In recent decades, scholarship in social studies education has advocated a shift in focus from memorization of facts, such as names and dates, to a broader emphasis on the ways knowledge is constructed through students’ skill development and disciplinary habits of mind. In studying history specifically, this process includes reading a variety of primary and secondary sources to address compelling and consequential historical questions that require incorporating multiple perspectives and interpreting historical evidence to reach and communicate informed conclusions (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013). Such historical thinking practices extend further to include using literacy skills to better discern meaning behind historical evidence and artifacts as a way to empathize with people of the past and recognize the context and purpose behind people’s choices and actions (Barton, 2012; Wineburg, 2001). This orientation provides an important opportunity for teachers to increase student engagement in social studies by helping them find relevance in the resources with which they grapple, and agency in themselves through active and collaborative involvement in learning.

Maximizing the utility of primary and secondary sources means that teachers embrace a broad notion of text and acknowledge that reading primary sources extends beyond conventional means of decoding words and practicing fluency. Important resources in social studies can include photographs, visual arts, political cartoons, graphic data, and deeply personal resources such as poetry and oral histories, so a range of literacy skills and practices are needed to cultivate meaningful learning. Thankfully, the proliferation of digital means to access resources provides teachers with myriad opportunities to enliven curriculum and engage students to see social studies as relevant to their own lives (Hammond & Manfra, 2009).

In this column, we share two digitally accessible resources that allow teachers to be part of this type of practice. In the first example, we explore National Jukebox, a digital resource that helps teachers harness the power of music to foster historical thinking. In the second example, we examine Clio, an educational website and mobile application designed to guide the public to thousands of historical and cultural sites across the United States.

**National Jukebox**

http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/

National Jukebox, a digital audio archive launched in 2011 as part of the U.S. Library of Congress collection, allows teachers to use the ubiquitous medium of music in their classrooms as part of social studies pedagogy. At its launch, National Jukebox included over 10,000 recordings from 1901 to 1925 and has since greatly expanded as copyright restrictions have evolved and Library of Congress holdings have grown (Library of Congress, 2014). In addition to early recordings of speeches and interviews, National Jukebox offers music recordings from the early days of jazz, blues, and country. As a resource of primary audio sources, National Jukebox can be an effective means to get students to learn to work with primary sources in this medium and bring attention to a wide breadth of topics relevant to any history curriculum. To navigate the website, users simply search for a specific song, genre, time period, or location. Although these options are useful, the ability to search by theme or topic would be useful for teachers to find songs via themes or topics that match lesson objectives more easily. Additionally, in using this resource, teachers must use or develop their own questions and activities that help students in their learning from these archives.

As an example of the ways National Jukebox can directly connect to social studies, we look to a composition that provides an important perspective on the enduring
The topic of immigration and its critical place in the U.S. story. Not only has this topic been featured prominently in political campaigns and in policy decisions since the early years of the country, but it also continues to affect the lives of people in the United States and around the world daily. One song found in the National Jukebox archives is a popular recording from 1910 of the song “Young America,” which promotes the idea of immigrant assimilation in the early part of the 20th century. The recording of the song can be accessed on National Jukebox at http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/1928.

The voice behind “Young America” is Nora Bayes (see Figure 1). She and husband Jack Norworth cowrote the song around 1910 as an expression of their patriotism and as a testament to the assimilation they exalted in immigrants arriving in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Bayes was a vaudeville performer and star in musical comedy and popular music in the first two decades of the 20th century. Until her death in 1928, she represented many patriotic causes through her music. She is perhaps most famous for singing George M. Cohan’s song “Over There,” the morale-boosting ode to U.S. troops during World War I.

In the classroom, using this song can be part of a larger lesson, unit, or module on immigration in the early part of the 20th century. Likewise, it can be used to connect past perspectives on immigrants to the changing nature of immigration and demographics of the United States that we see in the current debate grounded in a question such as “What is a U.S. citizen?” As such, this song should be used in conjunction with other sources that offer a variety of perspectives on the issue. In using the music specifically, questions about lyrics, instrumentation, and context should become part of a historical inquiry and inform the learning objectives and assessments. One way to increase the effectiveness of this composition is by using a question guide (e.g., the Preparation for Listening and Analysis Worksheet in Pellegrino & Lee, 2012) to support analysis of the music as part of a larger historical inquiry related to immigration.

Clio
https://www.theclio.com/web/
Clio is another digital resource that can be used in support of effective social studies pedagogy. Clio is a free public history website and mobile app that connects users with the local history and culture around them. David Trowbridge, an associate professor of history at Marshall University, developed the site and named it after the ancient Greek muse of history. However, Clio is more than a website and mobile app, as it is also an active collaborative research, interpretation, and map-building project that relies on professional and local historians, museum professionals, scholars, and even university and K–12 students to contribute to its content. Through the partnerships that users have developed, Clio has amassed nearly 5,000 entries, which include historic sites, monuments, and landmarks; museums and archives; and time capsule/historic events, images, and recollections. Additionally, Clio utilizes GPS technology to help guide users to these entries.

To use Clio, a user is first asked to allow it to access his or her location, although it is possible to use the site without allowing access. Once Clio pinpoints the user’s location, it will show all the nearby entries within a given search radius (usually 50 miles, but this can be adjusted) in either a map or list. For example, Figure 2 is a map of the entries near the University of Tennessee, Knoxville,
including Neyland Stadium, the Pat Summitt Plaza and Statue, and the Tennessee Woman’s Suffrage Memorial.

When users click on an entry, they can then read a brief summary of the historical or cultural site. Entries may contain additional information, such as Google Street View, primary sources, and links to additional websites and videos. Entries also include a button that will lead users to text and information on who created and edited the entry. Finally, some entries are designed to work as self-guided walking tours. These last two are less commonly used features, though.

There are several benefits to using Clio as a means to foster historical thinking. For one, it increases teachers’ and students’ awareness of local historical and cultural locations, many of which can also serve as primary sources despite not being a traditional text-based document. Depending on the entry, though, users may find traditional primary source documents as well. Yet, the greatest benefit is perhaps that of student engagement and creation.

Due to Clio’s organizational structure, which relies on crowd-sourced data entries, students can conduct research on local historical and cultural sites and add them to the dynamic website. Students may also revise and add data to existing entries. Yet, each entry must go through a verification process and be approved before being added to the website. This process not only adds to the rigor of students’ historical thinking work but also gives credibility to existing entries, which students and teachers may use in turn. Teachers interested in using Clio can find more information by clicking on “Clio in the Classroom” at the bottom of any page.

Clio is a great digital source for teachers and students to use, but it may not meet every teacher’s need to address historical thinking. First, due to the reading level of entries and the technology needed to create entries, Clio is probably best suited for students in middle school or higher. Second, Clio is most suitable for those teaching U.S. history, although there may be some entries that justify its inclusion in civics, such as historical courthouses. Geography is another suitable subject; after all, the platform is a map-building project. Third, because Clio relies on data entries from users, some geographical areas may not be able to locate a variety of local historical or cultural sites. Finally, having students create or edit entries may be too time-consuming for some teachers’ liking. Overall, however, Clio can be a great way to
incorporate interactive technology that helps teach and engage students with historical thinking.

**Conclusion**

The aforementioned digital resources, National Jukebox and Clio, make it possible for social studies teachers to move to a broader emphasis on historical thinking and the skills and habits of mind that it entails. Not only do these two digital resources include a variety of primary and secondary sources, which students can use to address significant and engaging historical questions, but they also hold the potential to pique students’ interests, engaging them in the relevance and humanity that can come from thinking historically. Music, for example, is an integral part of culture and history, and National Jukebox allows students to connect with the experiences, emotions, and messages of music in specific contexts and times. Moreover, although local history is not usually included in K–12 history standards, it is nonetheless stimulating in that it enables active involvement in learning about nearby and familiar spaces and communities. Clio enables students to connect with local history and geography and showcase their historical thinking skills in a public way. Together, these digital resources make it possible for social studies teachers to embrace historical thinking practices as a cornerstone of their classroom curriculum.

**REFERENCES**


The department editor welcomes reader comments.

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