**Statement of Purpose**

Learning about Social Studies and the world around us has been part of the educational curricular for many decades. The National Council for the Social Studies standards states, “In social studies, students develop a core of basic knowledge and ways of thinking drawn from many academic disciplines, learn how to analyze their own and others’ opinions on important issues, and become motivated to participate in civic and community life as active, informed citizens.” Through this subject is how students learn civic duty, geography, history, global network, and government functions. These topics are relevant for students to learn because it affects their everyday lifestyle, as well as, their environment. Many important issues, i.e. governmental concerns, are realistic events that students should and will learn from Kindergarten until adulthood. Although governmental functions are not actually taught until middle school years, teachers and parents still address current news with their children. For example, President Barack Obama became our nation’s first African-American President. Parents who opposed him winning the election, refused to allow their children to watch his first educational address to schools. Not to mention, this country still suffers with racial concerns, economical deficits, and global policies to address. “Today, teachers are rendered virtually powerless, and the ideas of the classroom are often not their own. The impositions of standards and mandates defeat the purpose of education. School committees leave teachers and students with little understanding and control. In addition, our education system is failing our students and teachers, plus with the establishment of the No Child Left Behind, the focus is mainly on Reading and Math. The Social Studies curriculum has really taken a backseat.

The purpose of including a strong meaningful social studies curriculum is to instill knowledge of the world to our students. If students are unaware how our society functions, then they will lose the core foundations of what our country was built on by our Founding Fathers. In this curriculum design, students will learn the branches of government, there functions, and how they are significantly important. The need for learning about the three branches of government will clearly help students contextualize the similarities and differences amongst them. Why they were established and how they relate to current issues today. Designing this concept map for a middle school social studies class will develop potential learners who will possess a keen knowledge and understanding of our democratic government. It will prepare them for the next level of education, as well as, expand their perspective on the current views of our society.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), has adopted this formal definition:

“Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”

The National Education Association concludes, “Students need a well-rounded, challenging curriculum infused with 21st century skills to prepare them to compete in today’s global economy.”

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