

Social Studies Teaching and Learning

Volume 1, Issue 2

December 2020

An open-source peer-reviewed journal of the



Co-editors:

Kimberlee Sharp, Morehead State University
Caroline Sheffield, University of Louisville

Peer Reviewers:

Joshua Kenna, University of Tennessee

David Childs, Northern Kentucky University

Jeremiah Clabough, University of Alabama – Birmingham

James Akenson, Tennessee Technological University

John Bickford, Eastern Illinois University

Natalie Keefer, University of Louisiana – Lafayette

Dean Vesperman, University of Wisconsin – River Falls

Scott Roberts, Central Michigan University

Ricky Mullins, Eastern Kentucky University

Charles Elfer, Clayton State University

Sean M. Lennon, Valdosta State University

Sandra Riegle, Morehead State University

Jeffrey Byford, University of Memphis

Table of Contents

Christopher T. Dague and Jessica A. Orcutt, <i>How Museums Can Serve Teachers' and Students' Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: A Self-Determination Perspective</i>	83
David Childs, April Eddie, and Jarrod Druery, <i>Teaching the History of Native American Pandemics to Highlight the Effects of Racial Discrimination in Indigenous Communities</i>	93
Rebecca Macon Bidwell, <i>Lewis Hine as a Change Agent: Discussing the Fight against Child Labor as a Model for Taking Civic Action</i>	110
Ricky Mullins, <i>But I'm a Social Studies Educator, So I Must Stay Connected: A Theoretical Examination of Technology Use During the Pandemic</i>	122

How Museums Can Serve Teachers' and Students' Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: A Self-Determination Perspective

Christopher T. Dague^a and Jessica A. Orcutt^a

^aThe Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina

Abstract

The authors describe how social studies teachers and museum educational programming can help serve the needs of students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the authors identify digital resources and discuss how implementation of authentic instructional activities, through a self-determination theory perspective, have the potential to support student autonomy and facilitate student motivation.

Keywords: COVID-19, self-determination theory, autonomy, museum education, virtual programming

Even in the best of times, social studies teachers experience periodic moments of self-doubt regarding their instructional efficacy. One thing is for certain, the proliferation of COVID-19, which has led to seismic shifts in instructional design and delivery, has likely exacerbated those doubts. Teaching and learning in our new instructional reality gives cause for teachers to reflect on current practices and evaluate how to most effectively promote active learning while physical distancing. Perhaps now more than ever, teachers need to focus on locating practical and learner-appropriate instructional resources. While “our read-the-chapter-and-answer-the-questions-in-the-back pedagogy has familiar coziness,” it is plain that trying to maintain such customary approaches will only deliver discord and discontent for our students (Wineburg, 2018, p. 6). As teachers continue their search for resources to implement, it is possible that museums could help meet the instructional needs of students.

As expected, museums and other nonprofit institutions are also experiencing the negative ramifications and challenges presented by COVID-19. Many such institutions were ordered to temporarily close due to their non-essential status. Some museums are still shuttered, while others are operating with extremely limited capacity. According to the American Alliance of Museums, one in every six museums faces “significant risk of closing permanently because of financial duress exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic” (Vankin, 2020). Thus, in an age where funding and financial viability are at a premium, museums find themselves struggling to stay afloat. COVID-19 has forced museums around the world to drastically alter nearly every aspect of how they function. Many museums, even internationally acclaimed institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have furloughed or laid off staff, decreased salaries and benefits,

and/or cut back on programming in order to remain viable during this economic crisis (Pogrebin, 2020). Grants have become more competitive, and public donations are drying up.

In light of these unusual circumstances, museums are taking extra steps to sustain and even strengthen their relationships with local communities. The potential defunding of museums should be of great concern to teachers – both now and in the future. Due to the potential loss of digital resources and instructional materials that could enhance the teaching and learning of social studies, increased collaboration among stakeholders must serve as a starting point. In fact, scholars in the field of museum education have been suggesting this type of collaboration long before COVID-19. Stoddard (2018) posits that increased collaboration between museum educators and staff with teachers and teacher institutes would support and promote powerful teaching opportunities.

The overarching objective of this article is to support social studies teachers as they navigate teaching and learning in the age of COVID-19. We intend to do this by,

1. Describing how museums are shifting their methods and materials for teachers' instructional use.
2. Presenting teachers with examples of available instructional resources developed by museums that can be implemented in classrooms, irrespective of synchrony of delivery.
3. Delineating facets of self-determination theory (SDT) and autonomy-supportive strategies, and how teachers' understanding of SDT – coupled with implementation of museum-based resources – can potentially support students' needs.

Museums' Shift to Virtual Offerings and Connecting to Classrooms

Traditionally, museums function as repositories of knowledge, in which irreplaceable artifacts are housed for posterity. Academically-inclined curators create exhibits and programs that are intended to be authoritative in nature, which can be intimidating to the average visitor. History museums have been particularly prone to such inaccessible educational offerings. In fact, it could be suggested that such authoritative approaches can impede the historical thinking process for students because it denies them the opportunity to challenge and “evaluate the ways museums present the past” (Marcus et al., 2012, p. 67).

In recent years it has become more commonplace for a history museum's education department, not the curatorial department, to control gallery interpretation and public programming. The education department's role is to ensure that the museum's collection is fully accessible to visitors of all ages and backgrounds. Some institutions have fallen behind relative to modern educational programming – in large part due to a serious lack of funding. The vast majority of museums in the United States are nonprofit institutions; as a result, there exists an overreliance on federal grants and public donations to stay afloat. In spite of, or perhaps because of, their financial difficulties many history museums were making dramatic changes to their educational offerings even before COVID-19, in order to better appeal to their visitors. The

pandemic has only served to spur museum educators to more quickly create effective virtual programming intended to support the general public and, more specifically, classroom teachers.

Many museums across the country have been working for years to properly document their collections in order to make them accessible to the public in an online format. Initially, virtual collections were meant to accommodate those visitors who, for whatever reason, could not physically visit the museum. Closures are a lingering concern, and as such, these virtual collections have become one of the only ways for the public to visit their treasured museums. The pandemic has caused an unforeseen crisis in the educational community, but it has also led to an unexpected opportunity for museums to fully realize their digital presence. COVID-19 created an educational vacuum when it forced schools across the nation to close, and museums have been hustling to roll out more dynamic virtual programming to fill that void.

For many years now, history museums' educational offerings have often included programs that coincide with state content requirements and that support teachers' classroom curricula. The in-person student programs are often geared towards specific grades and curricular units. Many teachers rely upon such field trips to supplement their lessons and instructional design, and to provide tangible, experiential learning opportunities that are so unique to museum programming. However, field trips to museums are often fraught with complications – including cost and logistics – and often prevent teachers from thoroughly benefiting from the museum experience. Perhaps an increased utilization of virtual museum resources will help teachers learn how to use museum programs to encourage interest in the learning of history (Marcus et al., 2012).

Web-Based Educational Programming and Social Media

There are countless virtual resources available for social studies teachers to utilize in their specific content areas. While many resources exist for the different content areas, this article will focus on offerings related to US History. In this new age of virtual classrooms, museums are in the midst of preparing fresh, dynamic digital offerings. For instance, the Smithsonian Learning Lab offers a free interactive platform that allows for the exploration of authentic digital resources within the Smithsonian's expansive collection. This includes digital images and recordings as well as texts and videos related to history, art, and culture. The Library of Congress has also compiled hundreds of resources on every imaginable subject while also providing tips for teaching, lesson plans, free access to its World Digital Library, and virtual professional development to help teachers better utilize the institution's online resources. Even Google has rolled out its "Art & Culture" platform, where educators can find a vast array of virtual collections from acclaimed museums and cultural institutions. The collections on Google's "Art & Culture" site concern subjects such as the history of American democracy, the importance of our national parks, and women in culture.

For teachers looking to incorporate art into a US History class, the National Portrait Gallery is offering virtual school programs on a wide variety of topics and concepts – such as

identity, democracy, and social justice – until May 2021. The Bill of Rights Institute has developed virtual learning lessons on such topics as the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence. It has also created opportunities for students to engage with more abstract concepts such as democracy and civil disobedience. Local museums across the country are likewise trying to compensate for empty, visitor-less galleries by offering an array of virtual educational opportunities that connect the public to their unique collections. Some have created 360-degree self-guided tours, virtual field trips for students, special online exhibits, gallery talks with museum curators, and exciting interactive activities related to the collections (see Table 1).

Table 1

Examples of Educational Opportunities within Museum and Web-Based Collections

Collection	Examples of Digital Resources for US History*
Smithsonian Learning Lab https://learninglab.si.edu/	<i>Audiovisual resources</i> include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Spanish Flu Impact America’s Ability to Fight in WWI? • National Youth Summit, Women’s Suffrage • American Indian Removal: What does it Mean to Remove a People?
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/education/	<i>Teacher-made lesson plans</i> include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Reconstruction • The American West: Images of Its People • Baseball, Race Relations, and Jackie Robinson
Google https://artsandculture.google.com/	<i>Art and museum collections</i> include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIFE Photo Collection • The Art Institute of Chicago • Amon Carter Museum of American Art
National Portrait Gallery https://npg.si.edu/teachers/school-groups	<i>Virtual school programming</i> include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Identity through Portraiture • Visualizing Democracy • Voices of Social Justice
Bill of Rights Institute https://bilofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/	<i>Virtual learning lessons</i> include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being an American • The Gilded Age and Progressive Era • Heroes and Villains

Note. The resources listed above are not exhaustive but were selected by the authors to serve as exemplars.

Museums are also taking advantage of this unusual time to expand their social media presence. Museums are “urging Congress to include nonprofit museums in economic relief,” by using the hashtags #4BillionForMuseums and #MuseumsAdvocacy to ask their communities and online audiences for financial support (Souza & Lee, 2020). The Carnegie Museum of Natural History has started a TikTok account to reach out to the younger generation. Others are creating podcasts, in which educators and curators discuss interesting artifacts, and YouTube channels, where teachers can find exciting educational videos or informal webinars. The Twitter hashtag #MuseumFromHome contains intriguing images and snippets of information about internationally acclaimed museums’ collections. With so many students enjoying easy access to social media these days, there are endless opportunities to incorporate museums’ social media platforms into a social studies curriculum.

Supporting Students’ Needs

The dramatic pivot to online learning platforms over the past few months has led teachers to re-examine various aspects of their instructional design. One of the most prominent concerns is how to effectively motivate students in these new instructional spaces. While there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to answer that concern directly, teachers’ understanding of self-determination theory (SDT) and autonomy-supportive strategies have the potential to mitigate such worries.

Self-Determination Theory and Student Motivation

Self-determination theory (SDT) is an approach to motivation and personality that is based on the assumption that humans (i.e. students) are “innately curious, interested creatures who possess a natural love of learning” (Niemec & Ryan, 2009, p. 133). Moreover, SDT posits that support and promotion of students’ need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is essential for facilitating growth and for constructive social development and personal well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). It is safe to state that, even in ‘normal’ face-to-face learning environments, teachers struggle with motivating students; thus we might conclude that the shift to online learning environments will likely amplify such struggles.

In order to fully understand SDT, we must begin by describing the roles that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play in the learning process. *Intrinsic* motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity or work on a task because it is deemed to be enjoyable. Schunk et al. (2008) suggest that “task participation is its own reward” which does not require further “explicit rewards or other external constraints” (p. 236). *Extrinsic* motivation serves as a means to an end, meaning that it directs students to work on a task because it might result in a desirable outcome (i.e. teacher praise, reward, avoidance of punishment, etc.). Given this, it is imperative that teachers seek to implement instructional methods that will challenge students while also creating

opportunities centered on curiosity and independence. Facilitating students' *intrinsic* motivation can be based on five assumptions:

- Preference for challenge rather than for easy work.
- Incentive to work to satisfy one's own interest and curiosity rather than working to please the teacher.
- Independent mastery attempts rather than dependence on the teacher.
- Independent judgment rather than reliance on the teacher's judgment.
- Internal criteria for success and failure rather than external criteria (Harter & Connell, 1984).

In each of these assumptions, it is evident that students' intrinsic motivation can be supported when they experience varying degrees of autonomy. Simply put, motivation produces. Authentic, intrinsic motivation reveals students who have "more interest, excitement, and confidence...manifest[ing] both as enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 69).

Autonomy-Supportive Strategies

Teachers want to put the needs of their students first, even in the face of a pandemic. However, many teachers are restricted in their pedagogical flexibility as a result of the various external pressures they face on a daily basis. These pressures can lead to an increase in teacher-centered approaches being employed. Such overreliance on teacher-centered approaches can dramatically thwart students' autonomy – which has proven to be a critical characteristic in facilitating students' intrinsic motivation.

In basic terms, autonomy is an individual's ability to exercise control and agency within his or her environment. Teachers can work toward supporting students' autonomy by fostering relevance, providing choice, and encouraging independent thinking. Implementing autonomy-supportive measures has to be intentional and systematic – especially given our current educational uncertainty. Moreover, while such strategies promote intrinsic motivation, they are also likely to increase various facets of engagement (i.e. behavioral, cognitive, and emotional). Autonomy-supportive strategies can take shape in various manners (see Table 2).

Supporting Students' Needs through Museum-Based Resources

While the proliferation of COVID-19 has caused near countless issues for various stakeholders, it also presents social studies teachers with an opportunity to expand their instructional horizon. While digital resources for teachers and students are plentiful, identifying quality resources from reputable institutions can be somewhat daunting and can cause teachers to return to a pedagogy that is familiar and comfortable (i.e. teacher-centered, direct instruction, etc.). Moving forward, we will identify several such museum-based resources and demonstrate how they can potentially facilitate student motivation while also supporting students' autonomy.

During the instructional design process, teachers should consider the following in order to develop lessons that meet the curricular standards while also being autonomy-supportive (see Table 3).

Table 2

Autonomy-Supportive Strategies: Adapted from Stefanou et al. (2004)

<i>Organizational Autonomy Support</i>	<i>Procedural Autonomy Support</i>	<i>Cognitive Autonomy Support</i>
Students are provided opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose evaluation procedures • Participate in development of classroom rules • Be responsible for due dates 	Students are provided opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose materials • Display work in an personal manner • Openly discuss wants and desires • Choose the form in which their project will be displayed 	Students are provided opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss multiple approaches and strategies • Have ample time for decision making • Receive informational feedback • Debate ideas freely • Ask questions freely • Formulate personal goals

Effective implementation of museum-based resources can support both curricular requirements and the needs of students. Some of the benefits of considering the intersections between student autonomy and our new online platforms for delivery might not be as tangible or as apparent as others. As Reeve (2016) points out, “the goal of autonomy support is clear and obvious—namely to provide students with learning activities, a classroom environment, and a student-teacher relationship that will support their daily autonomy” (p. 133). The power of teacher-student relationships is unmistakable – when teachers respond to students’ needs and are emotionally warm and available, students tend to be more motivated in class and achieve at higher rates (Davis & Dague, 2020). Ultimately, the coalescence of new instructional resources coupled with autonomy-supportive behaviors can lead to teachers being more in-synch with their students (Reeve, 2016).

Autonomy-supportive strategies implemented in face-to-face learning environments are still possible in online platforms. Below, we have isolated a lesson plan from the Library of Congress entitled, “Baseball, Race Relations and Jackie Robinson.” This provides students the opportunity to explore primary sources that relate to “Jackie Robinson’s breaking of the racial barrier in professional baseball,” and how it “leads to a deeper exploration of racism in the United States, both in and out of sports” (Pulda, n.d.). In this case, the lesson calls on students to analyze two primary sources and answer a series of questions. Through the source analysis,

teachers can set up their own online instructional activities that can meet curricular requirements while facilitating students' motivation. (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 3

Evaluating Autonomy-Supportive Measures (adapted from Reeve, 2016)

Characteristics of Autonomy Support	Application of Autonomy Support
Takes the Students' Perspective	The teacher, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invites, welcomes, and incorporates students' input is aware of students' needs, wants, and goals
Vitalizes Inner Motivational Resources	The teacher, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> piques students' curiosity frames instructional activities with students' goals
Uses Non-Pressuring, Informational Language	The teacher, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is flexible, open-minded, and responsive provides choices and options
Displays Patience	The teacher, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allows students to work at their own pace and in their own way waits for students' signals of initiative and willingness

Table 4

Description of "Baseball, Race Relations and Jackie Robinson"

Instructional Objectives	Resources
The students will, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze primary documents closely. Research documents specific to the history of race relations in the mid-20th century United States. Draw conclusions moving from the specific documents to the broader society and text them for validity 	The resources include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from Jackie Robinson to Branch Ricky, 1946 Branch Ricky's speech to the "100-percent Wrong Club"

Table 5

Examples of Supporting Students' Autonomy in Online Platforms – Jackie Robinson

Instructional Activity	Online Instructional Delivery*	Type of Autonomy Supported
<p><u>Posters and Gallery Walk</u> This is a popular evaluation tool for teachers. In this case, students could demonstrate their understanding of topics related specifically to Jackie Robinson, as well as additional sub-themes like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The place of sports in American life • The conflict between urban and rural values (i.e. placement of baseball stadiums and cities planning) 	<p><u>Synchronous/Asynchronous</u> Utilize shared spaces for group recording and view products as a whole class (i.e. Padlet, Google, etc.).</p>	<p><u>Procedural and Cognitive</u> By allowing students to display work in a personal manner, students' interest in the topics and products will be facilitated. Additionally, this activity supports students' perspective and allows the student to choose the form that the project will be displayed.</p>
<p><u>Think-Pair-Share</u> To encourage active engagement, students could explore a compelling question based on one of the primary sources. For example, after reading Robinson's letter to Branch Rickey, teachers could ask students to address the following question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was Rickey's leaving Brooklyn harder on Robinson than others? 	<p><u>Synchronous</u> Create breakout meeting rooms in online conferencing platforms.</p> <p><u>Asynchronous</u> Pose a similar type question and ask students to respond in a discussion-based forum.</p>	<p><u>Cognitive</u> The use of the compelling question will likely pique students' interest and will support students' perspective taking. Additionally, it will allow students to debate ideas freely – even if those ideas are displayed in an asynchronous manner.</p>

Note. Adapted from Baumgartner (2020) "Active Learning while Physical Distancing"

Conclusion

Instead of withering under these trying times, many stakeholders are taking the initiative to find innovative ways to connect. In this case, teachers are trying to connect with their students while museums are trying to connect with a variety of audiences in new ways. When looking toward the future, both teachers and museums must consider how circumstances today, and their responses to those circumstances, will affect their focus and offerings later on. Both have the

opportunity to develop a unique and potentially symbiotic relationship that should not be taken for granted and should not be forgotten once more normal times return.

What is at stake is our social studies students being afforded the opportunity to experience the many wonders that exist online. Teachers need to take the lessons learned during this crisis and continue to provide students with authentic instructional activities. Moreover, applying a deeper understanding and appreciation of self-determination theory can help create synergy between the instructional materials and the students. Further, for museums, it will be imperative to continue to build on their educational programming. While some museums are opening their doors again, with limited capacity, the aforementioned virtual programming should continue to be explored in an effort to reach a broader and more diverse audience. This is a rare opportunity for educators to look at their curricula with a critical eye and to incorporate new and exciting digital material into their lesson plans – such alterations could benefit students' education for many years to come.

Christopher T. Dague, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of teacher and social studies education at The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina. His current research focuses on the interplay of authentic instructional design and delivery and its impact on students' psychological needs and motivation. He can be reached at dague@citadel.edu or found on Twitter at @PhDague.

Jessica A. Orcutt is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program at The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina studying secondary social studies education and teaching. She possesses a M.A. in Museum Education from Tufts University and a B.A. in History from Skidmore College. She can be reached at jorcutt@citadel.edu.

References

- Baumgartner, J. (2020). *Active learning while physical distancing*. Creative Commons Attribution. https://docs.google.com/document/d/15ZtTu2pmQRU_eC3gMccVhVwDR57PDs4uxlMB7Bs1os8/edit
- Davis, H. A., & Dague, C. T. (2020). Teacher-student relationships. In J. Hattie & E. M. Anderman (Eds.), *Visible learning: Guide to student achievement*. Routledge.
- Harter, S., & Connell, J. P. (1984). A comparison of children's achievement and related self-perceptions of competence, control, and motivational orientation. In J. G. Nicholls (Ed.), *Advances in Motivation and Achievement: The Development of Achievement Motivation*. JAI Press.
- Marcus, A. S., Levine, T. H., & Grenier, R. S. (2012). How secondary history teachers use and think about museums: Current practices and untapped promise for promoting historical understanding. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 40(1), 66-97.
- Niemec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom. *Theory and Research in Education*, 7(2), 133-144.

- Pogrebin, R. (2020, March 18). *Met museum prepares for \$100 million loss and closure till July*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/arts/design/met-museum-coronavirus-closure.html>
- Pulda, A. (2002). Jackie steals home. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003557117/>
- Reeve, J. (2016). Autonomy-supportive teaching: What it is, how to do it. In L. W. Chia, J. W. C. Keng, & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Building Autonomous Learners: Perspectives from Research and Practice using Self-Determination Theory*. Springer.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.
- Schunk, D. H., Pintrich, P. R., & Meece, J. L. (2008). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Souza, J., & Lee, R. (2020, March 24). *How your museum can use social media during covid-19*. American Alliance of Museums. <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/03/24/how-your-museum-can-use-social-media-during-covid-19/>
- Stefanou, C. R., Perencevich, K. C., DiCintio, M., & Turner, J. C. (2004). Supporting autonomy in the classroom: Ways teachers encourage student decision making and ownership. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(2), 97-110.
- Stoddard, J. D. (2018). Learning history beyond school: Museums, public sites, and informational education. In S. A. Metzger, & L. McArthur Harris (Eds.), *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Wineburg, S. (2018). *Why learn history (when it's already on your phone)*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Vankin, D. (2020, July 22). 16% of U.S. museums say they risk closing forever in a prolonged pandemic. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-07-22/museums-risk-closing-permanently-covid-pandemic>