History and Pedagogy: Hidden Connections
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Defining History
- Edward Hallett Carr defined history as an unending dialogue between the past and the present. To comprehend present-day events and experiences, one must actively study the past. “A compass is a valuable and indeed indispensable guide. But it is not a chart of the route. The content of history can be realized only as we experience it” (Carr, 1961, p.153).

Defining Pedagogy
- Pedagogy: the method or approach one takes to teach
- Historical Context: The term “pedagogy” derives from the Greek word “agogos” which means “leader”, and “paidagogos”: a term that referred to a slave that had brought boys to and from school and tutored them (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The two terms merged into pedagogues and pedagogy commonly used in the education field today, (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Interpreting the Past/Continuous Dialogues
- Just as we carefully examine and interpret past events when studying History, we also trace the development of teaching theories/strategies to understand the idea of Pedagogy.
- Educators, interpret past methodologies of teaching, their successes, and failures, to determine the relevancy of past ideas/strategies and its effectiveness in the classroom today.
- In the same way that historians look at the norms of society, the educator must continuously examine past pedagogic norms and see what improvements are needed to use such strategies in the present.
- The historian is influenced by their environment, which actively shapes his or her viewpoint. In the same way, to understand the pedagogy of the teacher, one must understand that pedagogy is also a continuous dialogue between the teacher and their students’ needs.

The Hierarchy of needs and effective learning
- Actively pursuing the Hierarchy of Needs in the classroom results in improvement in self-esteem in students, resulting in effective learning. Having ethical understanding and teaching ethical vocabulary/discussion can provide a moral compass to students.
- History, likewise, interprets past events by highlighting moral and ethical concerns, taking that interpretation can provide guidelines on what to do and what not to do.

History and Pedagogy as Byproducts of Society
- History, is a byproduct of society. The interpretation of history changes based on the requirements of the society and the citizen. “The essence of man as a rational being is that he develops his potential capacities by accumulating the experience of past generations” (Carr, 1961, p.150).
- One’s method of teaching (pedagogy) shifts as a result of two factors: society, and the educational community.
- The needs of the student inside the classroom are met when there is an understanding of social norms and the society in which a child is situated.

COVID-19 and its impacts on socialization
- The current COVID continues to challenge students of all grade levels in new and often unidentified ways. It is difficult for students to engage in social norms i.e., spending time with friends outside of strictly necessary gatherings.
- All aspects of society (parents, government, students, and educators), must come together to take the current state of society and attempt to create a learning environment that is conducive to the advancement of student growth.

Pedagogy through the eyes of a Student Teacher
- As a Student Teacher in the Social Studies classroom, I note that teachers today are talking about both the good and the bad that has occurred in our nation’s history.
- My method of teaching involves discussion on proud moments in American history, but also moments when we faltered.
- Teaching controversial issues requires a strategy that identifies various viewpoints in a way that allows for meaningful discussion.
- By discussing different viewpoints, students can come to their own conclusion on where they stand on a certain discussion.

Guidelines for the future
- “The function of the historian is neither to love the past nor to emancipate himself from the past, but to master and understand it as the key to the understanding of the present” (Carr, 1961, p. 29). By recognizing what was successful and unsuccessful in the past, we can comprehend the present and use what we know about our past as a change agent and a guide for future action.
- Similarly, educators look back and reflect on their pedagogical methods and see what was and was not successful, take their inferences, and use them as a guideline for a more effective teaching strategy.