

## Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2013  
*Previous Value* Summer 2012

## Course Change Information

**What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)**

Make 2320 a GE course.

**What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?**

Sociology 2320 fulfills the GEC/GE requirement for Social Sciences: Human, Natural, and Economic Resources by addressing the three Learning Outcomes for this category. See attached rationale.

**What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?**

**(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?**

The course would be a new option for fulfilling the Social Sciences GE.

**Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No**

**Is this a request to withdraw the course? No**

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	Sociology
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Sociology - D0777
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	2320
Course Title	Sociology of Education
Transcript Abbreviation	Soc of Education
Course Description	Current social trends as they affect education; backgrounds of school children, social status of teachers, role of power and bureaucracy.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Marion

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

### Prerequisites/Corequisites

Exclusions Not open to students with credit for 320.

## Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

## Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 45.1101  
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course  
Intended Rank Sophomore

## Quarters to Semesters

Quarters to Semesters Semester equivalent of a quarter course (e.g., a 5 credit hour course under quarters which becomes a 3 credit hour course under semesters)

List the number and title of current course being converted Sociol 320: Sociology of Education.

## Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:  
Human, Natural, and Economic Resources  
The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

### *Previous Value*

*The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units*

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Content Topic List
- History of public education
  - Education equality
  - Student diversity
  - Multicultural and multilingual education
  - School choice and charter schools
  - Homeschooling
  - Government and funding
  - Teaching profession
  - Unions
  - Textbooks and curriculum
  - Legal issues

**Attachments**

- Sociology 2320 Syllabus.doc  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Chamberlain,Lindsey Joyce)*
- Sociology 2320 GE Rationale.docx  
*(GEC Model Curriculum Compliance Stmt. Owner: Chamberlain,Lindsey Joyce)*
- Sociology 2320 Assessment.docx  
*(GEC Course Assessment Plan. Owner: Chamberlain,Lindsey Joyce)*

**Comments**

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Chamberlain,Lindsey Joyce	08/27/2012 12:53 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Williams,Kristi L.	08/27/2012 08:33 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Haddad,Deborah Moore	08/27/2012 10:00 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Nolen,Dawn Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Hogle,Danielle Nicole Hanlin,Deborah Kay	08/27/2012 10:00 PM	ASCCAO Approval

## **Sociology 2320 Sociology of Education**

Instructor Name

Instructor Email:

Office:

Office Hours:

Course Meeting Days/Times:

Course Meeting Location:

Sociology 2320 fulfills the GEC/GE requirement for Social Sciences: Human, Natural, and Economic Resources, which has the following Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of the use and distribution of human, natural, and economic resources and decisions and policies concerning such resources.
2. Students understand the political, economic, and social trade-offs reflected in individual decisions and societal policymaking and enforcement and their similarities and differences across contexts.
3. Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use.

This course is designed to expose the structural patterns of American society by using sociological theories/concepts/research methods/data and to integrate them into a general overview. It will use a social problems approach to studying contemporary America and its place in today's world. This class will cover current social trends as they affect education, backgrounds of school children, social status of teachers, and the role of power and bureaucracy. We will take a critical look at the education institution and how it is perceived by the public and what the reality is.

After completing this course, students will fulfill the above learning outcomes because:

1. Students will understand fundamental sociological concepts and theories regarding education.
2. Students will understand the historical development of the U.S. educational system and issues related to accessing schooling.
3. Students will read and understand social science research on educational experiences and patterns in educational outcomes.
4. Students will understand variations in educational access, experiences, and outcomes by race, class, and gender. They will apply this knowledge to individual experience as well as larger societal contexts.
5. Students will be able to apply the aforementioned understanding of sociological concepts and theories to other contexts.
6. Students will develop and apply critical thinking skills.

Texts:

Lee, Valerie E. and David T. Burkam. *Inequality at the Starting Gate*. 2002.

ISBN: 1-932066-02-0.

Spring, Joel. American Education (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). 2010. ISBN: 978-0-07-337868-8.

Things to know about this class:

1. I will take attendance at each class meeting. Much of the material presented in class will not be found in your texts. It will be difficult to get a good grade if you miss class. It is your responsibility to get notes if you miss class. **ATTENDANCE WILL NOT BE PART OF YOUR GRADE.**
2. You will have two take-home, short answer exams. Each exam will be worth 75 points.
3. You will write a paper for this class. The paper will be worth a total of 75 points. The instructions for these projects will be passed out in class.
4. You will do a presentation for this class. Instructions are attached to the syllabus. This presentation is worth 15 points.
5. There will be three in-class group discussion projects. These projects will be based on a film or class discussion topic. Each group work assignment will be worth 10 points. Make ups for these assignments will be allowed only with an approved absence.
6. There will be handouts during the class. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting missed handouts.
- 7. Cell phones and computers are distracting in class. Leave your cell phone and your computer off your desk and out of use during class.**
8. All class outlines and some class handouts will be available on Carmen. Be sure to print the outlines before you come to class. Handouts put on Carmen are required reading. You should check Carmen before each class for announcements and handouts.
9. I expect that students will be respectful of each other in this class. Differences of opinion, based on reading, theory, and research are expected and should be respected. I also expect that students will be respectful of class time. Refrain from note passing, side conversations, napping, or other types of disruptive behavior. Class starts on time, try to be here on time. If you have to leave early, sit by the door
- 10. Unpaid fees:** Faculty rules specify that students are to have their fees paid by the first day of enrollment for the quarter [Faculty Rule 3335-9-12]. If you have not paid your fees, you will not be allowed to continue attending class until:
  1. your fees are paid, **OR**
  2. you have met with a Sociology Advisor and a Financial Aid Counselor is working to get your fees paid.
- 11. Academic Misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct”**

includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct [http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc\\_12-31-07.pdf](http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf).

**12. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.**

Following are planned dates for assignments and exams:

Midterm:

Passed out Oct 8 and due back Oct 12

Final passed out Dec 3 and due back Dec 10

In class group assignments (subject to change):

September 26, Oct 3, and November 19

**I WILL NOT USE PLUS OR MINUS GRADES IN THIS CLASS.**

Grading scale:

295-266	A	Exams 150 points
265-236	B	In class assignments 30 points
235-207	C	Presentation 15 points
206-177	D	Paper 75 points
		Outline/annotated bibliography 25 points

Reading/discussion schedule (subject to change)

In addition to these assigned readings, there will be readings on Carmen.

	Spring	Lee/Burkam
Week One 08/22 Intro to Course and Education		
Week Two 08/27 & 08/29 History of Public Education Sociological theory and Education	Chapter one	
Week Three 09/05 Education and Equality of Opportunity	Chapter two	Chapters 1-5
Week four 09/10 & 09/12 Student diversity	Chapter three	
Week Five 09/17 & 09/19 Multicultural and Multilingual education	Chapter four	
Week Six 09/24 & 09/26 Local Control, Choice, Charter Schools Film, in-class exercise		
Week Seven 10/01 & 10/03 Home Schooling Film and in-class exercise	Chapter five	
Week Eight 10/08 & 10/10 Review and Exam		
Week Nine 10/15 & 10/17 Power and control at the state and national levels School funding controversies	Chapter Seven	
Week Ten 10/22 & 10/24 The profession of teaching Teachers unions and collective bargaining	Chapter Eight	
Week Eleven 10/29 & 10/31 Textbooks, Curriculum	Chapter Nine	
Week Twelve 11/05 & 11/07 Courts and the schools	Chapter Ten	
Week Thirteen 11/14	Chapter Ten	

## Politics and Curriculum

Week Fourteen 11/19  
Film and in-class exercise

Week Fifteen 11/26 & 11/28  
The future of Education  
Class Presentations

Week Sixteen 12/03  
Review for Final



### Presentation

Each student must do a five minute presentation that features a news item that deals with education. The news item will come from a publication within one week of the presentation. These presentations will be made in a group of three or four students. If you choose a local school event, then you need to tie it into a larger, national issue.

For example: Amanda-Clearcreek school system has a tax levy on the ballot for May. This will be the fifth consecutive time the school district has placed a tax levy on the ballot. If the levy fails, the following cuts are being discussed:

- Eliminate the lunch period
- Eliminate positions for 29 teachers
- Eliminate all athletic programs
- Reduce the school day to 5.5 hours

These changes would save the district two million dollars a school year. This could be tied into the national problem of budget deficits in education resulting from decreased tax levy funding and budget cuts from the state and federal government. The presentation would need to include statistics on the amounts of money school districts are losing. You will need to include a bibliography for sources used and send a copy of the presentation to be included on Carmen for the other members of the class to read.

## Paper

This class covers many controversial topics. For this paper, you will choose a controversial topic and discuss the origins of the controversy, political complications to solutions that have been offered to the controversy, and sociological perspectives (theory and research).

For example: standardized testing

In the late 1980s, Ohio started a policy of evaluating student achievement with standardized testing. These tests are in addition to regular classroom evaluation by teachers. The testing was started because there was a belief among some lawmakers that students were not achieving and that more standardized tests would improve their achievement.

The No Child Left Behind Act has added to the testing pressure in schools.

Questions that can be asked:

- Can student achievement be adequately measured using standardized tests?
- Do standardized tests result in bias that negatively affects minority students?
- Were the tests based on false assumptions?
- Who benefits from spending millions of dollars each year on standardized testing?

For example: special educational populations and education

- a racial-ethnic minority group (e.g., Native Americans), keeping in mind that you may have to decide between a larger umbrella group (like Asian Americans) and a more specific subgroup (like Chinese Americans). (do not use African-Americans).
- immigrants (from one country or a region of the world)
- students with English as a second language
- lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and/or transgendered (LGBT) students,
- children who are home schooled
- student athletes
- students with special needs.

For example: merit pay and teaching

- can teacher performance be measured?
- should teachers of hard to teach populations be evaluated differently?
- how will hard to teach populations be defined?
- Has the move toward master's degrees for all teachers improved the quality of teaching? How can that be measured?

Other possible topics:

Class size

Funding of education

Bullying

Religion in school

Politics of textbooks

Tracking

Charter schools

Spanking students

School vouchers

Is there a relationship between grades and earnings?

Inclusion of special needs students

Other topics may also be suitable, check with me if you have a topic not on the list.

Paper outline:

The first step in writing your paper is to develop an outline after starting your research. This outline will be due the Monday of the fourth week on class. The outline should include a brief introductory paragraph stating the topic and controversy. The outline should include what you plan to write about. The outline should be typed, approximately one page in length, and left in the Carmen drop box prior to class.

Attached to the outline you will include an annotated bibliography. This is a list of references that includes comments on each reference. You will need a minimum of six scholarly resources (books, journal articles), that were not used in class, that you could use in writing your paper. For each reference you will include citation information plus a few sentences summarizing the reference and how it relates to your topic. This annotated bibliography should be typed and one to one and a half pages.

The final paper:

The final paper should follow the outline you previously turned in. You should expect that there will be differences but the general outline should be the same. Your paper should use at least six scholarly sources. Using sources that are not scholarly will result in lost points. You will also lose points for citation errors, failure to spell check, grammar mistakes, no introduction or conclusion. The final paper is due on December 3rd. It should be turned in using the drop box on Carmen.

You may turn in your paper early for feedback before December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Scholarly sources:

Materials that are considered scholarly are those that have been written by experts in the field. These materials have been written following accepted methodologies and research practices of the discipline. This means they are not opinion. These sources have been published in peer-reviewed journals or in books by academic publishers. Newspapers may contain information that is derived from scholarly sources. Use the scholarly source and not the newspaper. Web sites are not scholarly sources unless they are governmental sources (NCES for example) or on-line journal databases. Some on-line sources place original research on-line. Before you use this information consider the credentials of the person (s) writing the report. Ask whether the theory/methodology of the authors of the report meet the criteria for scholarly research. If you are not sure, don't use the resource or ask the teacher. **Wikipedia is not a scholarly source. Do not use Wikipedia.** Also, look at the publication date of the material you use. Research findings are often time-sensitive so you want to focus on the most recent studies (the last 10-15 years).

You may use non-scholarly articles for descriptive purposes. Examples are newspaper articles that describe a problem. These should be properly cited and do not count toward the number of required scholarly sources.

Scholarly resources:

The OSU library/Ohiolink

Books

Textbooks

Anthologies

On-line journals

Research databases (I start with JStor for my research).

Electronic Journal Center

The reference librarians can help you find information. Or, you can come to see me during office hours and I can help you find resources. There are plenty of resources available to aid in finding acceptable sources, take advantage of these resources.

## Sociology 2320 GE Rationale

Sociology 2320 fulfills the GEC/GE requirement for Social Sciences: Human, Natural, and Economic Resources, which has the following Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of the use and distribution of human, natural, and economic resources and decisions and policies concerning such resources.

Students understand the political, economic, and social trade-offs reflected in individual decisions and societal policymaking and enforcement and their similarities and differences across contexts.

Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use.

1. The course objectives address the expected learning outcomes in the following ways:

- This course is designed to expose the structural patterns of American society by using sociological theories/concepts/research methods/data and to integrate them into a general overview. It will use a social problems approach to studying contemporary America and its place in today's world (ELO 1).
- This class will cover current social trends as they affect education, backgrounds of school children, social status of teachers, and the role of power and bureaucracy (ELO 2);
- It will provide a critical look at the education institution and how it is perceived by the public as well as what the reality of the institution is, separate from this perception (ELO 2);
- Students will understand fundamental sociological concepts and theories regarding education (ELO 1);
- Students will understand the historical development of the U.S. educational system and issues related to accessing schooling (ELO 2 & 3);
- Students will read and understand social science research on educational experiences and patterns in educational outcomes (ELO 1);
- Students will understand variations in educational access, experiences, and outcomes by race, class, and gender. They will apply this knowledge to individual experience as well as larger societal contexts (ELO 2);
- Students will be able to apply the aforementioned understanding of sociological concepts and theories to other contexts (ELO 1);
- Students will be exposed to different perspectives on the educational system and what the future holds for both education in the United States and globally. The sustainability of the United States' system will be discussed (ELO 3).

2. The readings chosen for this course address the expected learning outcomes in the following ways:

- They give students a background in various sociological theories of education as well as the sociological perspective in general (ELO 1);
- They focus on student diversity (ELO 2);
- They connect individual experiences with policymaking in the realm of education (ELO 2);
- They examine state and national influences on the educational experience as well as court cases that affect students both system-wide and at the individual level (ELO 2);
- They raise questions on the future of education and challenges that the American system in particular may face (ELO 3);
- In addition, The textbooks chose for this course are chosen because they:
  - present material in a coherent framework;
  - present diverse theoretical approaches in sociology of education (ELO 1);
  - indicate how societal change takes place and what role sociologists play (ELO 1);
  - stimulate students to become involved with educational systems where they can put to use the knowledge available in textbooks (ELO 2 & 3);
  - focus on inequality in access to education and in the educational experience (ELO 2).

3. The topics chosen for this course address the expected learning outcomes in the following ways:

- Students are given a background in Sociological Theory and Education (ELO 1);
- Students are exposed throughout the course to different theories of education and their critiques (ELO 1);
- Students are taught the history of Public Education so they can better judge the future of the system (ELO 3)
- Students are taught about inequality within the system in terms of access and opportunity as well as experience (ELO 2)
- Student diversity is a topic considered throughout the course in terms of Multicultural and Multilingual education (ELO 2)
- Local control and school choice is presented as well as national level control and power – students are able to see all levels of the educational system in terms of control and consequences (ELO 2)
- School funding, textbooks, and curriculum controversies are presented as a topic that shows national and state power as well as the effects of decisions on the individual level (ELO 2)
- The profession of teaching is presented to students so they can examine the system beyond the student level (ELO 2)
- The power of politics and the courts is presented so that students can connect these parts of the system to individual experience (ELO 2) and understand how change occurs within the educational system (ELO 3)
- The future of education is discussed (ELO 3)

4. The written assignments chosen for this course address the expected learning outcomes in the following ways:

Students must choose a timely, topical controversial issue in education (ELO 2);

They must describe the origins of the controversy, demonstrating an understanding of the systemic nature of educational issues and the relationship between the individual educational experience and the educational system (ELO 2 & 3);

They must discuss political complications to solutions that have been offered to the controversy, demonstrating both an understanding of the systemic nature and the effect of political systems on education (ELO 2 & 3);

They must present sociological perspectives (theory and research) on this issue demonstrating an understanding of social science inquiry (ELO 1);

They must cite scholarly sources throughout their research papers (ELO 1).

## Sociology 2320 Assessment

Assessment of GE Expected Learning Outcomes is through both the paper assignment and through essay exams. In the paper and on the two essay exams, students are expected to demonstrate the following:

Knowledge of social science methods and theories – they must distinguish between educational theories, present theories as they relate to a topical issue, compare and contrast theories and critique theories (ELO 1). Students will be taught functionalism and conflict theories as well as various perspectives that fall under each.

- *Your book discusses 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Education and Competitiveness, the report is also on Carmen. The report supports the human capital perspective of education.  
What is the human capital perspective on education?  
Does this perspective fit into functionalism or conflict theory? Explain your answer.*
- *By now you have read Inequality at the Starting Gate. Can human capital theory be accepted when there is a discrepancy in readiness for kindergarten? Why?*
- *“The Harvard report, Pathways to Progress, advocates for young people being encouraged to pursue post-high school training, but not necessarily college. Would this support the claims of conflict theory that education is being used to reinforce stratification in our society? Explain your answer.”*
- *What do you think the purpose of education should be?  
What would Horace Mann, Thomas Jefferson, and Plato think about this?*
- *Explain how high stakes testing is supported by the functionalist perspective on education.*
- *What is cultural capital? Describe the cultural capital you took to school with you and if it paid off.*
- *What is Simpson’s Paradox? How does it relate to the arguments for and against standardized testing?*
- *What does Rothstein say about the argument that standardized tests hinder the achievement of minority students?*
- *Use Sadker’s research, symbolic-interactionism, and information from the Spring book to explain how girls are treated differently in school.*



- *This class covers many controversial topics. For this paper, you will choose a controversial topic and discuss the origins of the controversy, political complications to solutions that have been offered to the controversy, and sociological perspectives (theory and research).*

They also must relate political and court decisions regarding education to the individual educational experience. They must demonstrate knowledge of the interrelation of the pieces of the educational system and demonstrate an understanding of how a change can occur at the state or national level because of an individual situation as well as how this change at a larger level will affect student experiences at the individual level. A related piece is demonstrating an understanding of the complexity of inequality in the educational system, again drawing on the relationship between the system and larger political forces and the individual (ELO 2).

- *For this paper, you will choose a controversial topic and discuss the origins of the controversy, political complications to solutions that have been offered to the controversy...*
- *Are there public benefits that override the interests of parents and students in determining content of education? If so, explain what they are. If no, explain why not.*
- *Throughout the term we have discussed many problems with schools and some of the efforts to correct those problems. We also know that public schools do many things right or most of us would not be at OSU. Describe what you think are the biggest problems facing public education. What are the solutions to those problems? Who will be opposed to your solutions? How will you convince the opponents that your solutions are the best or most politically viable solutions? Remember, education is inherently political.*
- *Why have the courts ruled that the personal lives of teachers can be regulated?*
- *Why doesn't the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment apply to students?*
- *Is it possible to have religious activities in schools without violating the establishment clause of the first amendment? Explain your answer.*
- *Critics of property tax funding of public schools say it violates the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. Why?*
- *Your book (p. 22) asks whether parents agree with the goals set forth by the National Education Summit on High Schools. Should they? Why?*

- *Compare the position of the New York Workingman's Party on children of the poor with the problems identified in *Inequality at the Starting Gate*. Which groups' solution to the problems facing poor children do you agree with? Why?*
- *There is an article from the New York Times on Carmen (see April 4, *What I learned in School*). Should teachers make exceptions for students with special abilities and needs? Will this result in some students being short changed as teachers do not have the time to make special arrangement for every child. How will they decide?*
- *Use information from chapter 2, class notes, and *Inequality at the Starting Gate* to describe the students who will most likely benefit from public education in the United States.*
- *Provide evidence from *Inequality at the Starting Gate* to support the argument that our schools maintain inequality in our society.*
- *Use Sadker's research, symbolic-interactionism, and information from the *Spring* book to explain how girls are treated differently in school.*
- *Summarize the functionalist and Collin's perspective on credentialism. Which do you agree with? Why?*
- *This class covers many controversial topics. For this paper, you will choose a controversial topic and discuss the origins of the controversy, political complications to solutions that have been offered to the controversy, and sociological perspectives (theory and research).*

Finally, students must assess the future of education and the sustainability of the system by understanding its history, its current challenges, and its relationship to the global education system (ELO 3).

- *Throughout the term we have discussed SB 5, the new law that will limit collective bargaining, end multi-year teacher contracts, replace longevity pay with merit pay, authorize more charter schools, and provide more money for voucher programs. The House version of the budget will allow operators of charter schools to open more schools even if their existing schools are failing. The Governor believes these changes will result in better quality schools. Choose one of the changes and argue in favor of it.*
- *Who should decide the content of education? Why?*

- *Functionalists believe that education can create a meritocracy. We know that hasn't happened. What changes would you make to our current public education system to make outcomes more equitable. Be sure your suggestions are based on research and not opinion.*
- *One presentation discussed extending the school day. Another presentation discussed a proposal to design a three-year bachelor's degree. Which do we need, more time in school or less time in school?*
- *Summarize the research of Leathermen and Niemeyer on inclusion in the classroom. If you were the Superintendent of Schools what would you do to make inclusion of students with disabilities easier for teachers?*
- *Choose either the Rist research or the Rosenthal research and assume that it is reliable. Explain the research and findings. What would you do to prevent children from experiencing this in the future?*

Demonstration of these competencies is evaluated by both the instructor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. 70% of the students should earn a passing grade on the paper and exams, demonstrating that these learning objectives have been met. Classroom discussions, in-class assignments, and student presentations will include the three components as well (for example, each student must do a five minute presentation that features a news item that deals with education. The news item will come from a publication within one week of the presentation. These presentations will be made in a group of three or four students. If students choose a local school event, then they need to tie it into a larger, national issue), but the paper and exams are the main criteria used to judge competency.