, from <http://newsok.com/report-highlights-oklahomas-education-needs/article/5407841>.

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<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xvi</sup> The ACTA study of 1,000 respondents was completed by GfK Custom Research with a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points. ACTA has commissioned previous historical literacy studies on the [Roosevelt family, D-Day](#), and [general historical knowledge](#).

<sup>xvii</sup> Burnett, D. (2015, April 14). Survey: Half of Americans don't know when the civil war took place. Retrieved April 17, 2015, from [http://www.goacta.org/news/survey\\_half\\_of\\_americans\\_dont\\_know\\_when\\_the\\_civil\\_war\\_took\\_place?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=that's\\_not\\_all&utm\\_campaign=April\\_eNewsletter](http://www.goacta.org/news/survey_half_of_americans_dont_know_when_the_civil_war_took_place?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=that's_not_all&utm_campaign=April_eNewsletter).

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xix</sup> Broad knowledge drives literacy: Building a diverse academic knowledge base contributes to the ongoing development of reading and writing skills. (2012, February 1). Page 4. Retrieved March 25, 2015, from [http://www.herffjones.com/succeeding?utm\\_campaign=hj\\_2012\\_q1\\_display&utm\\_source=nbptssmartbriefs&utm\\_medium=728x90&utm\\_content=Susie&utm\\_term=4\\_30](http://www.herffjones.com/succeeding?utm_campaign=hj_2012_q1_display&utm_source=nbptssmartbriefs&utm_medium=728x90&utm_content=Susie&utm_term=4_30).

<sup>xx</sup> Griffin, S. *Letter to the Oklahoma house of representatives committee on common education*. National Council for the Social Studies. April 02, 2014.

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