

**Title:** The Cost of Nationalism

**Presenter:** Julia Barrios, Mt. San Jacinto College

**Mentor:** Erik Ozolins

Nationalism in the United States is a socially constructed concept that primarily starts in the educational system. Most school age children recite the “Pledge of Allegiance” out of tradition and without patriotic expression or understanding. Children are indoctrinated to perform ritualistic acts in the name of allegiance to one's country. Evidence shows that Nationalism is liminal in nature and will always be subject to change based on different factors. Outside influences such as church groups, family members, political affiliation all play a part in how a person will perceive and process information. The paper focuses on key ideas like “threshold concepts” and “troublesome knowledge” - the idea that a student can receive information initially and have a “troublesome”, way of thinking about a subject. There are “conceptual gateways” that will then lead the student to seek out information elsewhere. It is this “troublesome knowledge” that can eventually cause a student to have a transformed internal view of the subject matter, or world view. This shift in the perception of the subject can become irreversible, and integrative. These ideas were used to evaluate James Fields Jr., who was responsible for the murder of Heather Heyer, at the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville. Fields’ involvement with white nationalist extremist organizations occurred after he sought out secondary knowledge on the internet. There is a need for Americans to reevaluate learning environments in public schools. Critical thinking skills must be taught if we want children to understand the importance and value of democracy.

## Works Cited

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. pp. 121–176. ISBN 0-902308-89-0. Translated from the French by Ben Brewster. 1971

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, New York, NY, 1970,  
[https://commons.princeton.edu/inclusivepedagogy/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2016/07/freire\\_pedagogy\\_of\\_the\\_oppressed\\_ch2-3.pdf](https://commons.princeton.edu/inclusivepedagogy/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2016/07/freire_pedagogy_of_the_oppressed_ch2-3.pdf) .  
Accessed 04 May 2019.

Hall, Mark R, et al. Teaching and Learning Threshold Concepts in a Writing Major: Liminality, Dispositions, and Program Designs. *Composition Forum* 38, Spring 2018,  
<https://compositionforum.com/issue/38/threshold.php>. Accessed 02 May 2019.

Martin, L. A. (2012). Blind patriotism or active citizenship? How do students interpret the Pledge of Allegiance? *Action in Teacher Education*, 34(1), 55-64.  
doi:10.1080/01626620.2012.642288

Meyer, Jan and Land, Ray. *Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge: Linkages to Ways of Thinking and Practising within the Disciplines*. Universities of Edinburgh, Coventry and Durham, 2003.