

7-2020

Status of Social Studies within One Georgia School District

Tonya Fields Pinckley

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Status of Social Studies within One Georgia School District

by Tonya Fields Pinckley

This dissertation has been read and approved as fulfilling the partial requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Leadership.

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STATUS OF SOCIAL STUDIES WITHIN ONE
GEORGIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Tonya Fields Pinckley

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Education
in Curriculum and Leadership
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Columbus State University
Columbus, GA

July 2020

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to those who have believed in me with unwavering dedication throughout the long and arduous process of obtaining a doctoral degree. I dedicate this document to my husband, Jeff, my children Rebecca and William, and my parents, Mark and Priscilla. Jeff, your continuous support and belief in me helped motivate me on the days I questioned my ability and when my confidence wavered. You were always patient, willing to help with household chores, never complained when I was too busy to play, and obliged when asked to read over my work. Rebecca and William, thank you for supporting me along the way and for being patient when I was busy “working.” Through this process, I hope that I have shown you how important it is to set a goal and persevere until you reach the goal. Remember, important things in life often require hard work and sacrifice. Dad and Mom, thank you for being an incredible support system throughout my life. You were both great role models for working hard to accomplish goals. You were my first teachers and provided a strong foundation giving me the desire to learn and grow. Dad, Papa Bear, my only regret is that I was unable to finish this journey in time for you to witness my accomplishment. To you, thank you for all your support and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my doctoral committee members, Dr. Thomas McCormack, Dr. Parul Acharya, and Dr. Victor Salazar, as well as Columbus State University, for offering guidance and knowledge throughout this doctoral process. Thank you for answering my questions and providing suggestions. Your guidance and patience throughout this process helped keep me going. I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Thomas McCormack for “hanging in there” with me through this process. I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Parul Acharya for her patience and willingness to answer questions as I worked through the methodology portions of this research.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this causal-comparative research was to examine whether differences exist between the time allotted for delivering content, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, instructional perceptions regarding mandated testing, perceptions regarding pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), level of ease of planning, level of understanding of *Georgia Standards of Excellence* (GSE), level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle, and usage of the system provided pacing guides within public elementary schools in one Georgia school district across the content areas of ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The research also examined the differences in instructional strategies used in public elementary schools across different content areas. The PCK framework was used as the basis for this research study. PCK refers to a teacher's ability to blend content knowledge with effective instructional practices in a manner that allows students to learn. The teachers' instructional practices will enable school leaders and district leaders more knowledge when providing necessary resources and professional development opportunities. Using an adapted *Status of Social Studies Survey (S4)* through the Qualtrics platform, teachers disclosed their instructional practices for all content areas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Dedication | iv |
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| Abstract | vi |
| Table of Contents | vii |
| Lists of Tables | x |
| Lists of Figures | xii |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Background of the Problem | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem..... | 5 |
| Purpose of the Study | 8 |
| Research Questions and Hypotheses | 9 |
| Theoretical Framework..... | 12 |
| Methodology Overview | 14 |
| Delimitations and Limitations..... | 16 |
| Definition of Terms..... | 18 |
| Significance of the Study | 22 |
| Summary | 23 |
| CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE | 24 |
| Introduction..... | 24 |
| Theoretical Framework | 28 |
| Historical Overview of Educational Reform and Social Studies..... | 29 |
| National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) | 39 |
| Georgia Educational Policies and Reform..... | 40 |
| Georgia Council for the Social Studies (GCSS)..... | 41 |
| History of Social Studies in the state of Georgia..... | 43 |
| Effects of High-Stakes Testing on Social Studies | 44 |
| Teacher Preparation Programs and Professional Development..... | 49 |
| Instructional Practices..... | 59 |
| Integration..... | 76 |
| Inquiry-based Instruction and Historical Thinking..... | 78 |
| <i>College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3 Framework)</i> | 81 |
| Summary | 84 |
| CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY | 88 |
| Introduction..... | 88 |
| Research Design..... | 89 |
| Role of the Researcher | 90 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Sampling and Participants..... | 91 |
| Instrumentation | 92 |
| Data Collection | 98 |
| Data Analysis | 100 |
| Summary | 105 |
| CHAPTER IV: RESULTS..... | 107 |
| Introduction..... | 107 |
| Descriptive Results | 111 |
| Participants..... | 111 |
| Research Question 1 | 114 |
| Research Question 2 | 114 |
| Research Questions 3..... | 115 |
| Research Question 4 | 116 |
| Research Question 5 | 117 |
| Research Questions 6..... | 117 |
| Data Further Supporting Research and PCK | 119 |
| Inferential Results | 127 |
| Research Question 7 | 130 |
| Research Question 8 | 132 |
| Research Questions 9..... | 134 |
| Research Question 10 | 135 |
| Summary | 137 |
| CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION..... | 141 |
| Summary of the Study | 141 |
| Analysis of the Findings | 143 |
| Descriptive Analyses Findings | 143 |
| Inferential Analyses Findings | 148 |
| Limitations of the Study..... | 151 |
| Recommendations for Future Research | 153 |
| Implications of the Study..... | 156 |
| Conclusion | 157 |
| REFERENCES | 159 |
| APPENDICES | 184 |
| Appendix A: Principal Recruitment Email..... | 185 |
| Appendix B: Teacher Recruitment Email..... | 186 |
| Appendix C: Follow-up Email to Participants..... | 187 |
| Appendix D: Thank You Letter | 188 |
| Appendix E: Researcher's Certification of Completion (NIH) | 189 |
| Appendix F: Dissertation Chair's Certification of Completion (NIH) | 190 |
| Appendix G: Methodologist's Certification of Completion (NIH) | 191 |
| Appendix H: Committee Member's Certification of Completion (NIH) | 192 |

Appendix I: Sample Survey193

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 1. Concept Analysis Chart | 85 |
| Table 2. Survey Items Analysis | 92 |
| Table 3. Teacher Responses by Grade Level..... | 111 |
| Table 4. Teachers Responses by Number of Years Teaching Experience | 112 |
| Table 5. Teacher Responses by Highest Educational Level | 112 |
| Table 6. Teacher Responses by Gender | 113 |
| Table 7. Teacher Responses by Ethnicity | 113 |
| Table 8. Level of PCK Indicated by Teachers | 114 |
| Table 9. Level of Ease and Comfort in Lesson Planning per Content Area..... | 115 |
| Table 10. Level of Understanding of the GSE per Content Area | 116 |
| Table 11. Level of Understanding of the Teaching-Assessment Cycle Per Content Area | 116 |
| Table 12. Usage of District-Provided Pacing Guides per Content Area..... | 117 |
| Table 13. Usage of Instructional Strategies per Content Area..... | 118 |
| Table 14. Teacher Ranking of Content Area by Importance | 119 |
| Table 15. Frequency of Topics Emphasized in Social Studies Instruction..... | 120 |
| Table 16. Frequency of Using the Internet for Instructional Strategies..... | 121 |
| Table 17. Frequency of Reasons for Teaching Social Studies..... | 122 |
| Table 18. Beliefs About Social Studies Instruction | 123 |
| Table 19. State-level and District-level Professional Development and Instructional Policies | 125 |
| Table 20. Frequency of Integrating Social Studies with ELA/reading, Mathematics, & Science | 125 |
| Table 21. Teachers' Control in Instruction | 126 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 22. Number of Minutes Teachers Would Teach Social Studies if Added to the GMAS | 127 |
| Table 23. Cronbach's alpha Reliability of Survey Items | 128 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. Pedagogical Content Knowledge | 14 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

One purpose of the U. S. public educational system is to prepare young people for future life, work, and citizenship (Ballard, Cohen, Littenberg-Tobias, 2016; Camins, 2015; McGuire, 2007; Misco, 2014). The idea that public education serves to provide productive citizens can be traced back to the nation's founding fathers, who advocated for education to help prepare citizens to make wise decisions in adulthood (Neumann, 2008). Students need a great deal of opportunity learning lessons grounded in social studies to develop the knowledge and skills of active, productive citizens. Researchers have reported that such lessons can begin as early as elementary school (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003; Neumann, 2008; Ukpokodu, 2003). Researchers have reported students at the age of five can understand historical time and distinguish real changes through time in pictures and stories (Barton & Levstik, 1996; Brophy, VanSledright, & Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects, 1993; Hodkinson, 2009). Teaching social studies is an integral part of early education for students since the early experiences shape their attitudes and because students are "citizens of their classrooms, their schools, and of the larger community" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2019, p. 1).

Researchers have reported that the content area of social studies continues to receive less time for delivering instruction, planning, and assessment within the elementary classroom in comparison to other core areas (An, 2016; Au, 2007; Ballard et al., 2016; Bulgar, 2012; Brittingham, 2016; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner,

2018; Heafner, 2018; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Ollila & Macy, 2019; Pace, 2012, Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2015; Swan, Lee, & Grant, 2016; VanFossen, 2005; Whitlock & Brugar, 2019; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Educational legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and teacher accountability in tested content areas have often been cited as the reason social studies instruction continues to lag (Center on Education Policy, 2008). Past research indicated that social studies content is delivered through less effective, teacher-focused instructional strategies, such as the overreliance of textbook-driven instruction, lecturing, outlining, and memorization of facts. The use of the teacher-focused strategies provided another reason for the lag (Bulgar, 2012; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Heafner, 2018; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Ollila & Macy, 2019; Pace, 2010; van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Waters & Watson, 2016).

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) continued to keep social studies as part of the core content for elementary grades. During the spring of 2016, the GaDOE introduced new content standards in social studies through the *Social Studies Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)* (Georgia Department of Education, 2018b). Teachers began teaching the social studies GSE during the 2017 – 2018 school year. The GaDOE provided professional development on the content standards as well as effective instructional strategies to use when teaching the GSE to students. The professional development included teaching teachers about inquiry-based instruction and the use of primary and secondary sources. The GaDOE continues to provide support for teachers through the use of virtual specialists, online professional development modules and providing teacher notes on social studies content (Georgia Department of Education, 2018b). The GaDOE also provides tutorial videos, curricular maps or pacing guides, and

sample units on the GaDOE webpage (Georgia Department of Education, 2018b). During the same timeframe, the GaDOE introduced new content standards and provided professional learning and resources; a policy was adopted to lessen state testing. As a result, social studies (and science) content was removed from the state-mandated testing, Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS), for both third and fourth grades. The removal of social studies from state testing sent a mixed message as to the importance of social studies (and science) to elementary teachers across the state. Beginning the spring of 2017, fifth-grade students were the only elementary students assessed over social studies content on the GMAS.

The Georgia school district, which is the subject of this study, continued and continues to keep social studies as part of the core curriculum. The district adhered and continues to adhere to the GaDOE expectation of following the social studies GSE. The school district also provided professional development opportunities voluntarily for elementary social studies teachers. The professional development focused on advancing teacher content knowledge of social studies, familiarizing teachers with the content of the social studies GSE, and using effective assessment strategies. Additional professional learning focused on using effective instructional strategies, including inquiry-based instruction, primary and secondary resources, content vocabulary, and integrating reading and writing through social studies. The school district also provided professional learning opportunities for building literacy toolkits that included social studies texts. The district also provided History Refresher 101 courses, document-based questioning (DBQ) training, mini-society training, and Stock Market Game training. Combining both content

knowledge and effective instructional strategies provided teachers with the tools to have pedagogical content knowledge (PCK).

During the 2017 – 2018 school year, the district also went through a textbook adoption for social studies across all grade levels, elementary, middle, and high. The textbook adoption provided elementary teachers (kindergarten through fifth grade) with new digital resources, content-based trade books and magazines, and textbooks. The district-provided additional professional development on how to use the latest resources.

The school district-provided additional support resources through suggested curriculum maps or pacing guides, units of instruction, and primary source documents for each unit at each grade level. All resources were located on the school district's SharePoint online portal, a cloud-based program provided to all district employees through the district's Microsoft Office 365 account. The district also maintained the expectation that social studies would be taught daily (Houston County School System, 2018). The *Elementary School Procedures Manual* set the expectation that all kindergarten through second-grade teachers provides “150 minutes of ELA/reading instruction, 90 minutes of mathematics instruction, 30 minutes of science instruction, and 30 minutes of social studies instruction daily” (Houston County School System, 2018, p. 60). The district set the expectation that “third through fifth-grade teachers provide “130 minutes of ELA/reading instruction, 80 minutes of mathematics instruction, 45 minutes of science instruction, and 45 minutes of social studies instruction daily” (Houston County School System, 2018, p. 60).

Statement of the Problem

A problem existed throughout Georgia's public-school system (including the one Georgia school district that is the subject of this study) in regards to performing at the same proficiency level on the fifth grade GMAS in ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Despite the efforts of both the GaDOE and the school district, scores in ELA/reading, mathematics, and science continued to be higher than those in social studies (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2018). Fifth-grade students within the school district scoring proficient or higher on the social studies portion of GMAS had not demonstrated growth; with the average scores ranged from 33.9% in the spring of 2015 to 32.3% in the spring of 2016, 30.7% in the spring of 2017, and 29.4% in the spring of 2018 (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2018, n.p.). The data represented a 4.5% drop in proficiency. The average district scores were above the state average until the spring of 2018, after which the scores fell below the state average by 0.6%. The state average scores for fifth-grade students on the social studies portion of GMAS were 29.1% in the spring of 2015, 30.4% in the spring of 2016, 29.4% in the spring of 2017, and 30% in the spring of 2018. Scores in social studies not only declined in comparison to itself, but social studies scores were also lower than the scores obtained in ELA/reading, mathematics, and science, and even lower than 10 - 12% (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2018, n.p.).

The drop in proficiency ratings on the GMAS served as an indicator to balance the curricular demands of all content areas at the elementary level, which may be a struggle for elementary teachers. Research findings indicated that tying high-accountability, mandated testing, and teacher evaluations to the testing of ELA/reading

and mathematics had created a lingering negative effect of social studies instruction receiving less instructional time, focus, and resources than the other core content areas (An, 2016, Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015; Au, 2007; Ballard et al., 2016; Brittingham, 2016; Bulgar, 2012; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Haas & Laughlin, 1998; Heafner, 2018; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Heafner, Lipscomb, & Rock, 2006; Heafner, Good, O'Connor, Passe, Rock, & Byrd, 2007; Kalaidis, 2013; Ollila & Macy, 2019; Pace, 2012; Passe, 2006; Pederson, 2007; Swan et al., 2015; Tanner, 2008; VanFossen, 2005; Vogler, 2011; Vogler, Lintner, Lipscomb, Knopf, Heafner, & Rock, 2007; von Zastrow & Janc, 2004; Whitlock & Brugar, 2019; Zhao & Hoge, 2005).

The research suggested that social studies instruction lags behind other core content areas because elementary teachers have limited content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge upon graduating from teacher preparation programs (An, 2017; Bolick, Adams, & Willox, 2010; Hawkman, Castro, Bennett, & Barrow, 2015; Keenan, 2019; Powell, 2018). Keenan (2019) found that most elementary teacher preparation programs prepared teachers as generalists, providing little support in the teaching of content-specific social studies (p. 4). Additionally, researchers have reported that the field experiences of teacher candidates provided little experience in the area of social studies instruction because the cooperating teachers focused mostly on the areas of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science (An, 2017; Bolick et al., 2010; Hawkman et al., 2015; Ukpokodu, 2003). In the state of Georgia, teacher candidates struggled to observe cooperating teachers modeling social studies instruction. Still, teacher candidates were forced to focus on content areas included in the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), which is the student-centered assessment of teaching used at the

end of teacher preparation programs in the state of Georgia (An, 2017). edTPA did not assess teaching performance in the area of social studies at the elementary level (An, 2017).

Social studies instruction not only received less time allocation, but when taught, inferior instructional practices prevailed. Teacher-centered instructional practices versus student-centered practices remained dominant, due in part to an overreliance on textbook-based instruction, and student memorization of factual information (Bulgar, 2012; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Ollila & Macy, 2019; Pace, 2012; van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Waters & Watson, 2016).

The *2019 Georgia Civic Health Index* indicated that Georgia generally lagged in the national average civic health measures, the degree to which citizens participate in their communities (National Conference on Citizenship, 2019, p. 4). The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) concluded that robust civic health is critical to maintaining a robust and functional democracy (National Conference on Citizenship, 2019, p. 4). Georgia dropped from 29th to 40th position among all 50 states in voting in local elections, from 34th to 44th in volunteering, and 34th to 49th for contacting public officials (National Conference on Citizenship, 2019, p. 6). However, Georgia showed growth in voter registration from 62% in the 2010 election to 69.4% in the 2016 election (National Conference on Citizenship, 2019, p. 14).

If the call of public education is to prepare students for college, career, and civic life, the work needs to begin at the elementary level by examining the instructional practices associated with social studies instruction (Ballard et al., 2016; Camins, 2015; Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003; McGuire, 2007; Misco, 2014; Neumann,

2008; Ukpokodu, 2003). The current study contributed to the body of knowledge by examining social studies' status within one Georgia school district. The study specifically focused on the differences in the amount of time allotted for delivering content, the amount of time allotted for lesson planning, the amount of time allotted for student assessment, the perception of the influence of mandated testing, perception level of PCK, the level of ease in planning instruction, the level of understanding of GSE, the level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle, and the use of the district-provided pacing guides. The research also examined the instructional strategies most frequently used during instruction in all content areas across all elementary grade levels.

Purpose of the Study

This causal-comparative research study aimed to examine social studies' status in public elementary schools in one school district in Georgia. The research examined the differences between instructional practices in ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies from kindergarten through fifth grades. The research examined the perceived level of PCK, level, and ease of planning, level of understanding of the GSE, level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle, the frequency of use of district-provided pacing guides, the time allocated for delivering instruction, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of state-mandated testing on instructional practices. The research also examined the frequency of instructional practices across content areas and grade levels.

Evaluation of the status of social studies, in the wake of new state standards, professional development being provided by the GaDOE and the school district, adoption of new social studies resources, and students no longer taking the social studies portion of

the GMAS, provided a viable and timely reason to conduct the research. Previous research findings indicated that instructional practices in untested content areas deteriorate (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2014; Heafner, 2018; Pederson, 2007). Pederson stated it well, “What is measured is treasured” (Pederson, 2007, p. 291).

The current research study provided school level and district level leadership an overview of social studies instruction in the elementary classrooms. The research provided teachers with a lens to view instructional practices within their classrooms. The research proved to either affirm instructional practices or reveal gaps in instructional practices. For school-level leadership, the research provided information to help prepare professional development opportunities, adjust planning time, and provide necessary instructional resources. The research provided the district level leadership an overview of instructional practices across all the elementary schools in the district. The finding provided district coordinators the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of professional development opportunities previously offered to teachers, evaluate the effective use of the new instructional resources, and examine additional professional development and resources.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions, null hypotheses, and alternate hypotheses framing the current research were as follows:

RQ1: How does the PCK of teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies content areas?

RQ2: How does the level of ease in planning instruction by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between social studies content and other core content areas?

RQ3: How does the level of understanding of the GSE by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the social studies content area and the other core content areas?

RQ4: How does the level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas?

RQ5: How does the usage of the district-provided pacing guides by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas?

RQ6: Which instructional strategies are most frequently used by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades in the content area of social studies, and the other core content areas?

RQ7: What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?

H7_o: There are no differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H7_a: There are differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

RQ8: What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?

H8_o: There are no differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H8_a: There are differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

RQ9: What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?

H9_o: There are no differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H9_a: There are differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

RQ10: What are the differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H10_o: There are no differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H10_a: There are differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) formed the framework of this research. PCK is unique to the field of education and takes place when teachers blend pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of how to teach, instructional practices) with content knowledge (what to teach, subject matter) (Cochran, 1997; Powell, 2018; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 1987; van Hover & Yeager, 2004). *Figure 1*. Pedagogical Content Knowledge provides a graphic explanation of PCK. Lee Shulman (1986), a teacher education

researcher, introduced the concept of PCK in the mid-1980s to draw attention to the need to study teacher knowledge. Shulman (1987) later emphasized teachers' need to include research-based content-specific instructional pedagogy (p. 5). Shulman questioned the divide between focusing on content knowledge versus pedagogical knowledge, thus stressing the importance of blending the two (1987).

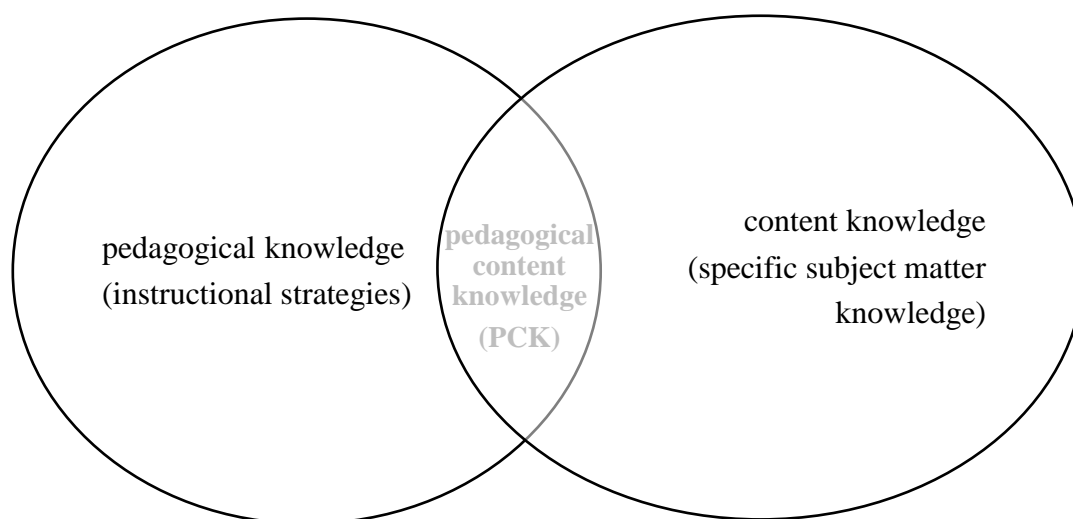
Shulman (1987) proposed that content knowledge includes knowledge of representations of subject matter and an understanding of teaching and learning implications (instructional strategies) referred to as the knowledge base for teaching. In addition, curriculum knowledge, educational context knowledge, and knowledge of the purpose of education should be known (Shulman, 1987). PCK “represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of *how* particular topics, problems, and issues are organized, represented, and adapted to learners' diverse interests and abilities, and then presented for instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Shulman concluded that teachers must reflect an understanding of both content and process within specific content, and encouraged continued research in the matter.

Central to PCK is that in-depth knowledge of content is crucial to effective teaching (Powell, 2018). Teachers and teacher candidates need to understand both content knowledge as well as pedagogical practices to conceptualize subject matter (Powell, 2018). For students to think like historians, teachers must have a deep understanding of what history is and how historical inquiry is conducted before teaching students (van Hover & Yeager, 2004, p. 9).

The current research aimed to examine the PCK level of elementary teachers within one Georgia school district by analyzing the differences in instructional practices

across ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies in kindergarten through fifth grades. The researcher conducted research via an online survey to investigate the teacher's self-reported level of PCK, ease, and comfort with lesson planning, level of understanding of the GSE, level, and understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, the time allotted for delivering instruction, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of mandated testing on instructional practices. In addition, teachers were asked to share instructional strategies frequently used in all content areas.

Figure 1. Pedagogical Content Knowledge



Methodology Overview

The researcher conducted a causal-comparative research study using an online survey to collect data. Causal-comparative research using an online survey gave the researcher a natural way to observe teacher practices without directly interfering with the participants (Creswell, 2014; Field, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The research was designed to investigate public elementary school (kindergarten through fifth grades)

teachers' instructional practices in the social studies content area, and those from the other core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science). More specifically, the researcher examined teacher self-reported levels of PCK, ease, and comfort of lesson planning, level of understanding of the GSE, level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle, use of the district-provided pacing guides, frequently used instructional strategies, the time allotted for delivering instruction, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of mandated testing on instructional practices.

Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine the self-reported PCK levels, ease and comfort with planning, level of understanding of GSE, level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, and the frequency in which instructional strategies were used in the various content areas.

Inferential analyses were conducted using the multivariate (MANOVA) model, to examine the differences or variances between the time allotted for content delivery, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of mandated testing (Huberty & Morris, 1989).

Participants included public elementary general education (kindergarten through fifth grades) teachers in one school district in Georgia. The researcher extended an invitation to 593 general education, public elementary teachers across twenty-two of the school district's twenty-three public elementary schools. One elementary school principal did not provide permission to conduct the study. One hundred ninety-eight teacher results were used in the analyses. Schools across the district varied in population size and socio-

economic make-up. The community environment of the schools varies based on inner-city schools and rural schools.

A self-reported online survey was used to examine the status of social studies and other core content areas. The Qualtrics platform served as the platform for creating the survey instrument and collecting the data. The survey chosen was an adaptation of the *Survey of the Status of Social Studies (S4)* (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2012). An email invitation was sent to the elementary teachers, which contained the survey link. Teachers voluntarily completed the survey after reading the informed consent form. The survey was open for a two-week interval. Online consent was obtained from each teacher before the administration of the survey. Data was collected on teacher demographics, including years of teaching experience, gender, educational background information, and questions on allocation of the curricular day, and instructional practices. Once the window for completing the survey closed, the data was exported to IBM® SPSS® Statistics Premium Grad Pack 26 (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential (MANOVA) analyses were conducted in SPSS.

Once all data had been analyzed, the researcher interpreted pertinent data through a combination of narrative and graphic representations to explain the research results.

Delimitations and Limitations

The causal-comparative research design limits generalizability. The results do not definitively state a cause-and-effect relationship between variables because there was no assignment of study participants in experimental and treatment groups (Salkind, 2010). The data collection tool, a self-reported online survey, was also a possible limitation. Self-reported surveys are of value; however, the measures are always subject to social

desirability bias. Participants may not provide their true perceptions (Johnson & Christensen, 2017, p. 178; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Lee, 2003). Common method bias, only one survey measure, was used to examine teacher perceptions, posed another possible limitation to the research (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Teachers may have also reported false information to enhance the results, such as reporting greater amounts of time delivering social studies instruction than what took place. The researcher also assumed that teachers would interpret the survey questions in the same manner (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004).

Additional limitations of the current research study include the following:

1. The research findings cannot be generalized to elementary schools in other Georgia school districts and across the nation.
2. The research finding cannot be generalized to middle school and high school populations.
3. The researcher was an assistant principal at an elementary school within the school district when the research was conducted. Teachers may have felt compelled to respond correctly due to the position of the researcher. However, the researcher assured participants that the survey results would remain anonymous and informed participants of their rights to discontinue the survey at any time.
4. The researcher had previously served as a district-wide instructional coach within the same school district. Teachers may have felt compelled to respond correctly due to the position the researcher once held. However, the researcher assured participants that the survey results would remain anonymous and informed them of their right to discontinue the survey at any time.

5. Teachers may have been reluctant to answer questions about instructional minutes truthfully due to expectations for instructional minutes presented in the school district's elementary procedures manual. However, the researcher assured participants that the survey results would remain anonymous and informed them of their right to discontinue the survey at any time.

Definition of Terms

Accountability refers to an era of public education following the publication of *Nation at Risk* in 1983 and the passing of the NCLB Act in 2001.

Civic health “included a wide range of civic engagement indicators, from social interactions among friends and family, to the ways people participate in groups and communities. Civic health reflects the ways people express themselves politically in traditional measures such as voter registration and turnout” (National Conference on Citizenship, 2019, p. 4).

(The) College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework published by the National Council for the Social Studies in 2013 outlines a structure for teaching social studies through an inquiry arc. The Inquiry Arc features four dimensions: developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, evaluating sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions, and taking action (Swan, Lee, & Grant, 2017).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) “are a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA). The learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade” (Common Core State Standards, 2019, p. 3).

Curriculum is defined as the three aspects of subject matter content knowledge, structure, or form of curricular knowledge and pedagogy (Au, 2007, p. 258).

Democratic education is the theory that teachers should teach students that “life in a democratic political community necessitates they (students) locate common ground with others, even amid widespread (and sometimes overwhelming) diversity, and that from this common ground they begin the difficult task of collective decision-making” (Kessel, 2014, p. 1431).

Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) “is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school that measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards, the GSE in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies” (Georgia Department of Education, 2020, n.p.).

Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) “provide a consistent framework to prepare students for success in college for the 21st-century workplace” (Georgia Public Broadcasting, 2019, n.p.).

High-stakes testing is used to make crucial decisions that affect students, teachers, administrators, communities, schools, and districts (Au, 2007, p. 258).

Historical thinking includes the “abilities to evaluate the reliability of historical evidence, reason about historical sources as a product of the historical context in which the sources were created, compared and corroborated claims across historical documents, and evaluated historical significance” (Smith, 2018, p. 2).

Ideology “consists of a network or system of interrelated beliefs, values, and opinions held by an individual or group. Generally, an ideology contains assumptions

about how the social and political world is, and how it ought to be” (Jost & Andrews, 2011, p. 541).

Inquiry-based instruction is a pedagogical approach that involves students asking meaningful questions, finding information, drawing conclusions, and reflecting on possible solutions (Thacker & Friedman, 2017).

Instructional strategies are the modes of delivery or techniques teachers use while interacting with students in the classroom, helping to build and sustain student engagement, and helping students become independent learners. Instructional strategies become learning strategies once students internalize the strategy, and use them appropriately (Georgia Department of Education, 2018c).

Integrated instruction refers to the connection of content across curricular lines. Integrated instruction works to make connections with students across subject-matter lines. Integrated instruction allows students to explore, gather, process, and refine information across content areas (Pigdon & Woolley, 1994).

Marginalization refers to the lessening of social studies instructional time compared to other core subject areas (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010).

Pedagogy refers to what a teacher “does,” the art and science of teaching, or teacher methodology (Russell, 2011, p. 421).

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was popularized by Lee Shulman (1987) in the late 1980s. PCK refers to “the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of *how* particular topics, problems, and issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interest and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

Perception refers to the way one sees the world (McDonald, 2012, p. 3).

Perception is what one perceives; a blend of what is out there and what one thinks, believes, and so on (Raftopoulos, 2009). For this research, teacher perception will be inferred through inquisition on the instructional practices of social studies instruction related to other core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science).

Self-efficacy is defined as the “belief in one’s own capability to organize, and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). The beliefs influence a person’s behavior about their own competencies (Bent, Bakx, & den Brok, 2017, p. 152).

Social studies (content) is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies (instruction) provides coordinated and 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 make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017c, para. 4).

The teaching-assessment cycle refers to a process by which teachers think through teaching and assessing students. According to Vagle (2014), there are five phases of the teaching-assessment cycle. Phase one consists of choosing standards and engagement. Phase two consists of analyzing standards and sketching out the learning goals. Phase three consists of identifying the learning goals for assessment, selecting assessment

methods, and determining the weight and number of items per learning goal. Phase four consists of creating or revising assessment items and tasks for each learning goal and developing student work and necessary materials. Phase five consists of creating a scoring scheme and choosing strategies to foster student involvement (Vagle, 2014).

Significance of the Study

Teachers serve a direct role in how young students are exposed to social studies (National Council for the Social Studies, 2019). Research examining how teachers interact with the curriculum through instructional practices and beliefs provided insights into the weaknesses and strengths of the school district's curricular program. Data from the research served to affirm that current educational initiatives are sufficient, or the data helped to expose gaps created, despite the current educational initiatives.

The research explored the status of social studies in public elementary schools in one Georgia school district. While curricular decisions were made at the federal, state, and district levels, what happens in the classroom is often left to teachers' discretion. Classroom teachers have the most significant impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012; Hattie, 2012). Examining and a better understanding of teachers' instructional practices within the classroom can prove valuable in improving student achievement and success.

The research was pertinent to the times because new social studies standards (GSE) were introduced, the GaDOE and school district-provided multiple professional development opportunities, and the district conducted a textbook adoption process. However, scores on the fifth grade GMAS continued to fall in the content area of social studies. The research sheds light on the classroom's instructional practices, which could

help the school district better understand the professional development and resources that should be provided to the teachers.

Summary

Chapter 1 of this research study served to introduce the concept that social studies instruction is essential in preparing students to be productive citizens upon graduating high school. However, previous research has indicated that social studies instruction lags behind that of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science at the elementary level. The chapter provided the purpose of the study, the research questions, and hypotheses, the theoretical framework, a brief methodology overview, the limitations of the study, defined key terms and discussed why the study was pertinent to the times.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The United States is a society that depends on its citizens being well informed on the basic functions of democracy and the world beyond its borders (McGuire, 2017). However, the level of public understanding of United States history and cultural traditions are at an all-time low. Fewer young adults have participated in political life (Fleury, 2011; Leming, Ellington, & Porter-Magee, 2003; Neumann, 2008). Young people between the ages of 18 and 24, who are the most recent products of our educational system, posted the lowest numbers of any group of voters (Neumann, 2008, p. 328). In Georgia, a mere 42.2% of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 voted in the 2012 Presidential election. According to the *2019 Georgia Civic Health Index*, Georgia lags in national averages on measures of civic health (National Conference on Citizenship, 2019).

Citizens must be well informed to maintain a democracy because any government that entrusts its safety solely on the ruler will fall. Social studies instruction is needed to ensure that citizens can reflect critically and debate crucial issues facing the nation (Neumann, 2008). To understand history, one must realize that a relationship exists between the past and the present (Whelan, 1997). An understanding of social studies aids in maintaining democracy and helps citizens in the career field. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, nearly one-third of the degree fields were related to the domain of social science (Brittingham, 2016, p. 1).

The education system has been charged with developing competent, civic-minded, and responsible citizens who are capable of making informed decisions, participating in their communities, acting morally, civically, and politically (Barr, Barth,

& Shermis, 1977; Dewey, 1903; Fleury, 2011; Neumann, 2008; Thacker, Lee, & Friedman, 2016). The United States cannot afford to overlook the importance of social studies education. U. S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, stated, “Too many elementary and secondary schools are pushing civics and service-learning to the sidelines, mistakenly treating education for citizenship as a distraction from preparing students for college-level mathematics, English, science, and other core subjects” (Gray & Donnelly, 2014, p. 1).

Previous research indicated that social studies instruction at the elementary level lags behind that of the other core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science) (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015; Au, 2007; Bolick et al., 2010; Brittingham, 2016; Bulgar, 2012; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett, Heafner & Lambert, 2014; Gradwell, 2006; Heafner, 2018; Heafner & Fitchett, 2018; VanFossen, 2005; VanFossen & McGrew, 2008; Whitlock & Brugar, 2019; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). The lagging of social studies was contributed to the focus on ELA/reading, mathematics, and science in the wake of high-stakes testing, high-accountability, nationalized standards, and teachers leaving teacher preparation programs ill-prepared for social studies instruction (Fitchett, Heafner, & VanFossen, 2014; Haas & Laughlin, 1998; Kalaidis, 2013; Keirn, 2018; VanSledright, Reddy, & Walsh, 2012; von Zastrow & Janc, 2004). Previous research indicated that schools and school systems diverted the majority of educational funding to ELA/reading and mathematics due to pressures to perform well on mandated testing (Brophy et al., 1993; Goodlad, 1984; Tanner, 2008; Thornton & Houser, 1996; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Research completed in California, Illinois, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas indicated that instructional minutes were taken away from social studies instruction and

given to ELA/reading, mathematics in the aftermath of educational policies and mandated testing, despite little change to the curriculum (Keirn, 2018; VanFossen & McGrew, 2008; VanSledright et al., 2012). When the instructional time was provided, ineffective instructional strategies such as memorization of facts, textbook driven instruction, and teacher-centered instruction were prevalent (van Hover & Yeager, 2004). The use of textbook-driven instruction, lecture, and multiple-choice assessments all work together to send the message that social studies or history contain stagnant or fixed information (Monte-Sano, 2011). The notion that social studies are fixed contributed to social studies instruction being rated as least favorite or least important for both students and teachers (Brophy et al., 1993; Goodlad, 1984; Thornton & Houser, 1996; Wood, 1989).

Research conducted on teacher preparation programs also indicated that after graduation, novice teachers possessed limited pedagogical knowledge in the area of social studies, which contributed to the continued lagging of social studies (An, 2017; Bolick et al., 2010; Hawkman et al., 2015; Passe, 2006; Thacker, Lee, & Friedman, 2016). Elementary teachers are typically trained as “generalists” through teacher preparation programs, receiving few methods courses on social studies (Keenan, 2019, n.p.). Coursework on elementary social studies content and pedagogy are limited in elementary teacher preparation programs, providing little support to teacher candidates (Ukpokodu, 2003; van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Teacher candidates “receive little support in navigating the specific pedagogical dilemmas posed by teaching young children about the past” (Keenan, 2019, n.p.). Teacher candidates may struggle because, during field experiences in college, little social studies instruction was observed due to cooperating teachers’ focus on ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. In the state of Georgia,

teacher candidates were required to complete the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), a student-centered assessment of teaching used at the end of the teaching preparation program. However, the only two content areas assessed are ELA/reading and mathematics (An, 2017). Throughout the teacher preparation program, future teachers participated in few social studies method classes, observed little social studies instruction during field experiences, and were assessed over ELA/reading and mathematics, which reduced the knowledge and experience required to be competent social studies teachers.

Professional development provided experienced teachers an avenue to improve the craft of teaching, learn content knowledge, and learn about innovative instructional strategies. However, research suggested that practicing teachers received little professional development in social studies at the elementary level. Professional development provides an avenue to clarify definitions and explanations needed in social studies (van Hover & Hicks, 2018). Teacher subject matter knowledge has a significant influence on instructional practices in the social studies classroom (Monte-Sano, 2011).

The first section of the literature review presented the research on the theoretical framework of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The second section presented a historical review of key educational policies or reform and the effect on the content area. The third section of the review focused on the lingering effects of high-stakes and high-accountability testing. The next section focused on instructional practices within the elementary social studies classroom. Lastly, the review shared about teacher preparation programs and the effect on elementary social studies.

Theoretical Framework

The pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) theory popularized by Shulman (1987) was used as the theoretical framework for the current research study. The majority of research around PCK revolved around mathematics and science content areas. However, the implications remain true for social studies content. Central to the idea of PCK is that in-depth knowledge of content is crucial to effective teaching. Teachers and teacher candidates need to understand both content knowledge and pedagogical practices to conceptualize subject matter and provide effective instruction for students (Powell, 2018).

Social studies instruction should encourage inquiry and critical thinking on the part of students. Teachers must possess strong PCK to foster higher-order thinking skills in students. “One critical aspect of PCK is the ability to comprehend students’ disciplinary thinking and to anticipate, recognize, and respond to students’ conceptions on the content (e.g., history is about memorization)” (Monte-Sano, 2011, p. 261). Tasks and assignments are created to guide students in understanding the nature of historical thinking. Hill and colleagues (2008) referred to this as knowledge of content and teaching. Teachers need to know “key historical facts, but also how knowledge is created, challenged, revised, and tested” (Wilson & McDiarmid, 1996, p. 298). Teachers should have a clear understanding of the subject matter, divide the subject matter into small, comprehensible forms of learning, bridge gaps in student understanding, and create tasks that convey the disciplines’ nature.

Teachers’ academic background has been found to affect the time spent preparing, assessing, and providing instruction. Data from the 2010 National Association of Education Progress (NAEP) eighth-grade test of U. S. history indicated that teachers with

an academic background in history and secondary education demonstrated increased use of valued instructional practices (i.e., reading laterally, discussion, using primary sources, and writing), and conducted performance-based assessment (Fitchett & Heafner, 2018, p. 1).

“The end goal was to provide a democratic education through appropriate pedagogical choices that will help reach the goal of producing personally responsible citizens, participatory citizens, and justice-centered citizens” (Edwards, 2010, p. 222). The content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge affect how teachers teach, influencing student achievement, and understanding of social studies.

Historical Overview

The connection of education and the well-being of our democracy was established by the nation’s founding fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin (Neumann, 2008). The United States’ founding fathers advocated that school would help prepare citizens to make wise decisions.

Today’s social studies curriculum was often credited with beginning during the Progressive education movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Progressive Era brought changes to social science methods of research and investigation, such as the teaching of social studies to elementary-aged students, incorporating new teaching methods that no longer focused on memorization, and the teaching of civics content. Today, school social studies courses in high school throughout the country are a result of educational changes in the 1880s and early 1900s (Bohan, 2003).

With the Progressive Era, teachers sought to improve the quality of education and give more people access. Horace Mann, often deemed the father of public education,

argued that schools should be publicly funded and attended by all (Miller, 2008). Mann also believed schools should be held accountable for teaching the principles of republican government, and that public education was the solution for poverty, crime, poor health, ignorance, and greed. Mann supported the nationalization of public schools (Baines, 2006; Miller, 2008; Neumann, 2008). The federal government's role in education was limited at the time. There was no national history (social studies) curriculum, and thus, a great deal of variability existed between states and local districts. Decisions concerning the curriculum were made at the local level. They would remain so until the late 1960s, when the federal government began to exert more control in the field of education (Keirn, 2018).

John Dewey was another voice of the time who revolutionized education but believed in a holistic approach in education and cautioned that a clash between traditional and progressive teachers was dangerous. Dewey advocated for inquiry in education, a balance between teacher and student-centered learning, and students taking an active role in their education. Dewey believed in a student-centered curriculum where ideas of citizenship and studies prepared students for life after formal education (Bohan, 2003). Dewey advocated that students, not content, should be the focus of the educational process (Williams, 2017, p. 93). Dewey argued that a genuine democracy required an informed, knowledgeable, committed, and active citizenry. Public school was the institution most critical, which prepared future citizens for this demand (Sabia, 2012, p. 379).

During this time of reformation and change, the National Education Association (NEA) created the Committee of Ten in 1893 to report on the status of secondary

education (Bohan, 2003; Keirn, 2018). The Committee of Ten was designed to investigate and recommend subjects taught in school, more specifically at the secondary level. The Committee of Ten consisted predominantly of academic historians focused on the areas of history, civil government, and political economy in high schools. It was the Committee of Ten that recommended schools to teach nine standards: (a) Latin, (b) Greek, (c) English, (d) modern languages, (e) mathematics, (f) physics, astronomy, and chemistry, (g) natural history, (h) history, civil government, and political economy, and (i) geography (Bohan, 2003, p. 78). The Committee of Ten report called for a complete program of history, and history needed to be broadened, nationwide. The call for more history was a brazen move because history was not a universally established subject in schools at the time. The recommendation was that history instruction begins in the fifth grade and continues for eight years. The purpose of historical study was to prepare students for life, not college. The Committee of Ten also addressed methods that teachers should use for instruction, stating that teachers should cultivate the mind and teach students to think rather than rely on rote memorization. However, how such instruction would take place was not made clear. Therefore, states, local school districts, and classroom teachers assumed the responsibility for refining the content (Duea, 1995). During the late 1920s, schools began to have social education courses such as civics, economics, and sociology; these courses began to challenge the dominance of history as the center of social studies instruction. During this time, the battle between advocates for teaching history and advocates for teaching social studies began, and the struggle continues today (Neumann, 2008).

In 1896, the American Historical Association's Committee of Seven was called to evaluate and develop additional recommendations for secondary school historical studies. The Committee of Seven surveyed schools across the nation requesting information about the conditions of the school, the nature of history courses taught, the time allotted for history instruction, methods of instruction, selection of textbook, the use of collateral reading and source materials, library facilities, written work required of students, teacher preparation, and potential difficulties encountered (Bohan, 2003, p. 85). Subsequently, the Report of the Committee of Seven was published in 1899. The report claimed that the greatest goal of education was to provide learners with a sense of duty and responsibility, and an acquaintance of human obligation (Saxe, 2003, p. 94). The Committee of Seven introduced a "history-centered" social studies curriculum focused on ancient, medieval, modern, and American histories (Saxe, 2003, p. 93). The studies would serve as gateways to effective citizenship. The Committee of Seven recommended a four-year course sequence of social science that remains the foundation of social studies instruction in public schools to this day (Bohan, 2003). The recommendation was made that more time is allotted to social studies instruction. It was the Committee of Seven that recommended using textbooks; thus, taking away the emphasis on primary sources and foundational documents (Keirn, 2018).

The Report of the Committee of Eight of the American Historical Association in 1909 created a more distinct focus on the teaching of history in elementary schools. The report credited both the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven for forming the foundation of social studies instruction and aiming to move from a four-year course of study to a six-year course of study (Bohan, 2003).

The Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven, along with others such as the Committee of Five, Committee of Eight, and the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE), were progressive in changing the educational curriculum. Much of what was created continues to be the foundation of the educational system in the United States today (Bohan, 2003). In 1921, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) was created as a professional body to support the teaching of history and social studies (Keirn, 2018). The NCSS promoted the teaching of social studies over the teaching of history. During this time, a new citizenship education curriculum emerged, expanded social studies instruction, included innovative teaching methods and curriculum designed for younger children (Fleury, 2011). Social studies instruction began to focus on civics courses rather than formal politics and government. The emphasis was on improving society through cooperation, community works, and social activism. Social studies instruction was deemed appropriate for younger learners, and learning history through the retention of facts was considered to be more suitable for later elementary and beyond. From the late 1920s to the 1970s, most states adopted a secondary social studies curriculum versus a history-based curriculum. Controversies continued over which version of history should be taught.

During the 1930s, the regulatory intervention of which version of history should be taught in public schools took place and affected what was printed in public education history books. These regulations took place during the same time frame as the New Deal and textbooks began to teach about class, immigrants, and immigration (Keirn, 2018). The curriculum supported the political issues taking place within the nation at the time.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the United States was involved in the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Cold War. Social studies instruction began to incorporate an issues-oriented curriculum, focused on social scientific study, and history. Diversity began to be integrated into textbooks by including the history of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and women (Keirn, 2018).

In the 1980s, *A Nation at Risk* report was written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which accelerated a “back-to-basics” attitude across the nation (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1993; Neumann, 2008). The report claimed that the American economy was suffering due to the inadequacies of the American educational system. The report stated that students were not prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation from high school. To improve the educational system, an agenda to increase performance in ELA/reading and mathematics through a standardized curriculum and standardized testing began and continues to this day (Neumann, 2008).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the National Governors Association began to push for standards-based reform (Metzger & Harris, 2018). The standards-based reform (accountability) movement continues to dominate the educational agenda to this day. The movement was the precursor of the Common Core State Standards movement.

In 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which called for national standards (National Education Goals Panel, 1999; Duea, 1995). The Educate America Act funded the establishment of separate standards for the different disciplines of social studies, such as history and geography. The Educate America Act resulted in the *National Standards for United States History*. The *National Standards for United States History* included teaching both historical thinking skills and historical

understandings (Duea, 1995). The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), took place in 1994 in the form of the Improving America's School Act (IASA). The IASA aimed to improve the education of economically disadvantaged students by increasing funding for schools. IASA included goals to ensure high standards for all students, including social and economic success, after completing high school. Schools that received funding were required to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP). AYP served as an evaluation tool for the US Department of Education to gauge the effectiveness of federally funded programs.

During the 1990s, the federal government recognized history, geography, and civics as distinct subjects and provided funding to create national standards for each (Keirn, 2018, p. 18). The geography and civic standards were readily accepted. However, the history standards were not. The uproar over whose history would be represented, resulted in the US Senate defeating the national standards for history. During this same time, a shift in focus from *what* students knew to *how* students knew history began to take place due to the publication of *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* by Sam Wineburg, who was a professor at Stanford University and, head of the Stanford University Education Group (SHEG) (Wineburg, 2001).

President Bush passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001, which led to even more accountability through testing and teacher evaluations and certification (NCLB, 2001). NCLB set the expectation that state and local education agencies would continue to show improvement in student achievement through AYP, in part, earned by students meeting set standards on annual state tests. NCLB set the goal of all students performing at a proficient or better level on state tests by the 2013 – 2014 school year.

The high expectations led to an era of testing and accountability, and a focus on the “tested” content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics, and eventually to science in the 2006 – 2007 school year (NCLB, 2001). NCLB did not mention anything about preparing students to become democratic citizens (Neumann, 2008). States began to focus on ELA/reading, mathematics, and science because the states could not afford to lose federal funding by not meeting AYP expectations. ELA/reading, mathematics, and science accountability grew, while social studies accountability waned. Research indicated a 72% reduction of instructional time in non-tested content areas (Center on Education Policy, 2008, p. 1). While many states continued to assess social studies on the annual test, accountability measures were tied to ELA/reading, mathematics, and eventually to science (Olwell & Raphael, 2006). As a result of not weighing in on accountability measures, scores on the social studies portions of state tests began to fall.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was made into law by President Obama in 2009. ARRA intended to restore economic stability to the nation and provide an economic stimulus for education (U. S. Department of Education, 2017c). ARRA emphasized the importance of high school students being prepared for college or career upon graduation (U. S. Department of Education, 2017b). During this time, Race to the Top (RTTT) and the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) came to the forefront of educational reform. States competed to receive RTTT funding and support (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). States were asked to adopt standards and assessments that would prepare students to succeed in college and the workforce to receive RTTT funding. States were asked to build data systems to measure student growth and inform teachers on how to improve instruction. In addition, states were to

encourage recruitment, development, rewarding, and retention of effective teachers. States were expected to turn around the lowest-performing schools (Croft, Roberts, & Stenhouse, 2015). The state school chiefs and governors in the National Governors Association (NGA) created the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The CCSS addressed curricular content standards that students were expected to meet before graduating from high school. The emphasis of ARRA, RTTT, and CCSS was once again on the content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics. The CCSS did incorporate “Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects” standards in sixth through twelfth grades. However, there were no specific standards that addressed the content area of social studies in the elementary grades (NGA Center, 2010). “With the adoption of CCSS, many teachers are faced with the task of very intentionally integrating the content curriculum (social studies) with specialty areas such as art and writing skills” (Sielaff & Washburn, 2015, p. 178).

In 2015, President Obama released additional guidance to states on reducing and improving testing in response to an unintended result of ARRA, which was an overwhelming amount of testing. Results were being used for teacher certification and rewards (Goldstein, 2017). The President later addressed the issue with educational reform by signing into law Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), and the replacement of NCLB. ESSA continued to call for equity for America’s disadvantaged and high-need students and required all students to be taught high academic standards that ensured success in college or careers. ESSA provided information to teachers, families, students, and communities through

annual statewide assessments that measured student progress toward achieving high standards. ESSA called for support for local innovators – including evidence-based and place-based interventions; continued support of high-quality preschool; and the expectation of accountability and action to effect positive change in low-performing schools where students are not making progress, and graduation rates remained low for extended periods (U. S. Department of Education, 2017a). ESSA continued to require annual testing in ELA/reading and mathematics but removed the pressure for teachers to be evaluated using student test scores (Goldstein, 2017).

Educational initiatives and legislation such as NCLB, ARRA, RTTT, CCSS, and ESSA contributed to the lag in social studies instructional time and achievement in comparison to that of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. High accountability measures through high-stakes testing and the lingering effect of teacher evaluation tied to that testing were partly to blame for the continued de-emphasis on social studies instruction. Accountability measures created an overemphasis on the content areas of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science and left less instructional time to devote to social studies (Heafner et al., 2006; Heafner et al., 2007; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Heafner et al., 2014; Heafner, 2018; Passe, 2006; Pederson, 2007; Tanner, 2008; Vogler 2011; Vogler et al., 2007; van Hover & Yeager, 2004). In their position statement, the NCSS stated that 44% of all school districts had reduced time for social studies instruction. The NCSS continued by stating that if students are to become productive participants in our democratic society, social studies must become an essential part of the curriculum during the elementary years. The NCSS stated that elementary social studies should be based on

the four core social studies disciplines: civics, economics, geography, and history (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017a).

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The NCSS was founded in 1921 and continues to be the largest professional association in the United States solely dedicated to social studies education. The NCSS is active within the United States as well as across the world, including 69 foreign countries and the District of Columbia. The NCSS serves elementary, secondary, and college teachers of history, civics, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and law-related education (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017b; Thacker & Friedman, 2107; Thacker, Lee, & Friedman, 2016).

The NCSS defines social studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. The primary purpose of social studies continues to be to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse and democratic society in an interdependent world. In 2010, the NCSS published the *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* to provide social studies educators guidance. The NCSS contended that an effective social studies program should include experiences for students to study: (a) culture, (b) time, continuity, and change, (c) people, places, and environments, (d) individual development and identity, (e) individuals, groups, and institutions, (f) power, authority, and governance, (g) production, distribution, and consumption, (h) science technology, and society, (i) global connections, and (j) civic ideals and practices (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017b). NCSS stated that social studies instruction in elementary school

should provide students with powerful, purposeful, and meaningful learning experiences. The content should enable students to understand, participate in, and make informed decisions about the world, give students the knowledge and skills for problem-solving, and thus provide a framework for responsible citizen participation. All teaching and learning in the elementary classroom should be meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017a).

Georgia Educational Policies and Reform

The state of Georgia transitioned through federal educational reform along with all the other states in the nation. As with other states, Georgia struggled through the era of testing with the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS), replacing the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) during the 2014 – 2015 school year. The same year the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) applied and received a waiver from NCLB accountability requirements. In 2016, the GaDOE worked to transition from the state waiver to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2016). Like many other states, Georgia continues to work through the requirements of ESSA, including teacher evaluations and assessments.

The *Top Ten Issues to Watch in 2016* indicated that Georgia had an overabundance of assessments. On average, students were required to take an average of 111.3 tests between pre-kindergarten and twelfth grade, and approximately eight standardized tests each year (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2015). The GaDOE began investigating ways to downsize assessments. Georgia continued with the GMAS, which was aligned to the GSE and administered to students in grades three through twelve. The GaDOE addressed the overabundance of testing during the 2016 –

2017 administration of the GMAS. Students in third and fourth grades were only required to participate in the ELA/reading and mathematics portions of the assessment. For grade-level promotion, third-grade students were only required to pass the reading portion of the GMAS, and this continues to be the policy. Fifth-grade students continued to be assessed in ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, they were only required to pass both reading and mathematics for promotional consideration, and this continues to be the policy.

The GaDOE introduced the social studies *Georgia Standards of Excellence* (GSE) during the 2016 – 2017 school year. Teachers across the state attended professional development on social studies GSE throughout the school year to prepare for full implementation of the standards during the 2017 – 2018 school year. During the 2017 – 2018 school year, teachers implemented social studies GSE and the transitional units provided by the GaDOE. The GaDOE offered professional development on social studies GSE via digital formats such as edWeb.org and Facebook. Professional development was concentrated on assisting teachers in understanding the intent of the standards as well as the inquiry process. An understanding of historical inquiry was critical because the social studies GSE followed the *College, Career, and Civic Life* (C3) Framework, an inquiry approach to social studies instruction (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017a). Georgia Council for the Social Studies (GCSS)

The GCSS is Georgia’s state affiliate of the NCSS. The mission of GCSS is to advocate for, support, and celebrate the advancement of quality social studies teaching for Georgia students. The vision is that the social studies instruction will prepare students to be knowledgeable, effective decision-makers, and engaged citizens in a globally

interdependent world (Georgia Council for the Social Studies, 2018a). In 1963, the GCSS (Georgia Council for the Social Studies, 2018b) was created under the umbrella of the Georgia Education Association (GAE). The goals were, and continue to be: (a) to secure adequate recognition for the social sciences and social studies among school curriculum; (b) to serve as a means of inspirational and professional growth through research, meetings, and other activities; (c) to provide means of a cooperative study of programs in social science curricula and methods; (d) to disseminate information through official publications, meetings, and other means about the achievements, purposes, and goals of the organization; and (e) to cooperate in all ways possible with other professional organizations, the GaDOE, and local schools to improve the quality of education in Georgia schools (Georgia Council for the Social Studies, 2018b, para. 4). In 1981, the Council changed its name from the Georgia Council for the Social Sciences to the GCSS to align GCSS with the national affiliate, the NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017b). In their position statement, the GCSS asserted that the need for social studies instruction is greater than ever. The GCSS also stated that social studies should be a vital part of the instructional day because it is critical in developing citizens who can participate in a democratic society. To accomplish this goal, the GCSS stated that social studies must be part of the ‘core’ curriculum. Social studies should have daily instructional time and be taught to all students in all grade levels. Teachers should be provided with adequate support, and resources should be devoted to the content so that teachers can provide effective instruction. Teachers must be prepared in both content and pedagogical practice.

History of Social Studies in the State of Georgia

During the 2003 – 2004 school year, a committee of teachers across the state, state coordinators, and Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) met and designed, vetted, and approved the GPS for English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, and fine arts, moving the standards from *Quality Core Curriculum* (QCC) to *Georgia Performance Standards* (GPS) (Barge, 2014). The GPS provided a more succinct set of integrated standards. In 2005, the GaDOE fully implemented the GPS.

During the 2010-2011 school year, a committee of teachers across the state, state coordinators, and RESAs met again. RESAs began infusing the CCSS for English/language arts and mathematics into the then GPS to create *Georgia's College and Career Georgia Performance Standards* (CCGPS). CCGPS was in response to the federal RTTT Initiative set forth by President Obama. Full implementation of the CCGPS standards, a discrete set of standards with additional connecting standards for English/language arts and mathematics, was in place during the 2013 – 2014 school year. Throughout the shift to CCGPS, the standards for fine arts, physical education, science, and social studies continued to be in the form of the GPS.

During the 2017 – 2018 school year, schools across the state began using the social studies GSE and the science GSE. The GSE resulted from the GaDOE listening to feedback from teachers, community members, representatives of post-secondary institutions, and business representatives calling for revisions of the GPS. The new GSE for social studies set out to promote historical inquiry and the use of primary sources. The overall changes resulted in a reduction in content at the elementary level, which spread the instruction of American history across third, fourth, and fifth grades versus fourth and

fifth grades only. The new GSE also enhanced standards for financial literacy and clarification (Dooley, 2017).

Throughout all the standards revision processes from QCC to the GSE, the GaDOE provided professional development for teachers to aide in teacher understanding of the content of the standards, the expectations of the standards, and instructional practices for delivering the content to students. The GaDOE provided professional development through virtual specialists, teacher notes on content, pacing guides, and sample units of instruction for the latest social studies GSE adoption (Georgia Department of Education, 2018a, b).

Effects of High-Stakes Testing on Social Studies

Teachers and researchers had questioned the results of high-stakes testing on education since the late 1980s when accountability came to the forefront due to the *A Nation at Risk* report and NCLB (Airasian, 1987; Au, 2007; Bulgar, 2012; Cimbricz, 2002; Gradwell, 2006; Madaus, 1988; Pederson, 2007; Shepard, Penuel, & Davidson, 2017; van Hover, Hicks & Irwin, 2006; van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Williamson, Bondy, Langley, & Mayne, 2005). Accountability was a powerful motivator and often caused teachers to change pedagogical practices (Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). Au (2007) conducted a meta-synthesis of 49 qualitative studies assessing the effects of high-stakes testing on the curriculum. The synthesis revealed that the primary impact of high-stakes testing was to cut down curricular content to focus only on the areas assessed. In addition, the instruction within the content areas taught was fragmented into test-related pieces by instructional pedagogy that was teacher-directed or teacher-centered. However, Au's research discovered in a minority of cases that high-stakes testing led to an

expansion of the curriculum and an integration of knowledge, leading to more student-centered pedagogy. Bulgar (2012) found that teachers in New Jersey felt turmoil between their understanding of effective teaching methods and the fear that students would not perform well when tested; thus, teachers admitted to reverting to traditional teaching methods. Bulgar also found that teachers viewed test preparation as a separate portion of the curriculum, separate and discrete from successful and engaging strategies that have been proven to build students' reasoning.

Haas & Laughlin (1998) studied 98 teachers who were members of NCSS via survey. The survey inquired about the methods teachers used to teach social studies, topics taught, resources used, and how the teachers individualized instruction based on student interests and abilities. Teachers were asked to share major concerns about the future of social studies instruction. The most important concern in the research was the lack of priority given to the content area of social studies. Throughout the research, teachers voiced the belief that ELA/reading, mathematics, and science received primary focus due to state testing mandates and budget decisions (Haas & Laughlin, 1998).

VanFossen (2005) researched the status of social studies instruction in elementary schools in Indiana. VanFossen (2005) mailed questionnaires to a stratified (by grade) random sample of 1,200 elementary teachers across the state of Indiana, and 594 teachers responded. The results indicated that two-thirds of the teachers spent on average, less than 90 minutes per week on social studies instruction. Teachers listed an assessment of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science on the state test, ISTEP, as the reason social studies received less instructional time. Teachers responded that more time would be devoted when asked if social studies were to be included in the fifth-grade state

assessment and whether the teachers believed more instructional time would be devoted to the content area of social studies or not. Within the questionnaire, teachers were prompted to rank the core content areas, and the results were that social studies content was ranked fourth in importance behind English/language arts (1st), mathematics (2nd), and science (3rd). Teachers revealed they did not have a clear understanding of the goal or purpose of teaching social studies.

In conclusion, VanFossen found three possible reasons for teachers not devoting more time to social studies instruction. First, teachers perceived little support from administration. Second, social studies content was not tested on the statewide assessment. Third, the goals and mission of social studies were unclear (VanFossen, 2005).

Bailey, Shaw, and Hollifield (2006) also researched the amount of instructional time spent on social studies, the variety of instructional strategies used during social studies, and the frequency and types of technology used during social studies instruction. The research placed thirty-nine teacher candidates into Title I schools in Alabama to serve as paraprofessionals. The teacher candidates kept a weekly log on the amount of time allocated for social studies instruction, the type of instructional strategies used, and how technology was included in the instruction. The results of the research indicated that elementary social studies instruction was not taught every day due to the focus on the assessed content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics. Little critical thinking or inquiry was incorporated with social studies instruction, which led to the researchers' conclusion that the elementary students would not be prepared for middle school social studies instruction. Little to no technology was integrated into the teaching of social studies. Bailey and colleagues postulated that the instructional minutes might wane even more

due to the accountability measures tied to ELA/reading, mathematics, and science in NCLB. Bailey and colleagues recommended that the university partner with schools to provide professional development, that elementary students be tested in social studies for accountability purposes and that schools should be required to teach social studies for a minimum of thirty minutes each day.

Research on whether the inclusion of social studies on state assessment improved that status of social studies proved indecisive (O'Connor, Heafner, & Groce, 2007). The question became whether more instructional time meant the status of social studies was improved. Researchers reported that more time would be devoted to social studies instruction if statewide assessments included the content, but the quality of the instruction may be compromised. However, the researchers postulated that teachers would be required to develop more in-depth lessons, should state tests include document-based questions, and move beyond multiple-choice questions.

Fitchett, Heafner, and Lambert (2014) examined the relationship between first through fifth-grade teachers' perceptions of autonomy, teaching context, state testing policy, and reported social studies instructional time (p. 1). The researchers used the Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) database to locate a multi-stratified (by grade level) sample of first through fifth-grade self-contained teachers. The findings suggested that teachers in states that participated in state testing of social studies reported spending more instructional time delivering social studies content. However, the researchers found that teaching in a state that administered a high-stakes test covering the social studies content resulted in teachers feeling a decrease in autonomy. This finding is important because teachers who felt more autonomous, despite administering an

assessment of the social studies content, provided more instructional time for social studies throughout the curricular day.

An (2017) researched the effect of the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) high stakes testing. The edTPA is a student-centered assessment of teaching used at the end of a teacher preparation program as part of initial teaching licensure for teacher candidates in the state of Georgia. The strong focus of edTPA in ELA/reading and mathematics could lead to less emphasis on teacher candidates' social studies methods classes. Due to the expectation that teachers must pass edTPA, teacher candidates concentrated more on edTPA and instructional practices in the literacy and mathematics methods courses.

Keirn (2018) found through his analysis of research literature that how students were assessed on social studies tests contributed to how social studies were taught. State tests usually focused on content versus procedural knowledge of history. The focus on content knowledge was due in part to the high cost of scoring an assessment that incorporated students' thinking and constructed responses. Scoring an assessment based on facts through multiple-choice items was more economical than scoring an assessment that consisted of constructed response items. Assessments that consisted of constructed responses were saved for the federally mandated contents area of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science.

However, Keirn (2018) found new instruments were being introduced at the secondary level that could serve to enhance historical thinking, such as the History Assessment of Thinking (HATS) produced and provided by the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG). The new Advanced Placement (AP) examinations began to

include short answer questions that addressed historical interpretation, periodization, causation, and sourcing. The new AP examinations included more rigorous multiple-choice questions that required students to “interpret a stimulus and apply that interpretation to the content and conceptual knowledge that was associated with the question” (Keirn, 2018, p. 27).

More recently, research suggested that testing social studies does not necessarily translate to better social studies instruction. However, a result may be an increase in the amount of time spent on social studies instruction (Heafner, 2018). “I observed a false hope for social studies, one in which an extended academic day and accountability measures fell short of expectations of improving the status of social studies” (Heafner, 2018, p. 236).

Teacher Preparation Programs and Professional Development

Teachers are the filters of what and how concepts, strategies, and approaches are included or excluded in the classroom (Chen, 2008; Long, 2017). “How” a teacher teaches and “what” a teacher teaches depends on the view the teacher has of his or her role in the profession, the school, and students (Patterson, 2010). A teacher’s self-concept, the perception one forms through interaction with the environment, significant others, and behavior attributions are multidimensional. The multidimensional aspect of teacher self-concept means a teacher may have a different self-concept as an English language arts teacher than as a social studies teacher (Muijs & Reynolds, 2015). Hattie (2003) argues that teachers are the single, most powerful influence on student achievement. Because teachers hold such influence over student learning, researchers

have investigated how teacher preparation programs and professional development affect instructional practices.

Researchers have reported that new teachers in general face many challenges due to emphasis on assessment and accountability, teaching a diverse population of students, teaching a full teaching schedule with multiple content area preparations, few instructional resources, little collegial support, feelings of isolation, high parent expectations, little administrative support, little knowledge of school and classroom routines and procedures, and an overall mismatch of expectations entering the field versus the realities of the classroom (van Hover & Yeager, 2004, p. 10). In addition to the general anxiety that beginning teachers experienced, these teachers participated in a generalized program of study with little specialization in social studies or science content throughout their teacher preparation program (Tanner, 2008).

Previous research found that teacher candidates entered college social studies methods classes predisposed with a negative attitude towards social studies instruction. This negative attitude often stemmed from their own experiences in school, where social studies were viewed as boring or irrelevant content. Teacher preparation programs did little to change this preconceived notion (An, 2017; Bolick, Adams, & Willox, 2010; Fry 2009; Owens, 1997; Ukpokodu, 2003; van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Required coursework in social studies methods classes tended to be minimal, leading to teacher candidates being ill-prepared for social studies instruction, which contributed to teacher candidates feeling a lack of confidence in the area of teaching social studies upon entering the profession (Passe, 2006). Teacher candidate beliefs combined with past educational

experiences had a great impact on the amount of content knowledge and the type of pedagogical approaches used upon entering the profession (van Hover & Yeager, 2004).

Another issue found in teacher preparation programs was that professors teaching social studies methods courses did not consider themselves specialists in the field of social studies (Passe, 2006). Most professors considered themselves generalists and primarily trained in the area of ELA/reading. Professors holding themselves as specialists in the field of social studies often held little knowledge of elementary education, especially at the primary grade level. Therefore, assisting teacher candidates with both content knowledge and instructional practices for delivering instruction proved difficult.

Adding to the problem, teacher candidates had little chance to observe or practice quality social studies instruction during field experiences (An, 2017; Bolick, Adams, & Willox, 2010; Franklin & Serriere, 2010; Fry, 2009; Hawkman et al., 2015; Owens, 1997). Social studies instruction that was observed did not match the theories and strategies taught in college methods classes (Owens, 1997). Teacher candidates were not given ample opportunities to witness quality social studies instruction. Thus, it became a struggle to define social studies and learn effective instructional practices. It proved difficult for teacher candidates to know how to teach social studies (Hawkman et al., 2015). The research implications suggested a “disconnect” between what teacher candidates learned in methods classes and what was encountered when entering the profession (van Hover & Yeager, 2004, p. 23). In addition, the results indicated the need for ongoing, long-term mentoring to provide support to teachers.

The research of van Hover & Yeager (2004) examined three second-year, secondary history teachers who had completed the same graduate-level college course in

history the previous year. All three teachers taught within the same public-school system in three different school settings, and each held a bachelor's degree in history. One teacher taught honors American history in a diverse school where the enrolled students selected the course. In contrast, another teacher taught Advanced Placement (AP) American history where students were placed in the course based on ability level and parental involvement. The third teacher taught in an environment containing challenging student behavior. The case study results revealed that all three teachers, regardless of context and setting, perceived similar challenges during their first year of teaching (p. 21). The perceived challenges held great influence over the teachers' decisions for instructional practices. The challenges resulted in a heavy reliance on textbook-driven instruction and lecturing versus historical inquiry, critical thinking, and a collaborative learning environment. All three teachers graduated from the same college and attended methods courses that emphasized historical thinking, historical inquiry, and document-based instruction. However, factors within their teaching environment superseded the pedagogical content learned in college classes. All three teachers voiced concern about behavior management and were afraid that inquiry-based lessons and cooperative learning situations would result in off-task behaviors. It appeared that the lecture format provided the teachers with a way of maintaining control over the classroom environment (p. 22).

Second, the amount of content to be covered created a challenge for the teachers. Teachers relied on delivering important factual information to students via lecture due to feeling time was limited to cover all the necessary content. Incorporating inquiry-based lessons or outside primary sources were perceived as too time-consuming, and was

eliminated. All three teachers appeared to doubt their students' ability to think critically (p. 22). Lastly, all three teachers voiced the feeling of having little to no support during their first year of teaching. Feelings of isolation, pressures of preparing multiple preparations for different classes, and colleagues' unwillingness to share ideas were all expressed throughout the research.

Good and colleagues (2010) also studied teacher candidates. The teacher candidates participated in five teacher preparation programs in North Carolina. The purpose of the research was to share teacher candidates' perspectives during their field experience. At the beginning of the field experience, teacher candidates interviewed their cooperating teacher through a structured questionnaire containing 20 closed-ended and open-ended questions. The teacher candidates then observed the cooperating teacher and documented similarities and differences between the initial interview responses and the classroom observations. At the end of the field experience, teacher candidates provided written reflections discussing the amount of instructional time spent on social studies, surprises to responses of the cooperating teachers, and how the time spent in the elementary classroom impacted their thinking about the teaching and learning of social studies (Good et al., 2010, p. 7). The results of the teacher candidate reflections revealed that teacher candidates recognized the difficulty in finding time to teach the entire curriculum, conveyed that social studies were not valued in the elementary curriculum, stated that integration was important to be able to teach social studies, and recognized teacher responsibility to make sure social studies was taught (Good, et al., 2010, p. 7). Good and colleagues concluded that social studies instruction at the elementary level continued to be marginalized, which meant that teacher candidates struggled to have the

opportunity to observe quality social studies instruction, meaning they may have graduated with little interest in and little ability of social studies content.

Monte-Sano (2011) also researched three teacher candidates through a descriptive, comparative case study. The study focused on teacher candidates' assignments in the college methods classes, observations during field experiences, and assessments of teacher candidates' disciplinary knowledge (p. 262). The researcher found that despite all three teachers participating in the same college methods classes that focused on interpretive and evidence-based historical thinking, their performance during field experience varied a great deal. Monte-Sano concluded that the nature and impact of the teacher candidate's disciplinary preparation before entering the teacher education program had a great influence. Two of the three teacher candidates majored in history, but the other had a conception of history that reflected disciplinary expertise (p. 270). Second, the researcher concluded that teacher candidates' disposition, vision, and beliefs toward the teacher education program affected the outcome. One of the teacher candidates grew a great deal throughout her college experiences, learning to focus on students' ideas, and recognize the students' disciplinary thinking.

In contrast, the other teacher simply did not. The candidate that did not understand voiced fear of failure if she included building upon student ideas in the classroom. Lastly, the methods courses and field experiences themselves influenced teacher candidates. Two of the teacher candidates' coordinating teachers focused on history as though it consisted of fixed, stagnant information and structured lessons in this manner. In contrast, the third candidate's coordinating teacher focused the classroom

around the discussion. The researcher concluded that more research is needed to discover how best to develop all aspects of PCK for teacher candidates.

VanSledright, Reddy, and Walsh (2012) argued that the marginalization of elementary social studies was not an assessment problem, but a knowledge problem. VanSledright and colleagues pointed out that few elementary teacher candidates in Maryland had more than one introductory-level history course throughout the college experience. VanSledright and colleagues suggested more rigorous requirements for teacher candidates in the area of social studies instruction was needed. In addition, for practicing elementary teachers, more history-specific professional development should have been offered.

The historical study research of Benjamin Jacobs focused on whether teacher education programs contributed to how teachers implemented social studies instruction (2013). Jacobs (2013) found social studies teacher preparation programs of the twentieth and twenty-first century to consist of basic structures, including subject matter, pedagogy, and practicum experience. At the turn of the twentieth century, education students at the University of Minnesota who pursued a teaching degree in secondary schools were required to take a two-year baccalaureate-level teaching course of study that included 24 credits, 15 of which needed to be in the major content area (p. 2). However, by the turn of the twenty-first century, University of Minnesota teacher candidates were required to enroll in one year of a baccalaureate-level teaching course, which comprised of 22 credits education courses, including ten credits of specializing in social studies. As with the University of Minnesota, most social studies teacher preparation programs continued to consist of some combination of subject matter, pedagogy, and practicum experience. The

research results suggested that disagreement between educational specialists and subject matter specialists as to what a social studies curriculum should include, and what place the content held in elementary schools contributed teacher candidates feeling ill-prepared to teach social studies.

Hawkman, Castro, Bennett, and Barrow (2015) researched teacher preparation programs at a large Midwestern university. The researchers surveyed ninety-one teacher candidates and found that more than two-thirds of the teacher candidates observed two or fewer social studies lessons throughout their 60-hour field experience. Teacher candidates who witnessed social studies instruction recalled teachers using worksheets, textbooks, and animated films (p.199). The researchers noted that when one teacher candidate asked for an explanation as to why social studies instruction had not been witnessed, the cooperating teacher said she tried to integrate it into the reading. Instructional strategies suggested in social studies methods classes were rarely observed in social studies but were witnessed in other content areas. The researchers recommended that social studies teacher educators be advocates for social studies instruction in elementary schools. The researchers recommended careful coordination between university and elementary schools be implemented to ensure that students receive the opportunity to observe quality social studies instruction. The study results suggested that methods courses be designed to help teacher candidates integrate social studies into other content areas. Lastly, the researchers believed that sixth through twelfth-grade teachers should pressure their elementary colleagues to include effective social studies instruction. Despite observing little social studies instruction, Hawkman and colleagues found teacher education programs were important because it was through methods classes that teacher

candidates learned of the little nuances of teaching specific content, child development, teaching strategies, and PCK necessary for a career in education.

In Georgia, teacher candidates submit learning portfolios for assessment in the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). An (2017) conducted a case study via online surveys and phone interviews with 32 elementary social studies teacher educators in Georgia. The researcher then conducted follow-up interviews focused on the impact of edTPA on social studies teacher education preparation programs. The researcher found that a slight majority of teacher educators were against edTPA due to their experience of losing academic freedom, a distraction from multicultural education, and the narrowing of possibilities of teaching and learning. Almost 40% of the participants were in favor of edTPA (p. 32). The research suggested that edTPA led to a marginalized social studies curriculum. Many teacher candidates were overwhelmed, anxious, or confused about edTPA and were less motivated to learn how to teach social studies. The teacher candidates predicted the status of elementary social studies in teacher education programs would get worse due to edTPA, which focused on literacy and mathematics content and neglected other content areas.

Teacher preparation programs are important for the success of education. However, the continuation of learning is important for practicing teachers. Schrum, Kortecamp, Rosenfeld, Briscoe, and Steeves (2016) researched the impact of historic site-based professional development on teachers' knowledge and instructional practices (p. 35). The researchers collected data through videos of site visits, follow-up surveys, classroom observations, and case studies. The researchers found “well-designed professional development such as visits to museums, memorials, and other historical sites

reinforced the importance of viewing history as a constructed narrative that goes beyond a traditional textbook” (p. 38). Historic site-based professional development provided teachers with opportunities to analyze exhibits, artifacts, and primary resources, which impacted both teacher practice and student outcomes. Well-crafted field experiences, combined with follow-up discussions and reflections, increased the likelihood that teachers transferred the knowledge and incorporated new skills in the classroom. Researchers identified two strategies that appeared to influence classroom practices: directly connect the professional development experience with the content the teacher currently teaches, and focus on conceptual knowledge.

Van Hover and Hicks (2018) also conducted an analysis of research literature on the education of history teachers and professional development. The researchers concluded that both teacher preparation and professional development remained uneven and specific to a particular context (p. 407). The researchers postulated that shared definitions and shared language would help move research forward. “History educators should collaborate to decompose practice and articulate core practices” (p. 408). The researchers postulated that a shift to focusing on clinical aspects of practice and better supporting novice and practicing teachers was necessary (p. 408). The researchers also suggested that history education needed to incorporate frameworks that assisted in assessments, and comprehension of the context in which learning occurs. Lastly, the researchers shared that more attention should be given to the ways and spaces teachers learn, including classrooms, school community, professional development courses, or workshops.

Instructional Practices

Social studies instruction at the elementary level not only lags regarding minutes within the curricular day; but it also continues to be taught using inferior instructional pedagogy when compared to ELA/reading, mathematics, and science (An, 2017; Babini, 2013; Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; Bolick, Adams, & Willox, 2010; Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere, & Stewart, 2011; Brittingham, 2016; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & VanFossen, 2012; Franklin & Serriere, 2010; Hawkman et al., 2015; Heafner, 2018; Heafner et al., 2007; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Heafner & Fitchett, 2018; Heafner, Lipscomb, & Rock, 2006; Holloway & Chiodo, 2009; O'Connor, Heafner, & Groce, 2007). The research of Haas and Laughlin (1998) focused on five major objectives. The first objective was identifying selected characteristics of teachers who currently taught social studies to kindergarten to sixth-grade students. Secondly, the researchers identified how elementary social studies teachers who were also members of the professional social studies organization implemented trends in elementary education. Third, researchers determined the perspectives that social studies teachers had regarding support received from other colleagues, administrators, and parents. Fourth, the researchers identified the concerns of elementary teachers related to the teaching of social studies. Lastly, the researchers reported the findings of the open-ended survey to the social studies community.

One hundred fourteen questionnaires were returned, and of those, 98 were from teachers. Sixty-one respondents were fourth through sixth-grade teachers, and 17 were first through third-grade teachers. Ninety percent of the teachers surveyed were familiar with the NCSS social studies standards and less knowledgeable about state and system

standards. Teachers obtained professional growth by attending professional meetings and reading professional journals. More than 75% of the teachers perceived that their school system and colleagues believed social studies content and instruction as very important. However, only 56% of the teachers believed that the parents of their students regarded social studies content and instruction as important (Haas & Laughlin, 1998, para. 4 -10).

Fifty-four percent of the teachers described their instructional practice as being social science or social studies oriented, but 26% indicated that social studies instruction was literature-based (Haas & Laughlin, 1998, para. 11-17). Teachers reported using a variety of instructional strategies and materials, such as maps, globes, and satellite images. However, 90% indicated using a textbook for instruction no more than once a week. Teachers reported using films, videos, and computers to supplement instruction (para. 11-17). Forty-three percent responded that students engaged in cooperative learning activities and projects. Written materials were most frequently used as resources for reading. Pictures and graphics were reported less frequently. Geographic tools, such as atlases and globes, were more frequently used while resources requiring human interaction such as speakers, interviewees, role-playing, and personal experiences were used much less frequently.

In regards to being prepared to integrate social studies instruction, 76 respondents listed a total of 217 topics or titles used in integrated or interdisciplinary teaching (Haas & Laughlin, 1998). First and second-grade teachers focused on teaching cultural universals and environmental geography by studying people. History became the most frequent topic for instruction beginning in third grade. It was also noted that third grade was the first-grade level to mention economic and political science or civic ideals.

Teachers in fourth through sixth grades reported using integrated studies focusing on history, culture (including multicultural studies), and geography. One noticeably missing piece was instruction on government and civic ideals. In response to the questionnaire's open-ended portion, the number one concern of respondents was the perceived lack of priority given to social studies instruction in schools. The second area of concern was the need for more professional development on teaching social studies content using new instructional strategies.

VanFossen (2005) investigated social studies instruction in the aftermath of NCLB and the renewed emphasis on ELA/reading and mathematics instruction. VanFossen investigated social studies instruction and teacher perceptions of social studies instruction in the wake of the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) in Indiana elementary schools. The research consisted of a stratified sampling (by grade level) of 594 kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers across the state of Indiana. There was little difference between the number of responses in kindergarten to fifth grades, with fifth and second-grade teachers having the least number of respondents at 96 and third-grade teachers having the highest number of respondents at 107 (p. 379). Teachers completed a questionnaire that included questions about the awareness of the *Indiana Academic Standards for Social Studies* (IASS), the use of IASS in planning, support for social studies, and the degree of engagement in social studies. The questionnaire included a section asking respondents about strategies, methods, and materials used while providing social studies instruction. Teachers were requested to provide general background information such as the number of years of experience teaching, and the highest degree obtained. The respondents were allowed to provide more

detailed data on the rationale and beliefs on social studies instruction through open-ended questions. The questionnaire was the forefather of the *Survey of the Status of Social Studies* (S4) used as the data collection tool within this current research (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013a, b, c).

VanFossen (2005) found that the average amount of time Indiana elementary teachers devoted to social studies instruction was less than 90 minutes per week. The number was even less when analyzing kindergarten through third-grade results, which indicated less than 60 minutes per week was devoted to social studies instruction. Teachers responded that more time would be devoted to social studies instruction if the content were assessed on the fifth-grade state assessment (ISTEP). The findings indicated that most primary teachers (kindergarten through second grade) had integrated social studies throughout the curriculum. However, intermediate (third through fifth grade) teachers indicated that social studies instruction received a specific, set aside time in the curricular day. Teachers ranked social studies as fourth or last compared to the content areas of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science (VanFossen, 2005). VanFossen also found a lack of coherence in teacher rationales for teaching social studies. VanFossen postulated that not knowing what should be taught and the reason it should be taught made it difficult for teachers to be efficient social studies teachers.

The research of Zhao and Hoge (2005) was similar to that of VanFossen. Zhao and Hoge researched three different northeastern Georgia school districts. The purpose of the research was to investigate what teachers and students believed about social studies. Teacher candidates interviewed kindergarten through fifth-grade students and cooperating teachers during field experiences. The research findings indicated that

students did not like social studies because they found it “boring,” “useless,” and “reading from a textbook” (p. 218). Teachers contributed to the students’ lack of interest in social studies because social studies did not get as much attention as the other content areas. Students were unable to discern what social studies instruction was or why it was important. Fourth and fifth-grade students shared that the social studies content was learning about history and famous people. However, 95% of the students did not think the content was relevant to their lives. Researchers postulated that teachers relied on textbook-driven instruction to fulfill the minimum requirements set by state and local guidelines, and used their best instructional practices in the areas of ELA/reading and mathematics.

Bailey, Shaw, and Hollifield (2006) also conducted a study to determine the amount of instructional time spent on social studies, the instructional strategies used, and the use of technology during social studies instruction. In this study, the University of South Alabama partnered with Title-I schools within the local school system to collect data in three areas: the number of actual minutes per day spent teaching social studies, the instructional strategies used, and the inclusion of technology in the classroom. During the study, 39 pre-service teachers were placed in Title-I schools and served as paraprofessionals. Data were collected for 13 weeks during the spring semester and 14 weeks during the fall semester. A weekly record log was used to collect the data indicating the amount of time allocated for social studies instruction, the instructional strategies used, and the inclusion of technology in the classroom. The data collected was analyzed by calculating an average for the daily and weekly time allocated to social studies instruction. The data was analyzed to report the amount of time each of the pre-

service teachers spent teaching the subject and calculated time spent for each grade level. Lastly, the data was analyzed to determine the number of weeks within the school year social studies was taught (p. 20).

The study results indicated that the local school district in the study mandated 30 minutes per day for social studies instruction. However, the only teachers within the study meeting this requirement was one kindergarten teacher in the spring and one first grade teacher in the fall. There was a deficiency in daily instructional time as well as inconsistency in the actual number of weeks social studies instruction took place.

Teachers revealed that social studies content was taught when time allowed or when able to get around to it. The practice of reading a book and answering questions was the number one practice, with defining vocabulary words as the second mode of instruction. There was little to no evidence of inquiry-based instruction or integration. In addition, the study also revealed that teachers were not utilizing technology in the classrooms.

Researchers noted a lack of enthusiasm for learning social studies among young learners.

Researchers recommended that elementary students be assessed over social studies instruction. They recommended teachers be held accountable for social studies instruction for at least the minimum amount of time suggested by the local district (30 minutes per day). The research posed the question of how well-prepared elementary students would be for middle and high school social studies instruction given the type of instruction received in elementary school. The researchers postulated that middle school teachers would spend a large amount of time in social studies remediation classes if the current trend of social studies instruction in elementary school continues.

Heafner, Lipscomb, and Rock (2006) posed the question of whether social studies should be tested content. The researchers conducted a comparative analysis of North Carolina and South Carolina social studies instructional practices to examine state testing effects. At the time, South Carolina tested social studies on the state assessment, and North Carolina did not. The comparative analysis focused on teachers' perceptions of social studies instructional time, the content of the curriculum, and instructional practices. Researchers surveyed 374 elementary teachers. Similar to VanFossen's (2005) results, teachers in both states ranked social studies as third in importance among the four content areas (ELA/reading was ranked most important). When asked to explain, teachers in North Carolina indicated that it was challenging to give social studies time in the curricular day because of the focus on ELA/reading and mathematics that are "tested." Teachers in South Carolina ranked social studies as fourth among the content areas. They also indicated that social studies content was taught 40% of the school year because it was on the state test. Teachers in North Carolina indicated they taught social studies for approximately 19% of the school year. In addition, teachers in North Carolina indicated that students requiring additional academic support were often pulled during the social studies content timeframe. Teachers in South Carolina said this was not the practice. Teachers in North Carolina stated they spent less time, and teachers in South Carolina stated they spent more time when comparing the amount of time spent on teaching social studies five years earlier.

When questioned as to why social studies content was taught, teachers in North Carolina explained that they taught social studies because it was important for students to learn, it was part of the state's elementary curriculum, and it taught citizenship and

character education (Heafner et al., 2006, p. 153). However, teachers from South Carolina shared they taught social studies because it was required, it was part of the state's elementary curriculum because it was tested and because they valued social studies (p. 153). The researchers posited that testing does increase the time allotted to social studies instruction. The researchers cautioned that the quality of social studies curriculum would diminish with accountability through testing. The researchers recommended more research on the role of accountability in social studies and perhaps finding alternatives to testing, in not only social studies but all content areas.

Pederson (2007) conducted a national survey of state assessment directors on the impact of NCLB on non-assessed content areas. All but four states responded (Florida, Georgia, New York, and Virginia). The researcher questioned representatives about the content areas assessed through state testing before 2001 and in 2005. Respondents described changes and provided opinions as to the impact of NCLB on non-tested content areas. The results indicated that between the years of 2001 and 2005, the number of states that assessed social studies decreased from 27 to 19. Three states discontinued assessing social studies for accountability purposes but continued to administer the assessment to students. The trends that emerged from the analysis indicated that there was an increase in science and writing assessments in all states. At the same time, testing in social studies, arts, and humanities, listening, and technology decreased. Integration of curriculum where teachers merged content-mandated subjects into the non-required subject areas increased. Pederson concluded, "What is measured is treasured" (p. 291).

Vogler, Lintner, Lipscomb, Knopf, Heafner, and Rock (2007) continued to research the impact of South Carolina's state-mandated testing on social studies

instruction by focusing on teachers' beliefs about the role of social studies content in the curriculum. This research was a continuation of the earlier research of VanFossen (2005) and Heafner, Lipscomb, and Rock (2006). The study focused on the questions: What priority and value did elementary teachers (grades K-5) and faculty assign (relative to other core subjects) to social studies education? How much time did elementary teachers (grades K-5) devote to social studies instruction? How has the amount of time elementary teachers (grades K-5) devoted to social studies instruction changed in the last five years? (Vogler et al., 2007, p. 21).

The mixed-method study design research analyzed data from both survey research and qualitative interviews (Vogler et al., 2007). Elementary teacher candidates from six South Carolina universities interviewed their cooperating teachers with participation from 235 classroom teachers. The interviews provided teachers with an opportunity to explain their perceptions, provide examples, and ask for clarification.

The study results aligned with earlier research findings that reported a lower commitment to social studies instruction than other content areas and ranked ELA/reading as the most important of the content areas (Vogler et al., 2007). The results indicated a correlation between teacher commitment and grade level, time spent on social studies instruction and grade level, and an increase in time spent on social studies instruction compared to five years prior. The results also indicated that as the grade level increased, the commitment to social studies instruction increased. The data also indicated that as the grade level increased, so did the instructional minutes allotted to social studies; with kindergarten teachers spending 0-15 minutes per day, fifth-grade teachers spending 30-45 minutes per day (p. 23). The study also compared time spent on

social studies instruction at the time of the study to five years prior, before NCLB. The results indicated an increase in time spent on social studies instruction across all grade levels with a 60% to 80% growth (p. 24). The researchers concluded that when social studies content was added to the state-mandated testing system, increased time was devoted to social studies. The researchers found that not only had elementary teachers in South Carolina devoted more instructional minutes toward social studies instruction, but their commitment to the content had also increased. However, in the concluding statements, the researchers also noted that legislation in South Carolina convinced policymakers to reduce the amount of testing, and not all elementary students would be assessed in social studies.

In 2008, VanFossen and McGrew replicated VanFossen's (2005) study of Indiana teachers. The number of participants in this research dropped from the previous number of 594 down to 385 (VanFossen & McGrew, 2008, p. 139). In the previous study, VanFossen (2005) proposed three possible reasons for the marginalization of social studies instruction: perceived lack of administrative support, lack of a statewide assessment of social studies concepts and skills, and a lack of understanding of the goals and mission of social studies (VanFossen & McGrew, 2008, p. 140). This research study sought to determine whether time devoted to social studies instruction continued to decline and, if so, to what degree did the three factors place in the decline. Compared to the previous research, the amount of time devoted to social studies instruction had declined from less than 90 minutes per week to 21-40 minutes per week (p. 150).

The lack of statewide testing was cited as the reason teachers did not give social studies more instructional time. As with the previous research, teachers indicated that

more time would be devoted to social studies content if social studies became part of the state assessment. When asked to rank the content areas by importance, social studies again ranked lower than the other content areas with ELA/reading ranked as most important. Regarding perceived administrative support, teachers who perceived support for social studies from building administrators devoted more time to social studies instruction. In the previous research, the conclusion was made that administrative support had little influence on teaching social studies; however, the current research results indicated otherwise. Teachers now appeared to be more aware of the *Indiana Academic Standards for Social Studies (IASSS)*. As with the previous research, the current research concluded that there continued to be a lack of coherence as to what social studies instruction was and the importance of studying the content.

Anderson (2009) agreed that different subjects in elementary education take precedence over others, but argued the difference was not due to accountability legislation. The researcher compared instructional minutes before accountability measures (i.e., the late 1970s and early 1980s) to instructional minutes after accountability measures (late 1990s to 2009). The numbers in comparison were very similar, with approximately one-quarter of the day spent on non-instructional items such as lunch and recess, one-third of the day spent on English/language arts, one-sixth of the day spent on mathematics, leaving the remainder of the day for both science and social studies. The researcher presented a contrarian conclusion compared to the previous research reviewed in this literature review. The researcher proposed that social studies instruction had not lagged and that there was no reduction in the curriculum because of high-stakes testing or accountability. Anderson contended that social studies had always

struggled for its place in the core curriculum. The researcher agreed that instructional practices in the content area focused on more teacher-centered approaches and emphasized memorization, but it was not true that accountability was the cause.

Anderson postulated that accountability had become the scapegoat that allowed teachers to continue with instruction as teachers always have, rather than teaching the way students need to be taught.

Holloway and Chiodo (2009) also presented a contrarian position concerning social studies instruction. The study questioned the idea that little to no social studies content was being taught in elementary classrooms. Holloway & Chiodo postulated that social studies content was being taught in elementary schools, but that the content simply did not receive the same amount of allotted time as other content areas. The purpose of the sequential mixed-methods study was to obtain statistical, quantitative results from teachers and explore in-depth analysis. The researchers received 115 completed surveys. Ten teachers were purposively sampled for interviews from the collected surveys (p. 245). Nine universal concepts appeared through the research data: attitudes, citizenship, community, cooperation, honesty, respect, responsibility, rules, and values (p. 246). In this study, teachers stated that they taught social studies but did so through thematic units that addressed multiple concepts. The teachers also stated that integration of the social studies concepts provided additional time, more than the suggested 30 minutes, for social studies instruction. The teachers integrated social studies instruction through art, music, reading, and mathematics. Holloway & Chiodo concluded that social studies content was being taught in kindergarten through fifth grades. However, the instruction did not always occur in a stand-alone time but was integrated and taught throughout the curricular day.

Although integration was mostly found in kindergarten through third grades, the researchers found that integration was used in some capacity throughout all grade levels. The results of this study matched that of other researchers, in that teachers indicated they felt pressured to devote more time to ELA/reading and mathematics.

The work of Fitchett and Heafner (2010) and Heafner and Fitchett (2012), sought to expand the scope of earlier studies and explored instructional time comparisons between social studies and other core subjects from a national perspective. The researchers evaluated the national state of elementary social studies pre and post accountability and standardization. Data were gathered from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Schools and Public-School Teacher Staffing Survey (SASS). The research found that instructional time spent on social studies content remained minimal compared to English/language arts and mathematics instruction. Since 1992, teachers spent an average of 11 hours on English/language arts instruction, 5 hours on mathematics instruction, 2.9 hours on social studies instruction, and 2.75 hours each week on science instruction. Social studies instruction continued to be more subject-specific in third through fifth grades than in kindergarten through second grades.

Contrary to Anderson's (2009) claim that accountability and high-stakes testing had not made an impact on instructional minutes and practice, Fitchett and Heafner (2010) found that instructional time in social studies decreased significantly. Fitchett and Heafner (2010) postulated that the standardization movement of the 1990s and the inception of NCLB had led to a diminished role for social studies instruction. Implications from the research were that teachers exercised constrained professionalism, and compromised social studies instructional time (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012). Heafner

and Fitchett (2012) found social studies instruction and science instruction both received less instructional time, but science received more instructional time than social studies. The results also indicated that autonomous decision-making had declined as the pressures of testing increased.

Vogler (2011) followed up his previous research on the state of social studies instruction in South Carolina because, at the end of previous research (Vogler et al., 2007), the state of South Carolina passed legislature decreasing the amount of testing in schools. The same teachers who were previously surveyed were the participants in this study. The following were the research questions: What priority and value did kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary teachers assign to social studies education since the implementation of census testing? How much time did kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary teachers devote to social studies instruction since the implementation of census testing? How, if at all, had the amount of time kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary teachers devoted to social studies instruction changed since the implementation of census testing? (Vogler, 2011, p. 167).

Vogler (2011) found that social studies instruction did not decline, and third through fifth grades showed an increase in the time spent on social studies instruction since the census testing initiative. However, the findings indicated a decrease in the time spent on social studies instruction in kindergarten through second grades. Third, through fifth-grade social studies, teachers found it easier to integrate the social studies content with other content areas, whereas kindergarten through second-grade teachers found integration more difficult. The results indicated that while kindergarten through second-grade teachers showed less commitment to social studies instruction than before, third

through fifth-grade teachers showed more commitment to social studies instruction than in the previous research. The time allotted for social studies instruction also increased in third through fifth grade but decreased in kindergarten through second grades compared to previous findings.

Fitchett, Heafner, and VanFossen (2014) followed up previous research that analyzed teachers' perceived autonomy and increased the time on social studies instruction. The purpose of the current research was to examine the contextual determinants of social studies' marginalization. The research used data collected from the *Survey on the Status of Social Studies (S4)*. The S4 examined the determinants of social studies marginalization and the influence of teachers' perceptions of attitudes and instructional decision-making. Teachers in first through fifth grade across the US were selected to participate. The results indicated that teacher decision-making and teacher attitudes were significantly associated with the proportion of time spent on social studies instruction. The results suggested that testing continued to be a significant factor in the time being allocated for instruction. However, teachers who exhibited a positive attitude toward their job satisfaction also accounted for a proportional increase in time spent on social studies instruction. The researchers also found that teachers across the nation were beginning to recognize the importance of social studies instruction; some even advocated that social studies content be assessed like ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. The study's findings offered hope that a movement towards more historical thinking and inquiry-based instruction was on the rise in elementary education.

Nowell (2017) explored teacher perceptions of CCSS literacy integration standards and changes in pedagogy in response to the increased literacy integration

expectations. Nowell's research investigated how social studies teachers fared after the implementation of the *Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies* during the 2013 – 2014 school year. Data was collected through teacher interviews and classroom observations. The results indicated that teachers utilized more writing and document analysis during social studies instruction. Teachers engaged students in social studies writing using fun, interactive, and creative assignments. Teachers spoke of gaining knowledge through professional development workshops and travel opportunities through the district's Teaching American History (TAH) grant, the Oklahoma Department of Education, the Oklahoma State University Writing Project, and other social studies organizations. Teachers also expressed the feeling of having more time to teach social studies due to the recent changes in the Oklahoma social studies standards vertical alignment – shifting the teaching of American history to fourth and fifth grade, which was formerly only covered in fifth grade. Teachers sought professional development opportunities that enhanced their content knowledge and helped shape their pedagogical knowledge as well. Teachers described collaboration and planning with other teachers in their school and around the district as essential in meeting all the mandates.

Fogo (2014) conducted research built upon the idea of the importance of teacher knowledge, student learning, and various contextual factors influencing social studies classroom instruction. Twenty-seven participants were recruited in the Delphi survey that consisted of three rounds of questioning. The purpose of the study was to create a set of core secondary history teaching practices. All results from the panel fell under the category of historical inquiry. Nine practices were recommended: using historical questions, selecting and adapting historical sources, explaining and connecting historical

content, modeling and supporting historical reading skills, employing historical evidence, using historical concepts, facilitating discussions on historical topics, modeling and supporting historical writing, and assessing student thinking about history (pp. 194-196).

Keenan (2019) addressed the overreliance of textbooks that presented a distorted view of historical events. The content analysis of fourth grade-level history textbooks adopted by California schools focused on the history of California colonial Spanish missions. Keenan postulated that elementary teachers often relied on the content held within the textbooks to guide instruction. However, the content held within textbooks often presented a skewed representation of historical events. Examining the content of elementary textbooks was important because the role of elementary level schooling shaped the public understanding of history. The research examined the representation of violence in the state recommended textbooks at the elementary level in California schools. The findings indicated that the elementary school history curriculum presented a distorted vision of violence in the colonial past. The research study's findings showed that the majority of content within elementary textbooks avoided the topic of violence. Violence was discussed through the lens of the California Indian resistance and revolts, with minimal discussion of the Spanish violence committed against the indigenous California Indian tribes. Violence taught was disproportionate, and presented the California Indians as the wrongdoers and the Spanish as the victims. Regardless of the population involved in colonization, history textbooks often presented the colonists as victims and the indigenous people as the aggressors. The researcher called for a shift in how teachers are guided to teach history. Rather than relying on skewed textbooks, teachers should be better equipped to examine historical events, including the violent

ones. The researcher recommended less reliance on textbook-driven instruction and allowing students to use more inquiry-based instruction in which views from all perspectives are included.

Integration

The integration of content areas has been viewed as both a positive force and a negative force in education. According to Johns (2016), most elementary teachers were expected to deliver content information by delivering instruction content by content. Instruction delivered in this manner provided no connection between the content areas and lead to a disconnection of content areas for students. This mode of delivery had also proven to take a great deal of time throughout the instructional day and left little time for secondary content areas such as social studies and science. The integration provided a way to connect information, and counter the marginalization of social studies instruction (Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere, & Stewart, 2008; Hinde, 2009; Pace, 2012; Ranshaw & Griffin, 2017). Integration was viewed as a way to help students think critically and create new meaning throughout subject areas (Gillespie, Graham, Kiuahara, & Herbert, 2014). Integration in this sense of the word was the correlation of social studies skills and concepts with other content areas, sometimes revolving around a specific theme (Holloway & Chiodo, 2009; Heafner et al., 2007; Hinde, 2009). By relating and connecting other content areas to that of social studies, teachers solved the struggle with finding enough instructional minutes to cover all content within the school day (Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). One positive consequence of integration was that students could see how social studies fit into day-to-day life. Integration had most often been a teaching practice found in elementary education.

A contrarian view of integration reports that too often integration meant teachers using trade books “instead of” or supplementing textbooks (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008; Boyle-Baise et al., 2011; Hinde, 2009). Fifty-four percent of the teachers described their instructional practice as being social science or social studies oriented, but 26% indicated the teaching of social studies was literature-based (Haas & Laughlin, 1998, para. 11-17). The outcome of the push for integration was that social studies no longer had a unique pedagogy of its own because teachers used social studies as a way of enhancing ELA/reading skills and comprehension (Hinde, 2009; Ranshaw & Griffin, 2017). Integration has led to social studies becoming secondary to the ELA/reading or writing (Hinde, 2009; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Hinde (2009) called this type of integration, fractured integration, which is defined as taking small chunks of the content in social studies and relating the information to the ELA/reading activities with no depth involved in the combination (Hinde, 2009). This form of teaching did not connect the social studies content to the students’ lives or other areas of the curriculum (Hinde, 2009). Fractured integration led to students and teachers regarding social studies as less important (Hinde, 2009; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Hinde (2009) also described “stealthy” integration as when teachers covertly taught social studies content to satisfy the requirement of instructional time spent on social studies. However, ELA/reading was still the center of the curriculum (Hinde, 2009, pp. 122-123).

Hinde (2009) suggested that integration should be about creating modes of thinking, with the ultimate goal to teach students how to understand the world by thinking according to the disciplines; by thinking historically, spatially, civically, and economically. Effective integration involved students thinking historically, spatially,

civically, and economically while adjusting their thinking when reading, and accessing social studies content, making meaning of what is being read. When used correctly, integration allowed students to make a connection between their own lives and the content of social studies because the social studies instruction was explicit. The researcher pointed out that teachers must possess a fundamental knowledge of the content being taught to accomplish effective integration.

De La Paz and colleagues (2014) researched incorporating reading and writing with adolescent students. The study included thirteen eighth grade teachers in a large school district in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The district was chosen because it had a large number of struggling readers and served a socially diverse group of students. Approximately 1,330 students completed both pretests and posttests. During the research, teachers taught students to access and evaluate historical content while reading and engaging in argumentative writing through a carefully designed process (p. 237). Student work was analyzed for historical argument, holistic quality, essay length, and how teachers used the curriculum. The researchers found that incorporating scaffolded reading and writing instruction inside the social studies classroom had a positive impact on student performance. The researchers concluded that curriculum intervention focused on reading and writing, combined with teacher professional development, led to improvements in middle school students' ability to write historical argumentative text (p. 257).

Inquiry-based learning and Historical Thinking

Inquiry-based instruction became popular during the early 1970s due to the Schools History Project (SHP) from Leeds, England, and the schools' opportunity to earn

grant monies (Keirn, 2018). The SHP was designed to rethink the purpose and nature of school history, and it sought to stop the declination of history in the secondary curriculum (Schools History Project, 2019). While teachers and researchers define inquiry-based instruction differently, there are common themes that emerged among researchers such as: asking important questions, collecting data to answer the said questions, deciding on criteria for accepting evidence, agreeing on the degree of generalizability, and communicating results (Oppong-Nuako, Shore, Saunders-Stewart, & Gyles, 2015, p. 201; Saunders-Stewart, Gyles, & Shore, 2012). In 2013, the NCSS released the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* to provide teachers with a framework for incorporating inquiry-based instruction within the social studies classroom as a method of connecting social studies to the CCSS (National Council for the Social Studies, 2014).

The goal of inquiry-based learning was to develop engaged citizens with an integrated focus on fostering individual growth, democratic participation, and social change (Coiro, Castek, & Quinn, 2016, p. 485). The NCSS (2019) stated that young students could use reasoning and inquiry skills to investigate social studies concepts. The NCSS also stated that young students need multiple opportunities to engage in social studies inquiry, and should be allowed opportunities to explore and interact with authentic issues that influence and shape their knowledge and skills across the social studies domains (p. 2).

Lévesque and Clark (2018) reviewed literature from England, Germany, Canada, and the United States to bring coherence to what historical thinking and thinking historically meant. The review of practices in the United States “found two dominant

streams of research on historical thinking: historical thinking literacy and democratic citizenship education” (p. 131). The first was defined using the work of Wineburg (1991), noting that historians read historical texts in different ways. Students often read history by searching for facts, whereas historians work through documents questioning and comparing sources and looking at the author’s motives. With historical thinking, the reader needed to think through the sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration of the text. Sourcing referred to as examining the source type, the text, and the author. Contextualization referred to placing the document with the correct time and particular place. Corroboration referred to comparing one source to another and reconciling discrepancies.

The second stream found by Lévesque and Clark (2018) was founded on the idea of educating democratic citizens. This approach to social studies education “rests on the assumptions that people, including students, engage in various historical practices in society and promote a more active and reflective set of practices for democratic life and the common good” (p. 133). The researchers found four cultural tools necessary for students to “do history” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 10). The tools consisted of a narrative structure of history, inquiry as reflective thought, historical empathy as perspective recognition, and empathy as caring (Lévesque & Clark, 2018, p. 134). The narrative structure of history referred to the need to understand the format and types of narratives for structuring historical information into coherent representations of the past (p. 134). Inquiry as reflective thought refers to asking meaningful questions, searching for and evaluating evidence, and developing conclusions (p. 134). Historical empathy as perspective recognition referred to the rational examination of the perspectives of people

in the past (p. 134). Empathy as caring referred to the emotional connections and interests necessary to care about and for history (p. 134).

Mueller (2018) found that while inquiry-based instruction was beneficial for students, it was not easy to accomplish. Mueller found that a teacher's use of inquiry in the classroom reflected the teacher's PCK. Inquiry-based learning relied on the type of questions a teacher asked, the tone in which the questions were asked, and phrasing, insight, and a general idea of how content knowledge was best relayed. Teachers should have a strong understanding of the subject matter to instruct using inquiry-based instruction or historical thinking (Keirn, 2018). Inquiry-based instruction posed another issue. History standards began addressing the procedural application of thinking historically versus obtaining content knowledge. Researchers found that for inquiry-based instruction to be successful, structure and guidance had to be provided that enabled learners to ask questions, choose resources, and create products that demonstrated their learning, and required teachers to plan strategically on how students used resources, including technology (Coiro, Castek, & Quinn, 2016, p. 484). The researcher argued that historical thinking provided the opportunity to evaluate evidence, information, and arguments critically. Historical thinking "contributes to the development of skills and dispositions aligned with active civics agendas that converge the teaching of history and social studies" (p. 28).

College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3 Framework)

The creation of the *College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3 Framework)* was an effort to improve social studies instruction using inquiry (Long, 2017).

Commissioned by the Social Studies Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction (SSACI)

collaborative of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the C3 Framework guided as individual states worked to upgrade their social studies state standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). The C3 Framework was designed to emphasize inquiry and extend the CCSS for English Language Arts (CCSS-ELA) while strengthening social studies instruction (Long, 2017; Young & Miner, 2015). The C3 Framework expected students to explore their ideas and enhance their thinking through writing, visualizing, and speaking. The C3 Framework expected students to construct an argument with reasons, use claims and evidence from multiple sources, to construct explanations using sequencing and relevant information (data, examples, and specific details), and to summarize their argument using print, oral, and digital technologies (Young & Miner, 2015). The C3 Framework was not designed to replace strong social studies instruction, but to strengthen instruction through the interdisciplinary application of knowledge and concepts in real-world settings (Long, 2017; Young & Miner, 2015).

The C3 Framework focused on disciplinary and multidisciplinary concepts and practices that made up investigation, analysis, and explanation (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). The framework included descriptions of the structure and tools of civics, economics, geography, and history, and habits of mind embedded in those disciplines. The C3 Framework was designed to guide, not prescribe the content necessary for a rigorous social studies program. The framework adds another level for students to be college and career ready for civic life. The preparedness was accomplished by students working individually and together as citizens.

The C3 Framework creators stated that the heart of the C3 Framework lay within the inquiry arc, a set of interlocking and mutually supportive ideas that featured the four

dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies. The four dimensions were: (a) developing questions and planning investigations, (b) applying disciplinary concepts and tools, (c) gathering, evaluating, and using evidence, and (d) working collaboratively and communicating conclusions (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). These four dimensions worked together to create the Inquiry Design Model (IDM) and provided teachers with a template for constructing inquiries or learning segments (Long, 2017).

However, researchers reported that for the C3 Framework and IDM to be successful, teachers needed to learn about, understand, and use the framework provided (Thacker et al., 2016). The results indicated that while teachers found the work rewarding, teachers also found the work to be challenging. In addition to understanding the C3 Framework itself, teachers found it challenging to find the appropriate resources required for inquiry work, especially for elementary students. The sheer volume of resources also overwhelmed teachers. Teachers participating in the study found it difficult to find sources that provided multiple perspectives on the issues being studied. Limited content knowledge created challenges for teachers designing inquiry models. Teachers needed to deepen their understanding of the content before creating the inquiry models. When their content knowledge was limited, the teachers realized that the students' content knowledge would be limited as well. Students need a great deal of scaffolding while working through the inquiry models. Researchers shared that while the C3 Framework had a great deal to offer to the world of social studies instruction, it was clear that teachers needed professional development to acquire a clear understanding of educational practices that develop understanding and skill with inquiry-based instruction (Crocco & Marino, 2017).

Summary

The purpose of education is to produce adults prepared for the workforce and live as productive citizens (Camins, 2015). However, researchers reported that fewer and fewer young adults leave school prepared to act as productive citizens creating a civic achievement gap (Fleury, 2011; Kalaidis, 2013; Leming et al., 2003; Neumann, 2008). In Georgia, fewer than 50% of young adults participated in the 2012 Presidential election (Georgia Council for the Social Studies, n.d.). As a democratic society, it is critical that today's youth take an interest in global events, understand how past events affect the present and future, and make informed decisions about political matters, complex issues, and contribute to society. Social studies instruction in schools provides an avenue to close the civic achievement gap by instilling such qualities in today's youth. However, according to most of the research literature, social studies instruction lags in comparison to that of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science in elementary education.

Researchers over the past thirty years have disagreed on the reasons for marginalized social studies instruction. Some researchers blamed educational reform, nationalized standards, and accountability in the form of high-stakes testing for the marginalization of social studies in elementary education (Boyle-Baise et al., 2011; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck; 2005; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013a, b, c). Other researchers argued that social studies had always been lagging (Anderson, 2014; Anderson, 2009; Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). Regardless of the blame, the instructional minutes for teaching social studies continued to be minimal compared to other content areas. Not only had social studies content received less time in the

curricular day, but teachers continued to use below standard methods of delivery, such as a heavy reliance on textbooks and lectures. Table 1 provides key research in this area.

While there has been debate as to how to deliver social studies instruction best, integration, stand-alone blocks of time, and inquiry, a well-rounded, full curriculum works best for students. The first step to finding a solution is to examine the state of instructional practices.

Table 1

| Concept Analysis Chart | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| STUDY | PURPOSE | PARTICIPANTS | DESIGN/ ANALYSIS | OUTCOMES |
| VanFossen (2005) | Provided an overview of social studies occurring in Indiana's elementary classrooms considering the Indiana Statewide Testing | Stratified (by grade level) random sampling of 594 K-5 elementary teachers across the state of Indiana. | Quantitative: Frequency distributions, non-parametric analysis, and simple comparative analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 90 minutes per week Time devoted to social studies • More time would be devoted if tested |
| Heafner et al. (2006) | Examined how the role of testing impacted social studies instruction in North Carolina and South Carolina. | Elementary Coordinating Teachers: 224 North Carolina 150 South Carolina | Mixed Methods: Survey research and qualitative interviews using comparative analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers in SC devoted more time to teaching social studies than NC teachers • Testing is a possible barrier to social studies instruction |

Table 1

Concept Analysis Chart *Continued*

| STUDY | PURPOSE | PARTICIPANTS | DESIGN/ ANALYSIS | OUTCOMES |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Fitchett & VanFossen (2013a, b, c) | Constructed an instrument for analyzing status of social studies (K-12) | 11,295 K-12 social studies teachers from 44 states. | Quantitative: Large-scale survey assessed for content validation, construct validation and content emphasis inventory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the Status of Social Studies (S4) Survey to be used as a research tool unique to the field of social studies. |
| Hawkman, Castro, Bennett & Barrow (2015) | Explored social studies instruction observed by teacher candidates during their field experiences | 90 teacher candidates from a large Midwestern University within a state that has state testing in grades 3-8 for ELA/reading and mathematics. | Mixed Methods: Survey (Quantitative questions 1-12 and Qualitative questions 13-16) Quantitative data was analyzed using basic frequency in which content and instructional practices were observed. Qualitative data analyzed for thematic data. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the field experience, Two-thirds of the teacher candidates observed two or fewer social studies lessons. • No match between college methods classes and field experience. |

Table 1

Concept Analysis Chart *Continued*

| STUDY | PURPOSE | PARTICIPANTS | DESIGN/ ANALYSIS | OUTCOMES |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|
| Nowell (2017) | Explore social studies teachers' perceptions of CCSS Literacy integration standards and the effect on pedagogy. | Three Oklahoma teachers; one 5 th grade teacher, one 8 th grade teacher, one 11 th grade teacher. | Qualitative: Interviews and classroom observations. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed alongside field note using inductive method of analysis/ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three teachers indicated an increase in literacy integration and document analysis, voiced gaining content knowledge, and instructional ideas through professional development Changes in social studies standards vertical alignment offered teachers more time to implement literacy strategies. |

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This causal-comparative research design utilized a self-reported survey to assess the status of social studies instruction in one Georgia school district. The purpose of this research was to study the self-reported differences between teachers' social studies instructional practices, and the instructional practices of the other core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science). Instructional practices were examined through the lenses of perception of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), level of ease of planning instruction, level of understanding of *Georgia Standards of Excellence* (GSE), level of understanding of teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, and frequency of use of instructional strategies, the time allotted to deliver content, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of mandated testing.

The research was timely and pertinent because the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) had adopted new social studies GSE. The GaDOE also provided teacher resources, sample pacing guides, and sample units of study to assist in teaching the standards. In addition to resources, the GaDOE provided professional development via online webinars and on-site trainers sent to school districts. Despite the updated standards and support provided to teachers, scores on the social studies portion of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) for fifth grade continued to lag behind those of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science throughout the state, including the school district where the study was conducted. Examining the instructional practices in

social studies and the other content areas could provide insights into the instructional changes that could be made in social studies classrooms to provide better instruction, better student learning, and better student performance.

Research Design

The causal-comparative study design was used to examine whether there are differences between instructional practices in social studies and instructional practices in other content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science) in the kindergarten through fifth grade. Causal-Comparative research design allowed the researcher to compare two or more groups in terms of a cause (independent variable) that had already happened (Creswell, 2014, p. 12). The goal of the researcher was to determine if the independent variable (differing grade levels) affected the dependent variable (the time allotted for instructional practices) by comparing two or more groups (Salkind, 2010). The causal-comparative research allowed the researcher to analyze the differences that existed between instructional practices used in social studies and other core content areas without directly interfering or manipulating classroom instruction at the various grade levels (Field, 2013). Since the manipulation of variables was not possible, and subjects were not placed into control or experimental groups, the results of the research are limited regarding generalizability, and the results cannot definitively state a true cause-and-effect relationship between variables (Salkind, 2010, p. 125). The causal-comparative research design was chosen over a correlational research design. In causal-comparative research, the researcher examines the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable by comparing two or more groups of individuals (Salkind, 2010, p. 125). Whereas,

correlational research examines the effect of one or more independent variables on the dependent variable within the same group of subjects (Salkind, 2010, p 125).

While causal-comparative research is commonly used in education to examine whether relationships exist between variables, there are limitations to the design (Salkind, 2010, p. 130). The first limitation is that the researcher did not have control over the variables due to which changes in the dependent variable could not be observed with the change in the independent variable. The second limitation is that the researcher could not definitively state that the independent variable caused the changes in the dependent variable because other variables could have impacted the dependent variables (Salkind, 2010). Lastly, the researcher was unable to randomly assign the participants to the experimental and control group, which posed the limitation to generalize the study findings to other school districts (Salkind, 2010).

In this chapter, the researcher described the researcher's role, the participants, the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher in this causal-comparative study distributed the online recruitment letter via email, notified all elementary school administrators, and general education kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers within the school district about the upcoming online survey. The researcher emailed online informed consent forms to all general education elementary school teachers within the school sites. The researcher distributed the online survey to all general education elementary school teachers within the school sites. The researcher conducted data compilation, cleaning, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher served as an assistant principal in an elementary school within the same

school district, where the research took place when the study was conducted. Conflict of interest and coercion were not anticipated as the survey responses were anonymous and confidential. However, the researcher acknowledged that there is a possibility of teachers not freely responding to the survey questions because a school administrator was conducting the research study.

Sampling and Participants

An *a priori* statistical power analysis was conducted using G*Power to estimate a sample size (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The effect size (ES) in the study was .06, which is considered a medium effect size using Cohen's criteria (Faul et al., 2007). With an alpha of .05 and a power of .95, the projected sample size needed was 153 ($N = 153$) to complete the simplest between-within group comparison. The sample size of the current research was 198 (Faul et al., 2007).

This study invited all general education kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers from 22 of the 23 elementary schools located within a school district in Georgia to participate in an online, self-reported survey. The 23rd school was not included in the study because the administrator did not consent to allow the research to take place in the school he oversees. The recruitment email was sent to 593 general education teachers. Two-hundred twenty-six teachers initially responded to the survey. However, only 198 teachers completed the survey with a response rate of 33.4%. Years of teaching experience ranged from first-year teachers to those having more than 30 years of experience. The largest elementary school had 37 general education teachers, whereas the smallest school had 17 general education teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade. Student enrollment in the 22 elementary schools varied from approximately 350 to 870

students (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2018). The schools represented inner-city schools, city schools, and rural schools. There were 13 Title I and ten non-Title I elementary schools in the district. All schools that participated in the study were required to adhere to the GSE in all content areas. All schools that participated in the study had equal access to GSE standards, pacing guides, units of study, and instructional resources provided by the GaDOE, and resources provided by the school district’s Teaching and Learning SharePoint Online (the cloud-based service provided to all employees through the district’s Microsoft Office account).

Purposive criterion-based sampling was used to select all general education elementary school teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade.

Instrumentation

A modified version of the *Survey of the Status of Social Studies (S4)* developed by Fitchett and VanFossen and the State of Social Studies Research Team (SSSRT), a team of social studies educators from colleges and universities across the US, was used (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013a,b,c; Passe & Fitchett, 2013; Passe & Patterson, 2013). A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix H. Table 2 provides a survey item analysis demonstrating the alignment between the survey questions and the research questions. The researcher obtained permission to use the survey developed by Fitchett & VanFossen (2012) by joining the University of North Carolina’s Dataverse.

Table 2

Survey Items Analysis

| Survey Item Number | Research Question | Strategy to Answer Research Question |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Item 10 had four questions. | 1. How does the PCK of teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between | ordinal scale |

Table 2

Survey Items Analysis Continued

| Survey Item Number | Research Question | Strategy to Answer Research Question |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| | 1. ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies content areas? | |
| Item 11 had four questions. | 2. How does the level of ease in planning instruction by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between social studies content and other core content areas? | ordinal scale |
| Item 12 had four questions. | 3. How does the level of understanding of the GSE by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the social studies content area and the other core content areas? | ordinal scale |
| Item 13 had four questions. | 4. How does the level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas? | ordinal scale |
| Item 14 had four questions. | 5. How does the usage of district-provided pacing guides by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas? | ordinal scale |
| Items 16, 17, 18, 19 had 21 questions each. | 6. Which instructional strategies are most frequently used by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade in the content area of social studies and the other core content areas? | ordinal scale |
| Item 6 had four questions. | 7. What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction in regards to the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades? | ordinal scale |

Table 2

Survey Items Analysis Continued

| Survey Item Number | Research Question | Strategy to Answer Research Question |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Item 7 had four questions. | 8. What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction in regards to the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades? | ordinal scale |
| Item 8 had four questions. | 9. What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction in regards to the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades? | ordinal scale |
| Item 9 had four questions. | 10. What are the differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree? | ordinal scale |

The purpose of administering the online survey was to examine the differences in instructional practices of general education kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary teachers in social studies, ELA/reading, mathematics, and science in one school district in Georgia.

The *Survey of the Status of Social Studies* (S4) survey can be used in elementary, middle, and high schools (Passe & Fitchett, 2013). For this research, only the elementary level questions in the S4 were adapted. The researcher modified the survey questions to be more specific to the school district in Georgia. Questions not applicable to the current research were deleted. In addition, questions regarding which content areas were assessed on the state test were also eliminated because all public schools in the district participated

in the same state. The researcher added questions on instructional strategies that were disseminated to teachers during the GaDOE professional development or the school district's professional development sessions to see if these strategies were being used in the social studies classroom. One example of this was including the strategy of building students' academic vocabulary.

The SSSRT developed the S4 survey (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013a, b, c; Passe & Fitchett, 2013; Passe & Patterson, 2013) to examine and collect data on social studies curriculum and instructional practices in kindergarten through twelfth-grade classrooms throughout the country. The goal was to develop a survey study that used an instrument created by and for social studies, teachers, practitioners, and public-policy advocates (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 4). The S4 survey grew from VanFossen's (2005) earlier work. Members of the SSSRT reviewed and assisted in revising the S4 survey.

Face validity for the S4 was obtained through a multi-step process. The first beta version, based on VanFossen's (2005) earlier work, was provided to a sub-group of the SSSRT via Surveyshare, a commercial survey tool (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Members of the sub-group reviewed, commented, and offered suggestions to strengthen the survey. The suggestions were integrated into a second beta version that was provided to a sub-group of the SSSRT, as well as, the subject for discussion at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) annual conference in 2010 (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Face validity was established through collaborations with researchers, professors, and classroom teachers involved in social studies education.

Content validity was obtained through sharing results from the survey with SSSRT members from higher education institutions across the nation who had not been

directly involved in the earlier beta testing. The SSSRT members were assigned specific survey items related to their field of expertise and asked to review and provide feedback. The third beta version was piloted with teachers from Indiana ($n = 88$) and North Carolina ($n = 20$) (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). The reliability estimates using Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients were high at .84 (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 9). The final version of the survey was distributed via weblink between April 2010 and January 2011 to kindergarten through twelfth-grade social studies teachers ($n = 11,295$) in 44 states (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Post-hoc comparisons of responses indicated statistically non-significant and negligible differences between groups.

Fitchett and VanFossen (2013c) conducted an exploratory factor analysis to establish construct validity, and to investigate the possible commonalities among and between survey items. The results indicated statistically valid factors (instructional strategies, content emphases, and instructional technology), which could be used to investigate the complex relationships between pedagogy, content, and teaching context (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 10). To examine the statistical validity and reliability of the key factors, the researchers disaggregated a randomized subgroup ($n = 2,818$) (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 10). Due to assumptions of multivariate normality not being met, the researchers used a principal axis factor analysis (PAF) to examine variable constructs (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Eigenvalues parameter values and scree plots were analyzed to determine factor inclusion (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). In addition, the researchers elected to rotate data using an oblique procedure that allowed factors to correlate (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 10).

Analysis of the instructional strategies inventory (item 16) yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .07, which indicated acceptable reliability of the survey item. Three factors accounted for approximately 52% of the variance: discipline-specific strategies, teacher-centered strategies, and student-centered strategies. A moderate correlation was indicated between student-centered and discipline-specific. A low correlation was indicated between teacher-centered and discipline-specific, and teacher-centered and student-centered instructional strategies (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Fitchett and VanFossen cautioned future researchers to include the survey items in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) because the analysis indicated a poor correlation with items on the instructional strategies inventory (i.e. "working with maps or globes" and "watch films or videos").

The researchers examined survey items that asked teachers to report on the content covered in the classrooms to examine content emphasis (item 18) (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Cronbach's alpha tests indicated very high reliability (.90) (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 12). The PAF indicated two factors that accounted for 64% of the total variance: civics content and historical content (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). The analysis indicated an inverse correlation between civics content and history content, suggesting that an increase in civics content domain was associated with a decrease in historical content (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 12).

To examine instructional technology (item 23), the researchers divided technology use into a purpose inventory, tools inventory, and Internet usage inventory (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c). Cronbach's alpha results for the purpose inventory indicated very high reliability (.91). The Cronbach's alpha for the tools inventory

indicated moderate reliability (.73). The Cronbach's alpha for internet usage inventory indicated high reliability (.85). A factor analysis was only run on Internet usage. Results indicated a 64.7% variance, and a moderate association between using the internet for research/investigation and communication (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c, p. 14). Findings from the factor analyses infer the validity and reliability of the S4 survey tool (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c).

The adapted survey tool used in the current research contained questions about school demographics and teacher demographics, the time allotted to deliver content, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, the influence of mandated testing, perception of PCK, level of ease of planning instruction, level of understanding of GSE, level of understanding of teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, frequency of use of instructional strategies, and social studies specific instructional practices at the elementary level. A total of 34 closed-ended questions were used for this research study.

School demographic questions made-up the first five questions on the survey item. The last section of the survey examined teachers' demographic information, such as the highest degree acquired, years of service, ethnicity, etc. (questions 28-34).

Data Collection

The researcher used an online survey administered through the Qualtrics platform. Data collection through surveys is a valid data collection tool and is often used by researchers in the educational and social science fields (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). The survey enabled the researcher to collect data on attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals in the sample. In this case, they are general education elementary school

teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade (Creswell, 2014). Data collection through surveys is economical and is an effective method to quickly collect data from a large number of sample participants, which can yield high response rates (Creswell, 2014). The Qualtrics platform is effective because teachers within the school district were accustomed to using email and the Internet (McCrary, 2008)

Permission was taken from Columbus State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school district before conducting the study. Permission to conduct the study was also taken from each elementary school principal. All but one principal granted permission. The researcher sent a recruitment email to each general education teacher in each of the 22 elementary schools, once permission was granted to conduct the research. Teachers were emailed a recruitment letter that described the research study, notified teachers of the school district's and Columbus State University's IRB approval for the study, and provided the Qualtrics survey link. Teachers interested in participating in the study clicked on the survey link. The informed consent form was the first page in the Qualtrics platform. The informed consent form provided information on the estimated time to complete the survey, and the right to withdraw from the study. Teachers were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of the responses. Teachers either clicked "I do not agree" or "I agree" on the first page of the survey. Teachers who clicked "I do not agree" were not able to enter the survey. Teachers who clicked "I agree" were able to enter the survey and participate in the research study. The S4 survey questions appeared in the Qualtrics platform to only those teachers who agreed to participate. One week after the initial recruitment email, the researcher sent a follow-up email to all previously

recruited teacher participants across the district to remind them of the survey. Thank you notes were sent via email by the researcher once the survey window closed.

The researcher exported the data from the Qualtrics platform to SPSS. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted to answer the research questions. All data was stored in the researcher's password-protected personal computer.

Data Analysis

Data from the survey was exported to SPSS for the inferential and descriptive analyses. Composite scores were built using the transform variable option for the Likert-type survey items. For example, ordinal survey items such as survey item 6, which asked teachers to indicate the amount of time spent delivering instruction in each content area, had answer choices of time increments divided into 15-minute increments. The increments of time were given a numeric response with 15 to 30 minutes coded as 1 and more than 90 minutes coded as 6 in the SPSS program. Using composite scores allowed the researcher to find the mean answer to the items. For example, the mean answer of minutes spent on social studies instruction for kindergarten teachers was $M = 1.44$, indicating that kindergarten teachers, on average, spent between 15 – 30 minutes delivering social studies instruction. Another example is survey item 9 that inquired as to whether the amount of time spent in each content area decreased (coded as 1), stayed the same (coded as 2), or increased (coded as 3) due to state-mandated testing. The mean average of kindergarten teacher responses was $M = 1.76$, indicating that the average kindergarten teacher selected the “stayed the same” as their response.

Descriptive analyses were conducted to calculate the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro Wilks' test of

normality were statistically significant, indicating that the normality assumption was not met. However, non-normality is a common phenomenon in Likert-type survey items. Parametric statistical models (t -test, ANOVA, MANOVA, correlation, and regression) are robust to depart from non-normality results from Likert-type items (Boneau, 1960; Dunlap, 1931; Havlicek & Peterson, 1976; Pearson, 1931; Pearson, 1932a, b). The measure of skewness should be between +1 or -1 to indicate normality. Kurtosis should be between +3 or -3 to indicate a normal distribution (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007). Skewness and kurtosis values in the survey items were within the range to indicate normality.

Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was used to assess the internal consistency of survey items. Reliability is the extent to which results can be repeated, and randomness is not a sense of measurement error (Cortina, 1993). More specifically, Cronbach's alpha was used on survey items 6, 7, 8, and 9 within this study. These survey items were used to answer the inferential research questions 7, 8, 9, and 10. Inferential analyses were also run on these survey items. There is no clear consensus in the literature on the acceptable level of Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of items measuring construct. Cronbach's alpha depends on several factors such as test length, test administration time, test conditions, characteristics of test-takers, and place of testing (Cortina, 1993; Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally, 1978). However, Nunnally (1978) considered a Cronbach's alpha of .7 or higher to be good. Other researchers consider Cronbach's alpha of $\geq .9$ as excellent, $\geq .8$ as good, $\geq .7$ as acceptable, $\geq .6$ as questionable, $\geq .5$ as poor, and $\leq .5$ as unacceptable (George & Mallery, 2003). The overall Cronbach's Alpha

was $\alpha = .95$ for the current research. Cronbach's alpha values of the majority of the survey items were about .80 (Table 23).

MANOVA was used to analyze the data in this research. A MANOVA allows researchers to examine whether two or more groups differ from each other by examining two or more independent variables and two or more dependent variables within one statistical model simultaneously (Huberty & Morris, 1989). By including all the variables in an analysis simultaneously, MANOVA takes into account the relationship between the variables (Field, 2013). While MANOVA is an extension of univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), MANOVA was chosen for the current research because it allowed the researcher to examine multiple dependent variables and independent variables simultaneously. Using an ANOVA would have resulted in the researcher running several statistical models to answer the research questions. ANOVA is only capable of telling whether groups differ along a single dimension.

In contrast, MANOVA can detect whether groups differ within a combination of dimensions and provides a cross-product matrix (Field, 2013, p. 525). Conducting a MANOVA also protected Type I error because running multiple statistical tests on the same data increases the chances of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true (Field, 2013; Huberty & Morris, 1998, p. 306; Ninness, Henderson, Ninness, & Halle, 2015). Conducting multiple ANOVAs for each outcome may also result in the relationship between the dependent variables being ignored, and important information being lost (Field, 2013). For this reason, the researcher decided to conduct MANOVA analyses. The current research examines the dimensions of instruction per grade level and within each content area. The independent variable was the grade level. The dependent variables were

the time allotted to deliver instruction, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for assessing student understanding, and the influence state-mandated testing had on instruction practices. The independent variables were the four content areas: social studies, ELA/reading, mathematics, and science.

In conducting a MANOVA, the assumption of the equality of variance-covariance matrices is tested using Box's test which should be non-significant if the matrices are similar (Field, 2013, p. 643; Allen & Bennett, 2008). Box's test is used in the MANOVA model versus Levene's test used in the ANOVA model (Huberty & Morris, 1989). However, Box's test is susceptible to deviations in multivariate normality, and results can be non-significant because matrices are similar (Field, 2013; Allen & Bennett, 2008). As a general rule, researchers tend to ignore the Box's test because it is unstable if sample sizes are equal. Pillai's Trace should be used if there is a chance of violation in any of the MANOVA assumptions (Field, 2013; Allen & Bennett). Allen and Bennett (2008) concluded that if group sizes have at least 30, then the MANOVA is robust against violations of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices assumption. In the current research, kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade data was included because it met the criteria of a sample size of 30. However, fourth grade was eliminated from the inferential analyses (research questions 7, 8, 9, and 10) because there were only 26 teacher participants.

MANOVA was used to answer research question seven regarding the amount of time allotted to delivering content, research question eight regarding the amount of time allotted for lesson planning, research question nine regarding the amount of time allotted for student assessment, and research question ten regarding the influence mandated

testing had on instructional processes. Research questions one through six were examined using frequency analyses.

To maintain sample size in MANOVA, the researcher used total mean imputation for survey item 6 (the time allotted for delivering instruction), survey item 7 (the time allotted for lesson planning), survey item 8 (the time allotted for student assessment), and survey item 9 (the influence of mandated testing) for kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade data. The mean imputation of data is desirable when the amount of missing data is less than 5%. Missing data is a common issue in survey research because it often involves a larger number of responses and a larger number of participants (Tsikriktsis, 2005). Missing data may result in a negative impact on statistical power, and may also result in biased estimates regarding measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, and biased coefficients (Tsikriktsis, 2005, p., 54). Several reasons lead to missing data such as, a participant's failure to complete the survey, the response does not apply to the participant's situation, participant's refusal to answer a sensitive question, and the participant has no opinion or insufficient knowledge to answer the question (Tsikriktsis, 2005). The researcher first excluded cases that included more than 20% missing data or responses in which the survey was not completed. The number of participants dropped from 226 to 198 after cases were removed. The researcher then concluded that the pattern of missing data in the remaining 198 cases was missing completely at random (Tsikriktsis, 2005). The researcher used the replacement procedure of mean substitution for retention of sample size and statistical power (Tsikriktsis, 2005). The mean replaces the missing value of a variable on the item for all respondents that answered the survey question with a mean substitution (Tsikriktsis, 2005, p. 59).

Post-hoc tests (Student-Newman-Keuls-SNK and Tukey HSD) were conducted after statistically significant results were indicated on the Test of Between Subject in the MANOVA model. There is no consensus on how to choose between the SNK or Tukey (Herve' & Williams, 2010). The SNK test was used to examine specific pairs (grade levels) of means for differences in the current research. The SNK test is based on range distribution (Herve' & Williams, 2010). SNK was designed to have more statistical power than Tukey's HSD. However, the probability of Type I error cannot be calculated, and it is not possible to calculate confidence intervals around the difference between means (Herve & Williams, 2010). The family-wise error rate was not a problem in the inferential analyses because no post-hoc tests analyzed for more than four means (Herve' & Williams, 2010). The Tukey test was not used because it favors Type II errors (Herve' & Williams, 2010).

Summary

The S4 Qualtrics survey was used to examine the teaching practices in all core content areas of general education kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers' classrooms in twenty-two elementary schools in a school district in Georgia. Chapter 3 describes the research design, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. SPSS analyzed results from the survey, and both inferential and descriptive data analyses were run. Descriptive analyses were used to understand the teachers' demographic characteristics, and to explore teacher perceptions of PCK, level of ease of planning instruction, level of understanding of the GSE, level of understanding of teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, and frequency of use of instructional strategies within the content area of social studies, and other core content

areas. Frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability were used in the descriptive analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Inferential statistics were used to examine the differences between the time allotted to deliver content, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of mandated testing within the content area of social studies and the other core content areas (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Researchers have reported that social studies instruction within the elementary classrooms received less time than that of ELA/reading, mathematics and science (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015; An, 2016, Brittingham, 2016; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Hawkman et al., 2015; Heafner, 2018; Ollila & Macy, 2019; Pace, 2012; Swan, Grant & Lee, 2016; VanFossen, 2005; Whitlock & Brugar, 2019; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). The current research examined the differences in instructional practices in social studies content and the other core content areas. In Georgia, elementary students did not perform at the same level of proficiency on the fifth-grade social studies Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) as they did on the ELA/reading, mathematics, and science portions (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2018). The current study explored differences in the instructional practices in social studies classrooms and the other core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science) within public elementary schools in one Georgia school district via an online, self-reported survey. General education kindergarten through fifth- grade teachers were asked questions regarding their perceived level of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), level of ease of planning instruction, level of understanding of *Georgia Standards of Excellence* (GSE), level of understanding of teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, frequency of use of instructional strategies in each content area, differences in the time allotted to deliver content, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and influence of mandated testing on instructional practices in all

content areas. Answers to the survey items were analyzed using descriptive and inferential methods.

This chapter contains the results of the causal-comparative research study conducted to answer the following research questions (RQ: 1 through 6 are descriptive, and 7 through 10 are inferential) and hypotheses:

RQ1: How does the PCK of teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies content areas?

RQ2: How does the level of ease in planning instruction by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between social studies content and other core content areas?

RQ3: How does the level of understanding of the GSE by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the social studies content area and other core content areas?

RQ4: How does the level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas?

RQ5: How does the usage of district-provided pacing guides by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas?

RQ6: Which instructional strategies are most frequently used by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade in the content area of social studies and other core content areas?

RQ7: What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?

H7_o: There are no differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H7_a: There are differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

RQ8: What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?

H8_o: There are no differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H8_a: There are differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

RQ9: What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?

H9_o: There are no differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H9_a: There are differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

RQ10: What are the differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H10_o: There are no differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

H10_a: There are differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades to a statistically significant degree.

Descriptive (mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness) and inferential analyses (MANOVA) were conducted to answer the research questions. All analyses were completed using SPSS.

Descriptive Results

Participants

A total of 593 general education teachers were recruited via email to participate in the adapted *Survey of the Status of Social Studies (S4)* using the Qualtrics platform. Two hundred twenty-six teachers initially expressed the willingness to participate in the study with a response rate of 38.1%. Out of the 226 teachers, ten did not participate in the survey and selected the “do not agree” option in the online informed consent form. The researcher removed 18 teachers because most of the survey items were unanswered, and there was a lot of missing data. Therefore, the number of responses dropped to 198, leaving a response rate of 33.4%.

Table 3 provides data on the number of participants by grade level. The highest number of responses came from third grade (19%), followed by first (18%), second (18%), kindergarten (17%), fifth (15%), and fourth (13%) grade levels.

Table 3

| Grade Level | <i>n</i> | % |
|--------------|----------|-------|
| Kindergarten | 34 | 17.2 |
| First | 36 | 18.2 |
| Second | 35 | 17.7 |
| Third | 37 | 18.7 |
| Fourth | 26 | 13.1 |
| Fifth | 30 | 15.2 |
| Total | 198 | 100.0 |

Table 4 provides data on the number of teacher responses by years of teaching experience. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers did not respond to this survey item. Of the 72% of teachers who responded to this question, 23% and 20% had six to ten years of teaching experience and eleven to fifteen years of teaching experience, respectively. The least frequently chosen was zero to two years of teaching experience (5%).

Table 4

Teacher Responses by Number of Years Teaching Experience

| Years of Experience | <i>n</i> | % |
|---------------------|----------|------|
| 0-2 | 7 | 4.9 |
| 3-5 | 15 | 10.5 |
| 6-10 | 33 | 23.1 |
| 11-15 | 29 | 20.3 |
| 15-20 | 14 | 9.8 |
| 20-24 | 23 | 16.1 |
| 25 or more | 22 | 15.4 |
| Total | 143 | 71.9 |

Table 5 provides data on the number of participants by their highest level of education. Twenty-seven percent of the teachers did not respond to this survey item. Of the 73% of teachers who responded to this question, 40% and 31% held a Specialist and Master's degree, respectively.

Table 5

Teacher Responses by Highest Educational Level

| Educational Level | <i>n</i> | % |
|--------------------------|----------|------|
| Bachelor's | 27 | 18.5 |
| Bachelor's plus 15 hours | 5 | 3.4 |
| Bachelor's plus 30 hours | 3 | 2.1 |
| Master's | 45 | 30.8 |
| Master's plus 30 hours | 5 | 3.4 |
| Specialist's | 59 | 40.4 |
| Ph.D. or Ed.D. | 2 | 1.4 |
| Total | 146 | 73.4 |

Table 6 provides data on the number of participants by gender. The majority of respondents were female (94.4%).

Table 6

Teacher Responses by Gender

| Gender | <i>n</i> | % |
|--------|----------|------|
| Male | 8 | 5.6 |
| Female | 136 | 94.4 |
| Total | 144 | 72.4 |

Table 7 provides data on the number of teachers by ethnicity. Seventy-two percent of the participants responded to this question. The highest number teachers identified themselves as white or non-Hispanic (79%), followed by Black or African American (15%), Asian/Pacific American (2%), other (2%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (1%), and Mexican American or Chicano less than 1%.

Table 7

Teacher Responses by Ethnicity

| Ethnicity | <i>n</i> | % |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------|
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 2 | 1.4 |
| Asian/Pacific American | 3 | 2.1 |
| Black or African American | 22 | 15.3 |
| Mexican American or Chicano | 1 | .7 |
| White or non-Hispanic | 113 | 78.5 |
| Other | 3 | 2.1 |
| Total | 144 | 72.4 |

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was not used for survey items 16 through 21 because no meaningful results could be derived. The researcher conducted frequency analyses on the remaining survey items for research questions 1 through 6. For these items, fourth-grade teacher responses were included.

Research Question 1

The first research question, “How does the PCK of teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies content areas?” Survey item 10 (Table 7) was used to measure teacher perception of PCK.

Teachers were asked to indicate their perception of their level of PCK in each of the core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) on a scale one (low level of PCK) to four (high level of PCK). The results in Table 8 indicated that the majority of kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers considered themselves to have a “high level of PCK” in ELA/reading (57%), and mathematics (57%), and a “slightly high level of PCK” in science (48%) and social studies (46%). Four percent of kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers indicated a “slightly low level of PCK” and “low level of PCK” in ELA/reading, 3.5% in mathematics, 17% in science, and 14% in social studies.

Table 8

Level of PCK Indicated by Teachers

| Content Area | Low PCK | Slightly Low PCK | Slightly High PCK | High PCK |
|----------------|---------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| ELA/reading | 0 | 8 (4) | 72 (39) | 106 (57) |
| Mathematics | 1 (.5) | 5 (3) | 75 (40) | 106 (57) |
| Science | 4 (2) | 28 (15) | 91 (48) | 65 (35) |
| Social Studies | 3 (2) | 23 (12) | 88 (46) | 78 (41) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Research Question 2

The second research question, “How does the level of ease in planning instruction by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between social studies content and that of the other core content areas?” Survey item 11 (Table 9) was used to measure the ease in planning instruction.

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of ease in planning instruction and the comfort of planning instruction by ranking the ease and comfort on a scale of one (low ease and comfort) to four (high ease and comfort). The results indicated that 43% of teachers felt high ease and comfort with planning lessons in both ELA/reading and mathematics, followed by social studies (39%), and science (32%). On average, teachers' responses were in the "slight ease/comfort" category.

Table 9

Level of Ease and Comfort in Lesson Planning per Content Area

| Content Area | Low Ease/ Comfort | Slightly Low Ease/ Comfort | Slight Ease/ Comfort | High Ease/ Comfort |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| ELA/reading | 9 (5) | 14 (8) | 80 (44) | 79 (43) |
| Mathematics | 6 (3) | 21 (11) | 79 (43) | 79 (43) |
| Science | 7 (4) | 40 (21) | 81 (43) | 59 (32) |
| Social Studies | 7 (4) | 29 (15) | 80 (42) | 73 (39) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Research Question 3

The third research question, "How does the level of understanding of the GSE by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the social studies content area and the other core content areas?" Survey item 12 (Table 10) was used to measure the level of understanding of the GSE.

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of understanding of the GSE on a scale of one (low understanding of the GSE) to four (high understanding of the GSE). The results indicated that teachers felt a "high level of understanding" of the GSE in mathematics (58%), followed by ELA/reading (55%), social studies (51%), and science (46%).

Table 10

Level of Understanding of the GSE per Content Area

| Content Area | Low | Slightly Low | Slightly High | High |
|----------------|---------|--------------|---------------|----------|
| ELA/reading | 0 | 12 (7) | 70 (38) | 102 (55) |
| Mathematics | 1 (0.5) | 11 (6) | 66 (35) | 109 (58) |
| Science | 2 (1) | 20 (11) | 80 (43) | 86 (46) |
| Social Studies | 1 (0.5) | 15 (8) | 80 (41) | 73 (51) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question, “How does the level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas?” Survey item 13 (Table 11) measured the level of understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle.

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of understanding of the teaching and assessment cycle on a scale of one (low understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle) to four (high understanding of the teaching-assessment cycle). The results indicated that teachers felt a “high understanding” of the teaching-assessment cycle in ELA/reading (56%), followed by mathematics (55%). The teachers indicated a “slight understanding” of the teaching-assessment cycle in science (47%) and social studies (45%).

Table 11

Level of Understanding of the Teaching-assessment Cycle per Content Area

| Content Area | Low | Slightly Low | Slightly High | High |
|----------------|---------|--------------|---------------|----------|
| ELA/reading | 1 (0.6) | 9 (5) | 69 (38) | 102 (56) |
| Mathematics | 1 (0.5) | 8 (4) | 74 (40) | 101 (55) |
| Science | 4 (2) | 23 (13) | 87 (47) | 70 (38) |
| Social Studies | 3 (2) | 19 (10) | 85 (45) | 82 (43) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Research Question 5

The fifth research question, “How does the usage of district-provided pacing guides by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades vary between the content area of social studies and other core content areas?” Survey item 14 (Table 12) measured the usage of the school district-provided pacing guide.

Teachers were asked to indicate their level usage of the school district-provided pacing guides in each content area on a scale of one (the teacher did not follow the provided pacing guide) to four (pacing guide was followed closely). On average, the teachers indicated they “followed closely” in mathematics (51%), followed by ELA/reading (49%), and “most of the time” in social studies (47%) and science (46%).

Table 12

Usage of District-Provided Pacing Guide per Content Area

| Content Area | Do Not Follow | Follow Some of the Time | Follow Most of the Time | Follow Closely |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| ELA/reading | 7 (4) | 21 (12) | 64 (35) | 89 (49) |
| Mathematics | 3 (2) | 14 (8) | 72 (40) | 92 (51) |
| Science | 4 (2) | 17 (9) | 84 (46) | 76 (42) |
| Social Studies | 3 (2) | 17 (9) | 88 (47) | 79 (42) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Research Question 6

The sixth research question, “Which instructional strategies are most frequently used by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade in the content area of social studies and the other core content areas?” Survey items 16, 17, 18, and 19 (Table 13) were used to measure instructional strategies.

Teachers were asked to indicate their level usage of a variety of instructional strategies within each content area on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = *Teacher Never Used the Strategy* to 5 = *Teacher Used the Strategy Almost Daily*. For this research, the

researcher first located instructional strategies that received an average of four or higher in each content area. Six different instructional strategies received a four or higher rating: cooperative learning, whole-class discussions, writing assignments, the building of academic vocabulary, engaging in technology to support learner-centered strategies, and the use of picture books. The researcher also added the instructional strategies of textbook lessons and lectures due to the information gleaned from the literature review. All eight instructional strategies did not receive a four or higher rating in all four content areas. Table 13 below demonstrates the top eight instructional strategies and how the strategy was rated in each content area. While not all teachers responded to each section of this survey item, 85%, 83%, 76%, and 78% of teachers responded to ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, respectively. Textbook lessons were rarely used (2 - 3 times per year), lectures were used occasionally (2 – 3 times per month), cooperative learning was used frequently (1 – 2 times per week), and building of academic vocabulary was used frequently (1 – 2 times per week), across all four content areas. The whole class discussion was used almost daily in ELA/reading and mathematics and frequently (1 – 2 times per week) in science and social studies. The technology was used frequently (1 – 2 times per week) in ELA/reading and mathematics, and occasionally (2 – 3 times per month) in science and social studies. Picture books were used almost daily in ELA/reading, frequently (1 – 2 times per week) in science and social studies, and occasionally (2 – 3 times per year) in mathematics.

Table 13

Usage of Instructional Strategies per Content Area

| Content Area | CL | WCD | TL | L | WA | AV | T | PB |
|--------------|----|-----|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| ELA/reading | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Mathematics | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |

Table 13

Usage of Instructional Strategies per Content Area Continued

| Content Area | CL | WCD | TL | L | WA | AV | T | PB |
|----------------|----|-----|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| Science | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Social Studies | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

Note. CL-Cooperative Learning, WCD-Whole Class Discussion, TL-Textbook Lessons, L-Lecture, WA-Writing Assignments, AV-Academic Vocabulary, T-Technology, PB-Picture Books

Data Further Supporting Research and PCK

Additional information pertaining to social studies instruction was gleaned from survey items 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27. The information was analyzed using frequency analysis. While the items did not directly provide answers to the research as mentioned earlier questions, the analysis provided additional information regarding social studies instruction.

Survey item 14 (Table 14) asked teachers to rank content areas on a 4-point Likert scale with 1 = *Least Important* to 4 = *Most Important*. The results indicated that ELA/reading was the most important of the content areas (91%). Mathematics content area was slightly more important ($M = 3$), whereas science and social studies were ranked slightly less important ($M = 2$).

Table 14

Teacher Ranking of Content Area by Importance

| Content Area | Least Important | Slightly Less Important | Slightly More Important | Most Important |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| ELA/reading | 6(3) | 2(1) | 9(5) | 171(91) |
| Mathematics | 2(1) | 7(4) | 108 (56) | 75(39) |
| Science | 35(19) | 88(46) | 49(26) | 19(10) |
| Social Studies | 72(38) | 56(29) | 43(22) | 21(11) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Survey item 20 (Table 15) explored the specific topics teachers emphasized during social studies instruction on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Almost Daily*. The results indicated that all topics were taught at least occasionally (2 – 3 times per month). Teachers indicated that civic responsibility (39%), and the US or world history (33%) were taught frequently (1 – 2 times per week).

Table 15

Frequency of Topics Emphasized in Social Studies Instruction

| Topic | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Almost Daily |
|--|---------|---------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Core Democratic Values | 14 (9) | 43 (28) | 46 (30) | 32 (21) | 17 (11) |
| US Constitution | 5 (3) | 76 (50) | 47 (31) | 19 (12) | 6 (4) |
| Social History of US/World | 11 (7) | 47 (31) | 35 (23) | 50 (33) | 10 (7) |
| Political History of US/World | 27 (18) | 49 (32) | 38 (25) | 33 (22) | 6 (4) |
| Issues of Race/Class | 15 (10) | 67 (44) | 49 (32) | 20 (13) | 3 (2) |
| Local, State and/or Federal Government | 10 (7) | 55 (36) | 52 (34) | 30 (20) | 4 (3) |
| Diversity of Religious Views | 33 (21) | 70 (46) | 37 (24) | 11 (7) | 3 (2) |
| Economic Concepts | 2 (1) | 27 (24) | 66 (43) | 40 (26) | 9 (6) |
| Civic Responsibility | 2 (1) | 25 (16) | 44 (29) | 60 (39) | 22 (14) |
| Current Events | 12 (8) | 46 (30) | 46 (30) | 35 (23) | 14 (9) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Survey item 21 (Table 16) asked social studies teachers the frequency of using the Internet to find and examine primary source materials, complete inquiry activities, take virtual field trips, collect information for reports/projects, communicate with others such as students or experts, communicate with students from another country, or develop web projects. Teachers were asked to rate the choices on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Almost Daily*. The results indicated that the majority of teachers used the Internet

“occasionally” (2 – 3 times per month) to “never.” Teachers “occasionally” used the Internet to find/examine primary sources (28%), take virtual field trips (33%), and to collect information for reports or projects (34%). Teachers “rarely” used the Internet to complete inquiry activities (29%) and to take virtual field trips (33%). Eighty percent of the teachers indicated that the Internet was used the “least” to communicate with students from other countries, 67% of teachers indicated they “never” used the Internet to develop web projects, and 56% never used the Internet to communicate with others such as experts or historians. Virtual field trips were used “occasionally” or “rarely.”

Table 16

Frequency of Using Internet for Instructional Strategies

| Topic | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Almost Daily |
|--|---------|--------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Find/examine Primary Sources | 38(25) | 34(22) | 43(28) | 34(22) | 4(3) |
| Complete Inquiry Activities | 35(23) | 44(29) | 40(26) | 28(18) | 6(4) |
| Take Virtual Field Trip | 40(26) | 50(33) | 49(33) | 12(8) | 2(1) |
| Collect Information for Report/Project | 38(25) | 38(25) | 51(34) | 20(13) | 5(3) |
| Communicate with Others (i.e. Expert, Historian) | 85(56) | 34(22) | 17(11) | 10(7) | 7(5) |
| Communicate with Students from Other Countries | 122(80) | 14(9) | 11(7) | 4(3) | 2(1) |
| Develop Web Projects | 103(67) | 31(20) | 13(9) | 3(2) | 3(2) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Survey item 22 (Table17) asked social studies teachers to rate reasons for teaching social studies on a 6-point Likert scale with 1 = *Least Important* and 6 = *Most Important*. The majority of the teachers rated the following reasons to teach social

studies: to prepare good citizens, and it is required by the state to teach content knowledge, to teach life skills, to prepare students for the next grade level, and to develop skills in ELA/reading.

Table 17

Frequency of Reasons for Teaching Social Studies

| Topic | Least Important | Moderately Unimportant | Slightly Unimportant | Slightly Important | Moderately Important | Most Important |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| To prepare good citizens | 4(3) | 2(1) | 5(3) | 11(7) | 32(21) | 100(65) |
| Because it is required by the state | 66(43) | 15(10) | 11(7) | 18(12) | 21(14) | 23(15) |
| To teach students content knowledge | 3(2) | 20(13) | 25(16) | 30(20) | 37(24) | 39 (25) |
| To teach students life skills | 2(1) | 4(3) | 12(8) | 24(15) | 48(31) | 66(42) |
| To prepare students for the next grade | 10(7) | 34(22) | 23(15) | 24(16) | 35(23) | 28(18) |
| To develop skills in ELA/reading | 6(4) | 15(10) | 28(18) | 36(23) | 29(19) | 41(27) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Survey Item 23 (Table 18) included 15 items on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*) that asked teachers to rate their beliefs about social studies instruction. The results indicated that 65% “strongly agreed” that the primary goal of teaching social studies was to help develop students’ thinking and

decision-making skills; 61% “strongly agreed” that state standards influenced instructional decision-making, and 64% “strongly agreed” that tested content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics drove the curricular day. Additionally, 28% of the teachers “strongly disagreed” that students receiving remediation or enrichment services affected social studies instruction.

Table 18

| <i>Beliefs About Social Studies Instruction</i> | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| My primary goal in teaching social studies is to help students master basic facts, concepts, and content. | 7(5) | 19(13) | 72(49) | 48(33) |
| My primary goal in teaching social studies is to help develop students’ thinking and decision-making skills. | 1(5) | 1(5) | 49(34) | 95(65) |
| Necessary materials such as textbooks and supplies are available to teach social studies. | 8(6) | 29(20) | 53(36) | 56(38) |
| My school administration is supportive of social studies as a subject area. | 3(2) | 12(8) | 61(42) | 69(48) |
| I collaborate with those in my social studies department or grade level on social studies instruction on a regular basis. | 7(5) | 17(12) | 51(35) | 71(49) |
| Student discipline problems influence my social studies instruction. | 49(34) | 39(27) | 43(30) | 15(10) |
| Students receiving remediation or enrichment services affect my social studies instruction. | 41(28) | 32(22) | 53(37) | 19(12) |
| State standards influence my instructional decision-making. | 4(3) | 9(6) | 44(30) | 90(61) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Table 18

Beliefs About Social Studies Instruction Continued

| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| State standards influence my evaluation and assessment of standards. | 5(3) | 8(6) | 54(37) | 80(54) |
| State and/or district standards have a positive impact on my social studies teaching. | 5(3) | 18(12) | 66(46) | 56(39) |
| I believe that the state and/or district test results will affect my job security. | 23(16) | 37(26) | 48(33) | 38(26) |
| I believe that tested content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics drive my curricular day. | 4(3) | 4(3) | 45(31) | 93(64) |
| I am generally satisfied with social studies teaching at my school. | 7(5) | 29(20) | 79(54) | 31(21) |
| Students are well prepared for the next grade level social studies instruction. | 9(6) | 31(21) | 79(54) | 27(19) |
| I am satisfied with the current time allotted for social studies instruction. | 24(16) | 32(22) | 65(44) | 26(18) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Survey item 24 (Table 19) asked teachers to rate statements on state-level and district-level professional development and instructional practices on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, and 4 = *Strongly Agree*). The majority of the responses fell in the “somewhat agree” category. The highest rating of “strongly agree” was given to the statement on professional development being offered in each content area by 43% of teachers. The lowest rating of “strongly disagree” was given by 15% of teachers on the statement on how teachers determined to use the instructional time.

Table 19

State-level and District-level Professional Development and Instructional Policies

| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| I have the freedom to choose my professional development sessions/ opportunities. | 15(10) | 26(18) | 71(48) | 35 (24) |
| Professional development is offered in each content area. | 8(5) | 16(11) | 60(41) | 63(43) |
| Administrators determine how instructional time will be used. | 1(1) | 16(11) | 80(55) | 49(34) |
| Teachers determine how instructional time will be used. | 22(15) | 32(22) | 75(51) | 17(12) |
| A set policy exists for the school, but teachers have some flexibility in how instructional time will be used. | 12(8) | 12(8) | 79(54) | 44(30) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Item 25 of the survey asked teachers to indicate the integration of social studies with the other core content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, and science). Teachers were asked to rate statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Never* and 5 = *Almost Daily*). Table 20 provides the data on the Frequency of Integrating Social Studies with ELA/reading, Mathematics, and Science. The most frequently integrated (1 – 2 times per week) content areas were ELA/reading and social studies (44%). Integration of social studies with mathematics and science ranked highest in the occasional (2 – 3 times per month) category.

Table 20

Frequency of Integrating Social Studies with ELA/reading, Mathematics, & Science

| Integrate | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Almost Daily |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| ELA/reading with Social Studies | 3(2) | 1(1) | 26(18) | 65(44) | 53(34) |
| Mathematics with Social Studies | 23(16) | 42(29) | 52(36) | 21(14) | 8(6) |

Table 20

Frequency of Integrating Social Studies with ELA/reading, Mathematics, & Science Continued

| Integrate | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Almost Daily |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Science with Social Studies | 15(10) | 44(30) | 54(37) | 23(16) | 9(6) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Item 26 of the survey asked teachers to indicate the degree to which they believed they had control over selecting textbooks, topics, content, teaching techniques, and student assessments. Teachers ranked the items on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *No Control* and 4 = *A Great Deal of Control*). Table 21 provides data on the extent to which teachers believed to have control over the instruction. The majority of teachers perceived that they had “minor control” over selecting textbooks, other materials, and selecting content topics and skills to be taught. Teachers perceived that they had “moderate control” over choosing which parts of the curriculum to emphasize during instruction, in selecting teaching techniques or strategies, and in evaluating and grading students.

Table 21

Teachers' Control in Instruction

| Scenario | No Control | Minor Control | Moderate Control | A Great Deal of Control |
|--|------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Selecting textbooks and other materials | 31(21) | 63(43) | 36(25) | 15(8) |
| Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught | 53(37) | 53(37) | 33 (23) | 6(4) |
| Choosing which parts of the curriculum to emphasize during instruction | 13(9) | 44(30) | 61(42) | 27(19) |
| Selecting teaching techniques or strategies | 4(3) | 15(10) | 54(37) | 72(50) |
| Evaluating and grading students | 5(3) | 19(13) | 52(36) | 69(48) |

Note. Numbers within brackets are percentages.

Item 27 of the survey asked teachers to indicate the minutes per week they would devote to social studies instruction if added to the GMAS. Table 22 provides data on the number of minutes teachers would spend on social studies instruction in all grade levels, should the content be added to the GMAS. The majority (26%) of teachers would allot 31 – 45 minutes to social studies instruction if added to the GMAS.

Table 22

| <i>Number of Minutes Teachers Would Teach Social Studies if Added to the GMAS</i> | |
|---|----|
| Minutes | % |
| 15-30 minutes per week | 13 |
| 31-45 minutes per week | 26 |
| 46-60 minutes per week | 25 |
| 61-75 minutes per week | 3 |
| 76-90 minutes per week | 8 |
| More than 90 minutes per week | 25 |

Inferential Results

All analyses were completed using SPSS. This section presents the Cronbach's Alpha results, the MANOVA, and post-hoc results.

Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the survey items (Gliem & Gliem, 2003, p. 88). Cronbach's alpha ranges between 0 and 1 (Gliem & Gliem, 2003, p. 87). A Cronbach's alpha of .7 or more is generally considered to be good. However, the research literature suggests that there is no consensus on the acceptable levels of Cronbach's alpha. The measure depends on several factors such as time, testing conditions, test-taker/participant characteristics, and location (Cortina, 1993; George & Mallery, 2011). In most situations, Cronbach's alpha of $\geq .9$ is excellent, $\geq .8$ is good, $\geq .7$ is acceptable, $\geq .6$ as questionable, $\geq .5$ is poor, and $\leq .5$ is unacceptable (George &

Mallery, 2011, p. 231). Table 23 provides the Cronbach's alpha results for each construct measured by a set of survey items. All the constructs had acceptable Cronbach's alpha ranging from .91 to .66 except the last one (teacher autonomy), which had an alpha of .45. The low Cronbach's alpha value of teacher autonomy construct could be due to survey fatigue (teachers might have been fatigued as it was a long survey, and the items measuring this construct were at the end of the survey) and question-wording which might have been confusing to the teachers. Cronbach's alpha value of the time allotted for delivering instruction and reasons for teaching social studies constructs were very close to the acceptable range of alpha = .7. Cronbach's alpha values indicated that the survey responses were reliable (Cortina, 1993; George & Mallery, 2011; Nunnally, 1978).

Table 23

Cronbach's alpha Reliability of Survey Items

| | Survey Item | α |
|----|--|----------|
| 6 | Time allotted for delivering instruction | .68 |
| 7 | Time allotted for lesson planning | .90 |
| 8 | Time allotted for assessing students | .88 |
| 9 | Influence of mandated testing | .75 |
| 10 | Level of PCK | .80 |
| 11 | Level of ease with lesson planning | .82 |
| 12 | Level of understanding of GSE | .90 |
| 13 | Level of understanding of teaching-assessment cycle | .80 |
| 15 | Usage of district-provided pacing guides | .89 |
| 16 | Usage of district-provided pacing guides | .90 |
| 17 | Instructional strategies usage in mathematics | .89 |
| 18 | Instructional strategies usage in science | .91 |
| 19 | Instructional strategies usage in social studies | .88 |
| 20 | Topics emphasized in social studies | .90 |
| 21 | Internet usage during social studies | .86 |
| 22 | Ranking of reasons for teaching social studies | .66 |
| 24 | Extent disagree/agree statements regarding social studies (i.e., goal, time, materials, support, etc.) | .67 |
| 25 | Extent disagree/agree statements in regards to social studies (autonomy) | .45 |

All initial inferential analyses were completed using a confidence interval of 99%, indicating a significance level of $p = .01\%$ providing a more robust analysis. Post-hoc tests were run using Scheffe, Tukey, and Student-Newman-Keuls (SNK) to determine which group(s) were significantly different. The SNK data were used to report the post-hoc results because it is a stepwise multiple comparison procedure (unlike Scheffe, which is a single-step multiple comparison procedure) based on range distribution, handles Type I error, and has more statistical power than Tukey. The estimated marginal means analysis provided data on the interaction between the different content areas and grade levels.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilks' test of normality were statistically significant, indicating that the normality assumption was not met. However, non-normality is a common phenomenon in survey scores that have Likert-type items. Parametric statistical models are usually robust to depart from non-normality for Likert-type items (Boneau, 1960; Dunlap, 1931; Havlicek & Peterson, 1976; Pearson, 1931; Pearson 1932 a, b).

MANOVA analyses were used to answer research questions seven through ten. MANOVA analysis was used because there was more than one dependent variable (time allotted for instruction, lesson planning, student assessment, and mandated testing) that had to be simultaneously analyzed by the independent variable (grade-level) (Huberty & Morris, 1989). A 99% confidence level was used for the MANOVA analyses ($p = .01$). The Box's Test was statistically significant for the first three MANOVA models (research questions 7,8, & 9). However, the MANOVA model is robust to this violation if each group within the independent variable has at least 30 participants (Allen & Bennett,

2008; Sharif, Ruslan, & Atiany, 2018, p. 1251). “One of the beauties of statistical methods is that, although they often involve heroic assumptions about the data, it seems to matter very little even when they are violated” (Norman, 2010, p. 626). Box’s test could not be computed for research question 10 due to the very high correlation between ELA/reading with mathematics ($r=.87$) and science with social studies ($r=.95$), which led to the removal of mathematics and science independent variables. Thus, MANOVA models were run with ELA/reading and social studies as the only independent variables for research question 10. It should be noted that the bivariate analyses were conducted in research questions seven, eight, and nine, and correlations did exist; however, not to the extent to which the Box’s test could not be computed.

The fourth-grade responses were removed from the MANOVA analyses because there was a lot of missing data, and only 26 teachers from this grade level responded to the survey. MANOVA statistical model is robust to the violation of Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices only when there are at least 30 participants in each of the grade levels (Huberty & Morris, 1989; Sharif et al., 2018). This caveat in Box’s test is met with the kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade levels, each having 30 participants.

Research Question 7

The seventh research question asked, “What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted to deliver the content throughout the instructional day by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?” Survey item six was used to measure the time allotted for delivering instruction.

A MANOVA analysis was used to compare the mean number of minutes allotted for delivering instruction (dependent variable) in the four content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) by kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade general education teachers (independent variable). The Box's Test of Covariance Matrices was statistically significant ($F = 9.77, p = .00$), indicating that the observed covariance matrices for the dependent variable were not equal across the grade levels. MANOVA results are robust to a violation in Box's Test of Covariance Matrices if each grade level had at least 30 participants (Huberty & Morris, 1989; Sharif et al., 2018). The overall MANOVA model was significant for grade level, Pillai's Trace = .24, $F = 2.67, df = (16,668), p = .00$, indicating a difference in the number of minutes allotted to deliver instruction by teachers between the grade levels. The univariate F tests showed that there was a statistically significant difference between grade levels for science, $F = 5.93, df = (4,167), p = .00$, and social studies, $F = 7.15, df = (4,167), p = .00$, with respect to number of minutes allotted to deliver instruction. However, the F tests were not statistically significant for ELA/reading, $F = .97, df = (4,167), p = .43$, and mathematics, $F = .80, df = (4,167), p = .53$. Thus, the number of minutes allotted to deliver instruction was not statistically different between grade levels for ELA/reading and mathematics. Post-hoc tests were conducted to see in which grade levels the mean number of minutes allotted for delivering instruction in science was different to a statistically significant degree. The result indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between first ($M = 1.28$) and second grade ($M = 1.40$), kindergarten ($M = 1.44$) and first grade ($M = 1.28$), kindergarten ($M = 1.44$) and third grade ($M = 2.03$), kindergarten ($M = 1.44$) and fifth grade ($M = 2.00$), and first ($M = 1.28$) and third grade ($M = 2.03$). Similarly, the posthoc

tests were conducted to see in which grade levels the mean number of minutes allotted to deliver instruction for social studies was different to a statistically significant degree. The result indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between kindergarten ($M = 1.44$) and third grade ($M = 2.00$), first ($M = 1.31$) and second grade ($M = 1.37$), and fifth ($M = 2.23$) and first grade ($M = 1.31$). Post-hoc tests were not conducted for ELA/reading and mathematics because the tests of between-subject effects were statistically non-significant.

Research Question 8

The eighth research question asked, “What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for lesson planning by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?” Survey item seven was used to measure the time allotted for lesson planning.

A MANOVA analysis was used to compare the mean number of minutes allotted for lesson planning per week (dependent variable) in the four content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) by kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grade general education teachers (independent variable). The Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices was statistically significant ($F = 4.97, p = .00$) indicating that the observed covariance matrices for the dependent variable were not equal across the grade levels. MANOVA results are robust to violations in Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices if each grade level has at least 30 participants (Huberty & Morris, 1989; Sharif et al., 2018). The overall MANOVA model was significant for grade level, Pillai’s Trace = .18, $F = 1.92, df = (16,644), p = .02$, indicating a difference in the number of minutes allotted to lesson planning per week by teachers between the grade levels. The univariate F tests

showed that there was a statistically significant difference between grade levels for science, $F = 3.17$, $df = (4,161)$, $p = .02$, and social studies, $F = 4.50$, $df = (4,161)$, $p = .00$, with respect to number of minutes allotted for lesson planning per week by teachers between grade levels. However, the F tests were not statistically significant for ELA/reading, $F = .33$, $df = (4,161)$, $p = .86$, and mathematics, $F = .54$, $df = (4,161)$, $p = .71$. Thus, the number of minutes allotted for planning per week by teachers between grade levels was not statistically different between grade levels for ELA/reading and mathematics. Post-hoc tests were conducted to see in which grade levels the mean number of minutes allotted for lesson planning in science was different to a statistically significant degree. The result indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and first grade ($M = 2.17$), kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and second grade ($M = 2.56$), kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and third grade ($M = 2.54$), kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and fifth grade ($M = 3.00$), first ($M = 2.17$) and third grade ($M = 2.54$), first ($M = 2.17$) and second grade ($M = 2.56$), first ($M = 2.17$) and fifth grade ($M = 3.00$), fifth ($M = 3.00$) and kindergarten ($M = 1.76$), fifth ($M = 3.00$) and first grade ($M = 2.17$), fifth ($M = 3.00$) and second grade ($M = 2.56$), and fifth ($M = 3.00$) and third grade ($M = 2.54$). Post-hoc tests were conducted to see in which grade levels the mean number of minutes allotted for lesson planning in social studies was different to a statistically significant degree. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and second grade ($M = 2.35$), kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and third grade ($M = 2.57$), kindergarten ($M = 1.76$) and fifth grade ($M = 3.22$), first ($M = 2.06$) and third grade ($M = 2.57$), first ($M = 2.06$) and second grade ($M = 2.35$), first ($M = 2.06$) and fifth grade ($M = 3.22$), fifth ($M = 3.22$) and kindergarten ($M =$

1.76), fifth ($M = 3.22$) and first grade ($M = 2.06$), fifth ($M = 3.22$) and second grade ($M = 2.35$), and fifth ($M = 3.22$) and third grade ($M = 2.57$). Post-hoc tests were not conducted for ELA/reading and mathematics because the tests of between-subject effects were statistically non-significant.

Research Question 9

The ninth research question asked, “What are the differences between social studies instruction and other core content area instruction regarding the time allotted for student assessment by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades?” Survey item eight was used to measure the time allotted for assessing student understanding.

A MANOVA analysis was used to compare the mean number of minutes allotted for student assessment per week (dependent variable) in the four content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) by kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade general education teachers (independent variable). The Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices was statistically significant ($F = 11.28, p = .00$), indicating that the observed covariance matrices for the dependent variable were not equal across the grade levels. MANOVA results are robust to a violation in Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices if each grade level has at least 30 participants (Huberty & Morris, 1989; Sharif et al., 2018). The overall MANOVA model was statistically significant for grade level, Pillai’s Trace = .14, $F = 1.52, df = (16,688), p = .09$, indicating a difference in the number of minutes spent in student assessments by teachers between the grade levels. The univariate F tests showed there was a statistically significant difference in the number of minutes allotted to student assessments between grade levels for science, $F = 3.82, df =$

(4,167), $p = .01$, and social studies, $F = 5.11$, $df = (4,167)$, $p = .00$. However, the F tests were not statistically significant for ELA/reading, $F = 1.24$, $df = (4,167)$, $p = .30$, and mathematics, $F = 1.35$, $df = (4,167)$, $p = .26$. Thus, the number of minutes allotted to student assessments by teachers was not statistically different between grade levels for ELA/reading and mathematics. Post-hoc tests were conducted to see in which grade levels the mean number of minutes allotted for student assessment in science was different to a statistically significant degree. The result indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between second ($M = 1.51$) and third grade ($M = 1.92$), fifth grade ($M = 2.10$) and kindergarten ($M = 1.35$), fifth ($M = 2.10$) and first grade ($M = 1.36$), fifth ($M = 2.10$) and second grade ($M = 1.51$), fifth ($M = 2.10$) and third grade ($M = 1.92$). Similarly, the posthoc tests were conducted to see in which grade levels the mean number of minutes allotted to student assessments in social studies was different to a statistically significant degree. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between second ($M = 1.51$) and third grade ($M = 1.95$), fifth grade ($M = 2.30$) and kindergarten ($M = 1.35$), fifth ($M = 2.30$) and first grade ($M = 1.36$), fifth ($M = 2.30$) and second grade ($M = 1.51$), and fifth ($M = 2.30$) and third grade ($M = 1.95$). Post-hoc tests were not conducted for ELA/reading and mathematics because the results of the tests between-subject effects were statistically non-significant.

Research Question 10

The tenth research question, “What are the differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on social studies instructional time and other core content area instructional time as indicated by teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth

grades to a statistically significant degree?” Survey item nine was used to measure the influence of the time allotted for mandated testing

A MANOVA analysis was initially used to compare the mean differences in the level of influence mandated testing has on instructional time (dependent variable) in the four content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) by kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade general education teachers (independent variable). However, the Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices would not compute.

Therefore, a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to examine the magnitude of the relationship between the dependent variables (influence of mandated testing on instructional time) across the four content areas (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995; Wothke, 1993). The bivariate results indicated a high correlation between ELA/reading with mathematics ($r = .87$) and science with social studies ($r = .95$). Therefore, mathematics and science were removed from the MANOVA model, and the analysis was conducted again. The Box’s Test of Covariance Matrices was not statistically significant ($F = 1.73$, $p = .06$), meeting the assumption of MANOVA, and indicating that the observed covariance matrices for the dependent variable were equal across the grade levels. The overall MANOVA model was statistically significant for grade level, Pillai’s Trace = .18, $F = 4.0$, $df = (8,334)$, $p = .00$, indicating there was difference how teachers by grade level felt mandated testing influenced instructional time given to the different content areas. The univariate F tests showed a statistically significant difference between grade levels for ELA/reading, $F = 4.44$, $df = (4,167)$, $p = .00$. However, the F tests showed there were no statistically significant differences for social studies $F = 2.18$, $df = (4,167)$, $p = .07$. Thus, the difference in how teachers by grade level felt mandated testing influenced

instructional time within the different content areas was not statistically different between grade levels for social studies. Post-hoc tests were conducted to see which grade levels teachers felt mandated testing influenced instructional time given for ELA/reading to a statistically significant degree. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between kindergarten ($M = 1.82$) and first grade ($M = 2.17$), kindergarten ($M = 1.82$) and fifth grade ($M = 2.23$), kindergarten ($M = 1.82$) and second grade ($M = 2.29$), and kindergarten ($M = 1.82$) and third grade ($M = 2.59$). Post-hoc tests were not conducted for social studies because the tests of between-subject effects were statistically non-significant.

Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the descriptive and inferential findings from the causal-comparative research.

The descriptive analysis indicated the majority of kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers believed themselves to have a “high level of PCK” in ELA/reading and mathematics, and a “slightly high level of PCK” in science and social studies. The majority of teachers indicated “slight ease and comfort” with lesson planning in all four content areas (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies). Similarly, teachers also indicated a “high level of understanding” of the GSE in all four content areas. Regarding the teaching-assessment cycle, teachers indicated a “high level of understanding” in ELA/reading and mathematics; and a “slightly high level of understanding” of the teaching-assessment cycle in science and social studies.

Teachers indicated they followed the district-provided pacing guides “closely” in mathematics and ELA/reading; and “most of the time” in social studies and science.

Whole class discussion, writing assignments, and incorporating picture books were the most frequently used (almost daily) instructional strategies in ELA/reading followed by cooperative learning, building academic vocabulary, and incorporating technology (1-2 times per week). The whole class discussion was the most frequently (almost daily) used strategy in mathematics, followed by cooperative learning, building academic vocabulary, and incorporating technology (1 – 2 times per week). None of the instructional strategies were chosen as “almost daily” in science or social studies. However, teachers indicated using the following strategies “1 – 2 times per week” in both science and social studies: cooperative learning, whole-class discussion, building academic vocabulary, and incorporating picture books. When asked to rank the four content areas by importance, the majority of teachers ranked ELA/reading as “most important,” mathematics as “slightly more important,” science as “slightly less important,” and social studies as “least important.”

Regarding questions pertaining directly to social studies instruction, teachers indicated the topics most emphasized (1 – 2 times per week) during instruction were civic responsibility and social history of the US/ world. Teachers indicated the use of the Internet “occasionally” (2 – 3 times per month) to “never.” The Internet was incorporated two to three times per month to find and/or examine primary sources, to take virtual field trips, and to collect information for reports and projects.

Teachers indicated that the “most important” reasons for teaching social studies were to prepare good citizens, to teach students life skills, to develop skills in ELA/reading, and to teach students content knowledge. The majority of teachers ranked

“because it is required by the state” as the “least important” reason for teaching social studies.

Teachers indicated “strongly agree” for the following statements: the primary goal in teaching social studies is to help develop students’ thinking and decision-making skills, necessary materials such as textbooks and supplies are available to teach, school administration is supportive of social studies, I collaborate with those in my social studies department or grade level on social studies instruction on a regular basis, state standards influence my instructional decision-making, state standards influence my evaluation and assessment of standards, and I believe ELA/reading and mathematics drive the curricular day. Teachers indicated they “somewhat agree” with the following statements: my primary goal in teaching social studies is to help students master basic facts, concept, and content, students receiving remediation or enrichment services affect my social studies instruction, state and/or district standards have a positive impact on my social studies teaching, I believe that state and/or district test results will affect my job security, I am generally satisfied with social studies teaching at my school, students are well prepared for the next grade level social studies instruction, and I am satisfied with the current time allotted for social studies instruction.

Regarding state-level and district-level professional development and instructional policies, teachers indicated feeling “some” degree of influence in choosing professional development, determining how instructional time will be used, and having some flexibility in choosing how instructional time will be used. Teachers indicated feeling “a great deal of control” in evaluating and grading students. Teachers indicated feeling “moderate control” in choosing which parts of the curriculum to emphasize, and

“minor control” over selecting textbooks and other materials (43%) and selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught. Teachers also indicated feeling “no control” for selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught. Teachers indicated they integrated ELA/reading and social studies frequently and indicated if social studies were added to the GMAS, teachers would teach social studies 31 – 45 minutes per week.

The inferential MANOVA analysis indicated there was a difference in the time allotted for delivering instruction, the time allotted for lesson planning, and the time allotted for student assessment across the content areas at the kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth-grade levels. Regarding the time allotted for delivering instruction, there was no statistically significant difference between ELA/reading and mathematics, but a statistically significant difference was indicated for science and social studies. Similarly, results indicated there was a difference in the number of minutes allotted for lesson planning. The results were not statistically significant between the content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics but were statistically significant in science and social studies. The results indicated no statistically significant difference in the time allotted for student assessment in science and social studies. There was no statistically significant difference in ELA/reading and science.

Regarding the influence of mandated testing, the results indicated that teachers did not feel the state-mandated testing influenced the amount of instructional time devoted to social studies content to a statistically significant degree. However, teachers indicated feeling that state-mandated testing influenced the instructional time devoted to ELA/reading to a statistically significant degree.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary of the Study

This causal-comparative study aimed to examine the status of social studies in public elementary schools in one school district in Georgia. The study set out to examine the current status through examining teacher perception of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), level of ease of planning instruction, level of understanding of *Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)* level of understanding of teaching-assessment cycle, use of district-provided pacing guides, frequency of use of instructional strategies, the time allotted to deliver content, the time allotted for lesson planning, the time allotted for student assessment, and the influence of mandated testing. An amended version of the *Survey of the Status of Social Studies* (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013a, b, c) was used to gather data regarding instructional practices in public elementary schools across one school district in Georgia in the content areas of ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Data collected from the self-reported survey were analyzed for differences between content areas and grade levels.

The research review suggested that at the elementary level, social studies instruction lagged behind that of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. The research review revealed the following possible reasons as to why social studies instruction fell behind the other content areas at the elementary level: high accountability measures due to mandated testing, teacher evaluations tied to ELA/reading and mathematics, teachers

possessed limited PCK to deliver effective instruction upon graduating from teacher preparation programs, and when taught, inferior instructional practices that were teacher-centered, and textbook reliant instructional strategies prevailed (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015; An, 2016; Brittingham, 2016; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Hawkman et al., 2015; Heafner, 2018, Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Ollila & Macy, 201, Pace, 2012, Passe, 2006; Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2015; Swan, Lee, & Grant, 2016, Thacker et al., 2016; VanFossen, 2005, Waters & Watson, 2016; Whitlock & Brugar, 2019, Zhao & Hoge, 2005).

Examining the status of social studies in the school district in Georgia was timely because the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) had recently undergone a transition from the *Social Studies Georgia Performance Standards* (GPS) to the new social studies GSE, provided professional development on content, the intent of GSE instructional strategies for teaching social studies, pacing guides, teacher content notes, and sample units of instruction. The school district had also provided professional development, pacing guides, and units of instruction. In addition, the school district recently underwent a textbook adoption for social studies and provided teachers with a variety of materials to teach social studies. The GaDOE recently decided to no longer assess third and fourth-grade students over social studies content on the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS), bringing into question the adage, “what is treasured is measured” (Pederson, 2007, p. 291). In light of previous research and the many changes in both the state and the school district, examining the status of social studies would provide insight as to the effectiveness of professional development that had

been provided, the usage of new social studies resources, and the need for additional professional development.

Overall, the data retrieved in this current research continued to support the previous research findings put forth in the research review. In social studies across the Georgia school district, instructional practices differ overall compared to the instructional practices of ELA/reading and mathematics and between grade levels. However, differences between instructional practices in social studies and science were not as noticeable, and in some scenarios, science fared less than social studies across grade levels. Chapter V will discuss the findings regarding each research question and provide the researcher's recommendations for future research and implications of the study.

Analysis of the Findings

Descriptive Analyses Findings

Data from descriptive analyses were used to answer the first six research questions. Data revealed that teachers believed themselves to have a “high level of PCK” in both ELA/reading (57%) and mathematics (57%) and a “slightly high level of PCK” in both science (48%) and social studies (46%). PCK is the “blending of content and pedagogy” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). To blend content and pedagogy, teachers must possess a deep understanding of content matter and the implications of how students will use overall compared to the instructional practices of ELA/reading and mathematics and between grade levels (van Hover & Yeager, 2004). PCK formed the framework for the current research. Research questions one through six together provided insight into teachers' PCK level across the school district concerning social studies instruction.

Survey item 10 asked teachers to indicate their perceived level of PCK; however, to examine the PCK level required a multi-faceted approach.

Analysis of the second research question (survey item 11), indicated teachers felt “slight ease and comfort” with lesson planning in all four content areas: social studies (42%), ELA/reading (44%), mathematics (43%), and science (43%). However, results were very similar at the “high ease and comfort” level in ELA/reading (43%) and mathematics (43%), but not as high in social studies (39%). Analysis of the third research question (survey item 12) indicated teachers felt a “high understanding” of GSE in all content areas: mathematics (58%), ELA/reading (51%), social studies (51%), and science (46%). Similarly, analysis for the fourth research question (survey item 13) indicated teachers felt a “slightly high understanding” of the teaching-assessment cycle in social studies (45%) and science (47%) versus a “high understanding” in ELA/reading (56%) and mathematics (55%). The trend in which social studies fell just behind that of ELA/reading and mathematics continued with the analysis of the fifth research question (survey item 15) when teachers indicated following the district-provided pacing guide “most of the time” in social studies (47%) and science (46%) in contrast to “following closely” in ELA/reading (49%) and mathematics (51%). The responses in the research questions one through five suggested that teachers overall were comfortable with all four content areas, with social studies (and science) lagging just behind that of ELA/reading and mathematics. The phenomenon is not unfamiliar because previous researchers found social studies instruction lagging behind that of ELA/reading and mathematics (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015; An, 2016; Brittingham, 2016; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Hawkman et al., 2015; Heafner, 2018, Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Ollila &

Macy, 201, Pace, 2012, Passe, 2006; Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2015; Swan, Lee, & Grant, 2016, Thacker et al., 2016; VanFossen, 2005, Waters & Watson, 2016; Whitlock & Brugar, 2019, Zhao & Hoge, 2005).

However, research question six (survey items 16 -18) asked teachers to indicate the instructional strategies used most frequently in different content areas. Inquiry-based learning was an answer choice for teachers on the survey item but was not selected among the most frequently used instructional strategies in social studies. Previous research suggested that inquiry-based instruction is important for students to understand social studies because it encourages students to ask questions, collect data to answer questions, decide on criteria for accepting the evidence, agree on the degree of generalizability, and communicate results (Oppong-Nuako et al., 2015; Saunders-Stewart et al., 2012). A further indication of the importance of inquiry-based learning in social studies was when National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) released the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework* to provide teachers with a framework for using inquiry-based instruction in social studies (National Council for the Social Studies, 2014). In addition, the school district had provided professional development on SWIRL (speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening) activities as one way to incorporate inquiry-based instruction in the classroom. Teachers did not indicate using this strategy frequently, either. Considering one of the most recommended instructional strategies was not chosen by teachers indicated that teachers' PCK levels were not as high in the area of social studies as in ELA/reading and mathematics, and may not be as high as indicated in the survey results. Further investigation into why inquiry-based instruction is not taking place in social studies classrooms is needed.

Previous research found that textbook and teacher-driven instruction were more prevalent in social studies instruction (An, 2017; Babini, 2013; Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013; Heafner & Fitchett, 2018). However, the results from the current research indicated, textbooks were used “rarely” (1 – 2 times per year) across all four content areas, contrary to previous research findings. Teachers also indicated using cooperative learning, whole group discussion, and building of academic vocabulary as instructional strategies “frequently” (1 – 2 times per week). Previous research indicated that social studies instruction more was teacher-centered. However, the results from the current research indicated that less teacher-centered instruction took place in the one Georgia school district. Cooperative learning and whole-group discussion are more student-centered instructional strategies.

Teachers indicated using picture books “frequently” (1 – 2 times per week). The frequent use of picture books during social studies instruction suggested that teachers were integrating social studies with ELA/reading. Previous research found this to be common at the elementary level (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008; Hinde, 2009; Johns, 2016; Ranshaw & Griffin, 2017). Teachers also indicated (survey item 25) that integration of ELA/reading with social studies took place “frequently” (1 – 2 times per week). Further supporting the idea of integration was indicated when teachers responded to survey item 22 about the reasons for teaching social studies. Teachers responded that developing skills in ELA/reading was one of the “most important” reasons to teach social studies (27%).

The descriptive analyses also provided additional insight into the teaching of social studies. When asked to rank the content areas by importance (survey item 14),

ELA/reading was ranked as “most important,” mathematics ranked as “slightly more important,” science ranked as “slightly less important,” and social studies ranked as “least important.” This ranking ordered mirrored earlier research findings in which ELA/reading content was ranked as most important and social studies content was ranked a least important (Fitchett, Heafner, & VanFossen, 2014; Passe & Fitchett, 2013; Thornton & Houser, 1996; VanFossen, 2005; VanFossen & McGrew, 2008; Vogler, 2011; Vogler et al., 2007).

Teachers indicated (survey item 20) the most “frequently” (1 – 2 times per week) covered topics during social studies instruction were those of civic responsibility (39%) and social history of US/world (33%). Topics covered “occasionally” (2 – 3 times per month) were economic concepts (43%), core democratic values (30%), and current events (30%). The Internet is used (survey item 21) only “occasionally” for collecting information for reports/projects (34%), taking virtual field trips (33%), and finding/examining primary sources (28%). Teachers indicated that the Internet was used “rarely” (2 – 3 times per year) for inquiry activities. Teachers indicated (survey item 22) that the “most important” reasons for teaching social studies were to prepare good citizens (65%), to teach students life skills (42%), to develop skills in ELA/reading (27%) and to teach students content knowledge (25%). Teachers indicated (survey item 23) that the primary goal of teaching social studies was to help develop students’ thinking and decision-making skills (65%). The results indicated that teachers focus on the more traditional aspects of social studies, civic responsibility, and social history. While social studies instruction lends itself to technology (Fitchett & VanFossen, 2013c), teachers indicated it was not often used. Somewhat contradictory is the finding that teachers

“strongly agreed” that a primary goal of teaching social studies was to help develop students’ thinking and decision-making skills. There is little support for this answer selection within the remainder of the survey responses.

Inferential Analyses Findings

Inferential analyses were used to answer the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth research questions. The teachers were asked questions about the amount of time allotted for delivering instruction (survey item 6), lesson planning (survey item 7), assessing students (survey item 8), and the influence of mandated testing on instructional time (survey item 9).

Regarding the time allotted for delivering instruction, the results indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the time allotted for delivering ELA/reading and mathematics instruction between the grade levels. However, the results indicated a statistically significant difference in the time allotted for delivering science and social studies instruction. These results mirrored previous research that suggested social studies instruction lags because the educational resources and time are dedicated to ELA/reading and mathematics instruction because of high-stakes testing and accountability measures (Au, 2007; Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Fitchett et al., 2014; Haas & Laughlin, 1998; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; O’Connor et al., 2017; VanFossen, 2005; VanFossen & McGrew, 2008; Vogler, 2011; Vogler et al., 2007). Teachers spent an average of 76 – 90 minutes per day delivering ELA/reading instruction across the grade levels, and an average of 61 – 75 minutes per day delivering mathematics instruction. Kindergarten, first, and second-grade teachers spent an average of 15 – 30 minutes per day on social studies instruction versus third and fifth-grade teachers spending 31- 45 minutes per day

on social studies instruction. While time allotted for social studies instruction waned, the time teachers indicated in the current survey surpassed the amount of time indicated in previous research. VanFossen (2005) indicated that teachers, on average, spent 90 minutes per week delivering social studies instruction. The majority of the curricular day was devoted to delivering ELA/reading and mathematics instruction. As the grade level increased, the amount of time delivering social studies (and science) instruction increased. However, the amount of time delivering science and social studies instruction was substantially less than ELA/reading and mathematics. The minutes indicated are close to the school district expectation listed in the elementary procedure manual. “Kindergarten through second- grade teachers provide 150 minutes of ELA/reading instruction, 90 minutes of mathematics instruction, 30 minutes of science instruction, and 30 minutes of social studies instruction. Third through fifth-grade teachers provide 130 minutes of ELA/reading instruction, 80 minutes of mathematics instruction, 45 minutes of science instruction, and 45 minutes of social studies instruction” (Houston County Board of Education, 2018, p. 60). Teachers also indicated in survey item 27 that social studies would be taught on average 31 – 45 minutes per day if the content was added to the GMAS, which is similar to the currently allotted time frame.

There was a statistically significant difference in the time allotted for lesson planning in the different content areas and between grade levels (survey item 7). There was a statistically significant difference in the number of minutes allotted for lesson planning in both science and social studies. However, the data indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the amount of the time allotted for lesson planning in ELA/reading and mathematics. Kindergarten, first, second, and third-grade teachers on

average spent 46 – 60 minutes per week planning for ELA/reading instruction, and fifth-grade teachers spent an average 61 - 75 minutes planning. Teachers across all grade levels indicated spending an average of 46 – 60 minutes per week planning for mathematics instruction. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers indicated spending an average 31- 45 minutes per week planning for science instruction; whereas, second, third, and fifth-grade teachers indicated spending an average 46 – 60 minutes per week in planning. Kindergarten, first, and second-grade teachers spent, on average, 31 – 45 minutes planning social studies instruction; whereas, third and fifth-grade teachers spent on average 46 – 60 minutes planning social studies instruction. Teachers throughout the grade levels spent more time planning lessons in ELA/reading and mathematics than in science and social studies. The amount of time allotted for lesson planning in science and social studies increased as the grade levels increased. These results from the current research mirrored earlier findings by Haas & Laughlin (2008) that found teachers believed there was a lack of adequate time to plan social studies instruction.

The data indicated that the amount of time allotted for student assessment (survey item 8) was different in content and by grade level to a statistically significant degree. The number of minutes allotted for student assessment between grade levels for ELA/reading and mathematics was not statistically different. However, the results indicated a statistically significant difference in science and social studies. The data indicated that teachers, on average, spent 46 – 60 minutes per week on student assessment in ELA/reading and mathematics. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers indicated spending on average 15 – 30 minutes per week on student assessment in science and social studies; whereas, second, third, and fifth-grade teachers indicated spending on

average 31 – 45 minutes per week on student assessment. Teachers spent more time on student assessment in ELA/reading and mathematics than science and social studies across the grade levels. However, as the grade level increased, teachers spent more time assessing science and social studies.

As previously mentioned, the level of influence of mandated testing on instructional minutes (survey item 9) was so closely correlated that Box’s test would not compute. For this reason, the researcher ran the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on ELA/reading and social studies, only. The results indicated a difference in how teachers by grade level felt mandated testing influenced instructional time. There was no statistically significant difference indicated for social studies, but there was a statistically significant difference for ELA/reading. Teachers across all grade levels indicated “instructional time had increased” in ELA/reading due to state-mandated testing. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers indicated “instructional time had decreased” in social studies due to mandated testing. Second, third, and fifth-grade teachers reported that “instructional time has remained the same” and was not influenced by state-mandated testing. However, the results are somewhat contradictory to the responses provided from survey item 23 that asked teachers to indicate the level to which they disagreed/agreed with the following statement, “I believe that tested content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics drive my curricular day.” Teachers indicated they “strongly agreed” with this statement.

Limitations of the Study

The study results are limited because causal-comparative research design does not allow for causality to be established (Salkind, 2010).

The second notable limitation was the data collection tool itself; the survey was extensive. Self-reported surveys are subject to social desirability bias (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Poksakoff et al., 2003). In addition, the survey assumed the teachers all interpreted the survey items in the same manner (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). Fatigue can also be a concern. The survey consisted of 34 items that had several items and multiple sub-sections. A review of the data showed that the questions at the end of the survey had higher missing data than those at the beginning of the survey. Thus, the researcher decided not to complete MANOVA analyses on the latter items and conducted frequency analyses instead. On the earlier items that directly answered the research questions, the researcher conducted a missing data analysis and imputed the mean response to run the MANOVA more robustly.

Another limitation of this research was participation. While the response rate of 33% is a good response rate, not all grade levels participated equally. The sample size of kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades were 30 or above. However, the sample size for the fourth grade was 26. For this reason, fourth-grade scores were excluded from the MANOVA analyses. The fourth-grade sample was not a large enough sample size in light of the Box's Test of Covariance Matrices assumption not being met. While MANOVA analysis is robust enough when the Box's Test of Covariance Matrices assumption is not met, the sample size should be at least 30 (Sharif et al., 2018).

The results of the research cannot be generalized to other schools within the state or nation. The results are not generalizable to different age groups (i.e., middle school or high school).

The researcher was an administrator at one of the elementary schools in the research at the time the study was conducted. In addition, she once served as a district-wide instructional coach. For this reason, some teachers may have felt pressured to answer the survey in the “correct” manner. However, steps were taken to notify participants that survey responses were anonymous.

In addition, the expectation for instructional minutes is outlined in the school district’s elementary procedures manual. Having such expectations may have influenced teacher responses. However, the researcher provided explicit instructions that the survey results would be anonymous.

In addition to the limitations mentioned above, the research set out to get an overview of social studies’ status within a school district in Georgia. The data gleaned from the research cannot provide causation behind the answers.

Recommendations for Future Research

As mentioned in the limitations, the current research only provided an overview of social studies’ status at the elementary level in one Georgia school district. To better understand how to improve social studies’ status at the elementary level within the district, more specific information is needed. Interviewing a representative sample of elementary teachers from various grade levels across the school district, and inquiring as to “why” questions may have been answered the way they were would provide more helpful information. For example, teachers indicated that the time on instruction was not influenced by mandated testing (survey item 9). However, later in the survey (item 23), teachers indicated they “strongly agreed” with the following statement, “I believe that tested content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics drive my curricular day (64%).”

Again, in survey item 23, teachers also indicated they “somewhat agreed” with the following statement, “I am generally satisfied with the current time allotted for social studies instruction (44%).” Together, the survey results presented conflicting information. Conducting qualitative research in the form of individual interviews or panel interviews would provide insight.

A more in-depth study of the school district’s professional development would be beneficial, as well. Conducting interviews of teachers who have attended social studies professional development courses would help district coordinators better understand the hindrances of incorporating the instructional strategies taught during professional development sessions. Professional development provided by the school district focused on building content knowledge, familiarization of the GSE, assessment strategies, inquiry-based instructional strategies, the usage of primary sources, building academic vocabulary, and integrating reading and writing into social studies. The results of the survey indicated that teachers incorporated building academic vocabulary, and incorporating picture books, but did not incorporate inquiry-based instruction, the use of primary sources, or integrating reading and writing into social studies. Further researching why teachers do not incorporate all the instructional strategies could help school leaders and district leaders in providing additional necessary professional development and resources to help teachers.

Teachers indicated using picture books “frequently” during social studies instruction, and later indicated integrating social studies with ELA/reading “frequently.” Further research into the effectiveness of the integration that is taking place would be beneficial. Conducting interviews or panel interviews would provide insight into whether

teachers are reading picture books and considering that to be integrating social studies with ELA/reading. Are teachers losing the social studies content information during integration? Is fractured integration taking place (Hinde, 2009)? Information gleaned from further research could also aid in providing professional development and resources to help teachers.

In addition, further research into the time allotted for delivering social studies instruction would prove helpful. These results indicated that teachers devoted more time to social studies instruction at the third and fifth-grade levels. Conducting interviews of teachers may provide answers as to why more time was devoted as the grade levels increased. Was the increased time a result of numerical grading, administration of the GMAS, or because the content became more rigorous? In addition, investigating whether dedicating more time alone to delivering social studies instruction alone would result in higher performance on the GMAS should be studied. Heafner (2018) suggested that simply providing more time would not alleviate the learning gap. The quality of the instruction taking place is the deciding factor. Regarding time allotted, further study into the effect of the school district's expectation of how instructional minutes during the day should be allocated would be beneficial. The district's expectation may be cause for why teachers limit the amount of time devoted to social studies instruction.

In addition to delving more in-depth with the elementary level research, research at the middle school level would provide insight into gaps that middle school social studies, teachers witnessed for students moving from elementary to middle school.

Additional research in the content area of science would also benefit the school district because science and social studies findings were often similar in the current

research. While previous research suggested that science instruction would be more similar to ELA/reading and mathematics, the current results indicated, it lagged just as social studies lagged.

Implications of the Study

The findings from the current research provided an overview of social studies' status at the elementary level in one school district in Georgia. Results from the research will be provided to school leaders and district leaders to provide insight as to a way to improve social studies instruction. Information gleaned from the study will assist in providing resources as well as professional development for teachers.

The results from the current research indicated that social studies instruction received approximately half the allotted time as ELA/reading and mathematics. The time allotted for social studies instruction increased in intermediate grades (3rd – 5th grades), growing from 15- 30 minutes per day to 31- 45 minutes per day. The current findings are similar to those of previous research that found the time allotted to deliver social studies instruction was considerably less than the time allotted for ELA/reading, mathematics, and science instruction (Au, 2007; Bailey et al., 2006; Fitchett et al., 2014, Heafner, 2018; O'Connor et al., 2007; VanFossen, 2005; Vogler, 2011). However, for the school leaders and district leaders, the results should not be surprising. Teachers indicated adhering to the expectations for instructional minutes presented in the elementary procedures' manual (Houston County Board of Education, 2018). Changes to state standards, recent textbook/resources adoption, multiple opportunities for professional development seemed not to affect the amount of time allotted for social studies instruction.

The time allotted does not necessarily lead to quality instruction (Fitchett et al., 2014; Heafner, 2018). Results from the current research indicated that social studies continued to be ranked as the least important content area, perhaps indicating that teachers do not fully understand the importance of the content. The fact that teachers feel social studies instruction is the least important of the four content areas may influence the amount of time devoted to instruction and the instructional strategies used to deliver instruction. While teachers indicated using whole-group discussion and cooperative learning strategies during social studies instruction, they did not indicate using inquiry-based instruction frequently. Social studies researchers and experts agree that teaching through an inquiry-based approach fosters individual growth, democratic participation, and social change (Coiro, Castek, & Quinn, 2016, p. 485).

Conclusion

The narrowing of the curriculum needs to end if the goal of the public education system is to prepare young people for future life, work, and citizenship. Results from the current research continue to bring attention to the need to explore how social studies instruction can be improved. While adding more instructional minutes to the curricular day may prove difficult, and even improbable, assisting teachers with delivering quality social studies instruction is not. For teachers to be willing to improve their social studies instruction, they need to feel supported by school leaders and district leaders. School leaders can provide support by providing time for teachers to collaborate and plan quality instruction, providing time for teachers to attend professional development to grow in content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and providing the necessary resources for instruction. Professional development of inquiry-based instruction is a particular need

in the school district. District leaders can provide support by providing professional development and resources for the schools; they may also offer support by allowing teachers the autonomy to decide how to spend the minutes within the curricular day. Fitchett and Heafner (2014) indicated that teachers who felt more autonomy in making curricular decisions allotted for more time to deliver social studies instruction and incorporated better quality instructional practices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Principal Recruitment Email

Dear (Principal),

My name is Tonya Pinckley and I am a doctoral candidate under the supervision of Dr. Thomas McCormack at Columbus State University in the Department of Counseling, Foundations, and Leadership.

I am contacting you to ask permission for your teachers to participate in a research study entitled, *The Status of Social Studies Instruction within One Georgia School District*, which examines the status of social studies instruction within your school.

To collect data for this study, I will be conducting a web-based survey via *Qualtrics* platform. The time to take the web-based survey should not exceed 20 minutes and will consist of 32 items related to the instructional practices in regard to ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Questions pertain to the time allocated for lesson planning, the time allocated for assessment, the time allocated for delivering instruction, and instructional strategies or modes of delivering instruction. The responses of the teachers will remain anonymous and confidential. The research will be conducted via web-based survey during teachers' non-instructional day. All survey responses will be confidential and anonymous. The responses will be in no way evaluative and will not involve any risks, discomforts or loss of benefits to the participants. The teachers can voluntarily participate in the study and can withdraw at any time from the study.

The research study has been approved by the Columbus State University Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. In addition, the research study has been approved through the Board of Education Research Guidelines.

Please return the attached "Letter of Cooperation from an Outside Performance Site" email to pinckley_tonya@columbusstate.edu.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at pinckley_tonya@columbusstate.edu or 478-747-6296.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tonya Pinckley
Doctoral Student
Columbus State University

Appendix B

Teacher Recruitment Email

Dear Teacher,

My name is Tonya Pinckley and I am a doctoral candidate under the supervision of Dr. Thomas McCormack at Columbus State University in the Department of Counseling, Foundations, and Leadership.

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in my research study, *The Status of Social Studies Instruction within One Georgia School District*. To participate, you will need to complete the web-based survey via *Qualtrics Survey Solutions for Success®* survey platform. The survey window will remain open for ten working days. The time to take the web-based survey should not exceed 20 minutes and will consist of 32 items related to the instructional practices in regard to ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Please participate in the web-based survey during a non-instructional time convenient to you by clicking on the attached link. (link) The survey consists of questions related to the time allocated for planning, the time allocated for assessment, the time allocated for delivering instruction and the variety of instructional strategies of modes of delivering instruction in each of the content areas. The goal of the research is to examine the relationship between instructional practices of general education elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) teachers in regard to social studies instruction and the instructional practices of ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. The survey will also include demographic questions to assist the researcher in defining the research sample. Survey results will be anonymous and confidential. Your responses will not be attributed directly to you. You may withdraw from the research study at any time.

This research study has been approved by the Columbus State University Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subject follow federal regulations. In addition, the Board of Education has also approved this research.

If you are willing to participate in this research study, simply continue on to the *Qualtrics Survey Solutions for Success®* link provided in this email. (Link) Once you access the survey, you will be asked to complete a web-based Informed Consent Form before proceeding to the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at pinckley_tonya@columbusstate.edu or 478-929-7826.

Thank you in advance for your time, consideration, and assistance.

Sincerely,

Tonya Pinckley
 Doctoral Student
 Columbus State University

Appendix C

Follow-up Email to Participants

Dear Teacher,

Hello again, my name is Tonya Pinckley and I am a doctoral candidate under the supervision of Dr. Thomas McCormack at Columbus State University in the Department of Counseling, Foundations, and Leadership. Last week I sent you an email recruiting your assistance with my research study, *The Status of Social Studies Instruction within One Georgia School District*.

This email serves as a reminder to please respond to the web-based survey via *Qualtrics Survey Solutions for Success®* survey platform. The survey window will remain open for another five working days. The time to take the web-based survey should not exceed 20 minutes and will consist of 32 items related to the instructional practices in regard to ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Please participate in the web-based survey during a non-instructional time convenient to you by clicking on the attached link. http://columbusstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0105RQqIEgUSOID

Survey results will be anonymous and confidential. Your responses will not be attributed directly to you. You may withdraw from the research study at any time. If you have already completed the survey, THANK YOU.

This research study has been approved by the Columbus State University Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subject follow federal regulations. In addition, the Board of Education has also approved this research.

If you are willing to participate in this research study, simply continue on to the *Qualtrics Survey Solutions for Success®* link provided in this email. http://columbusstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0105RQqIEgUSOID Once you access the survey, you will be asked to complete a web-based Informed Consent Form before proceeding to survey items.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at pinckley_tonya@columbusstate.edu or 478-747-6296.

Sincerely,

Tonya Pinckley
 Doctoral Student
 Columbus State University

Link: http://columbusstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0105RQqIEgUSOID

Appendix D

Thank You Letter

Dear Teacher:

My name is Tonya Pinckley and I am a doctoral candidate under the supervision of Dr. Thomas McCormack at Columbus State University in the Department of Counseling, Foundations, and Leadership. I want to thank you all for your time and consideration in participating in my research, *The Status of Social Studies Instruction within One Georgia School District*. At this time the web-based survey has closed.

Again, if you are interested in the findings of the research, please email me at pinckley_tonya@columbusstate.edu or call me at 4787-747-6296.

Thank you for your time,

Tonya Pinckley
Doctoral Student
Columbus State University

Appendix E

Researcher's Certificate of Completion (NIH)



Appendix F

Dissertation Chair's Certificate of Completion (NIH)

**Certificate of Completion**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Thomas McCormack** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 10/03/2011

Certification Number: 777816



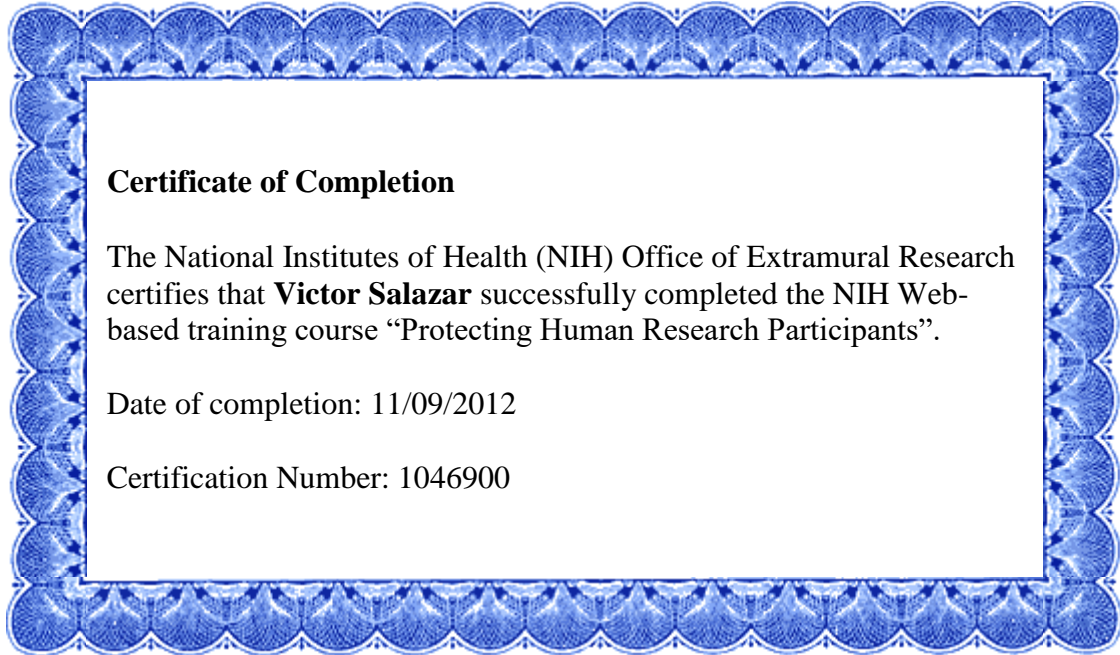
Appendix G

Methodologist's Certificate of Completion (NIH)



Appendix H

Committee Member's Certificate of Completion (NIH)



Appendix I
Sample Survey

1. In which school do you currently teach?

- Bonaire Elementary
- C. B. Watson Primary
- Centerville Elementary
- David Perdue Primary
- Eagle Springs Elementary
- Hilltop Elementary
- Kings Chapel Elementary
- Lake Joy Elementary
- Lake Joy Primary
- Langston Road Elementary
- Lindsey Elementary
- Matt Arthur Elementary
- Miller Elementary
- Morningside Elementary
- Northside Elementary
- Parkwood Elementary
- Pearl Stephens Elementary
- Quail Run Elementary
- Russell Elementary
- Shirley Hills Elementary

- Tucker Elementary
- Westside Elementary
2. Which of the following best characterizes the school in which you teach?
- Title-I
- Non-Title I
3. Which of the following best characterizes the school in which you teach?
- Inner city
- City
- Rural
4. What grade do you currently teach?
- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade
- Fifth Grade
5. Which of the following best describes the way YOUR classes are organized?
- I instruct the same students all day (self-contained class).
- I teach social studies to different classes of students (subject specialist).
- I team-teach and one subject I teach is social studies (departmentalization).
6. Please indicate how many minutes (approximately) you spend each day during a normal school week on classroom instruction for each of the following content areas.

| | 15 – 30 minutes | 31- 45 minutes | 46 – 60 minutes | 61 – 75 minutes | 76 – 90 minutes | More than 90 minutes |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| ELA/reading | | | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Science | | | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |

7. Please indicate how many minutes (approximately) during a normal school week you spend preparing lesson plans for each of the following content areas.

| | 15 – 30 minutes | 31- 45 minutes | 46 – 60 minutes | 61 – 75 minutes | 76 – 90 minutes | More than 90 minutes |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ELA/reading | | | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| Science | | | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |

8. Please indicate how many minutes (approximately) during a normal school week you spend assessing student understanding in the following content areas.

| | 15 – 30 minutes | 31- 45 minutes | 46 – 60 minutes | 61 – 75 minutes | 76 – 90 minutes | More than 90 minutes |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ELA/reading | | | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| Science | | | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |

9. Please indicate how mandated testing has influenced the amount of instructional time for each of the content areas below.

| | Instructional time has decreased | Instructional time has remained the same | Instructional time has increased |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| ELA/reading | | | |
| Mathematics | | | |

| | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| Science | | | |
| Social Studies | | | |

10. Please indicate your level of pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge of both content and the practices of teaching) and the ease of planning instruction (1 indicating a low pedagogical content knowledge and difficulty with planning and 4 indicating a high pedagogical content knowledge and comfortable with planning).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| ELA/reading | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | |
| Science | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | |

11. Please indicate your level of ease with planning instruction. (1 indicates a low level of ease and discomfort with planning and 4 indicates a high level of ease and comfort with planning)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| ELA/reading | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | |
| Science | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | |

12. Please indicate your understanding of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). (1 indicates a low understanding of GSE and difficulty in planning and 4 indicates a high understanding of GSE and comfort with planning)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| ELA/reading | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| Science | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | |

13. Please indicate your understanding of how to teach/assess the content. (1 indicates a low understanding of how to teach/asses the content and 4 indicates a high understanding of how to teach/assess the content).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| ELA/reading | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | |
| Science | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | |

14. Please indicate how YOU would rank order the following content areas. (1 indicates least important and 4 indicates most important)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| ELA/reading | | | | |
| Mathematics | | | | |
| Science | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | |

15. The school district provides pacing guides for the core content areas. How would you describe your use the pacing guides?

| | I do not follow the district-provided pacing guide. | I follow the district-provided pacing guide some of the time. | I follow the district-provided pacing guide most of the time. | I follow the district-provided pacing guide closely. |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| ELA/reading | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| Mathematics | | | | |
| Science | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | |

16. During ELA/reading instruction, how often do your students engage in the following:

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Cooperative learning assignments | | | | | |
| Whole class discussion | | | | | |
| Textbook-based activities | | | | | |
| Lecture on the content | | | | | |
| Group projects | | | | | |
| Use of computer-based applications | | | | | |
| Watch videos/film | | | | | |
| Inquiry-based learning | | | | | |
| Writing assignments | | | | | |
| Answer questions/define terms from the textbook | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| SWIRL (speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening) | | | | | |
| Building of academic vocabulary | | | | | |
| Use of technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the needs of the students | | | | | |
| Application of technology to develop students' higher order skills and creativity | | | | | |
| Facilitate technology enhanced experiences that address the content standards | | | | | |
| Interactive multi-media presentations | | | | | |
| Instructional strategies that utilize digital images/primary sources | | | | | |
| Digital media such as a digital camera, cell phone, iPod, or digital video | | | | | |
| Course development software, such as Elluminate, WebCT, Blackboard, Edulastic, etc. | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Digital resources provided by the school district | | | | | |
| Picture Books or Trade Books | | | | | |

17. During mathematics instruction, how often do your students engage in the following:

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Cooperative learning assignments | | | | | |
| Whole class discussion | | | | | |
| Textbook-based activities | | | | | |
| Lecture on the content | | | | | |
| Group projects | | | | | |
| Use of computer-based applications | | | | | |
| Watch videos/film | | | | | |
| Inquiry-based learning | | | | | |
| Writing assignments | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Answer questions/define terms from the textbook | | | | | |
| SWIRL (speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening) | | | | | |
| Building of academic vocabulary | | | | | |
| Use of technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the needs of the students | | | | | |
| Application of technology to develop students' higher order skills and creativity | | | | | |
| Facilitate technology enhanced experiences that address the content standards | | | | | |
| Interactive multi-media presentations | | | | | |
| Instructional strategies that utilize digital images/primary sources | | | | | |
| Digital media such as a digital camera, cell phone, iPod, or digital video | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Course development software, such as Elluminate, WebCT, Blackboard, Edulastic, etc. | | | | | |
| Digital resources provided by the school district | | | | | |
| Picture Books or Trade Books | | | | | |

18. During science instruction, how often do your students engage in the following:

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Cooperative learning assignments | | | | | |
| Whole class discussion | | | | | |
| Textbook-based activities | | | | | |
| Lecture on the content | | | | | |
| Group projects | | | | | |
| Use of computer-based applications | | | | | |
| Watch videos/film | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Inquiry-based learning | | | | | |
| Writing assignments | | | | | |
| Answer questions/define terms from the textbook | | | | | |
| SWIRL (speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening) | | | | | |
| Building of academic vocabulary | | | | | |
| Use of technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the needs of the students | | | | | |
| Application of technology to develop students' higher order skills and creativity | | | | | |
| Facilitate technology enhanced experiences that address the content standards | | | | | |
| Interactive multi-media presentations | | | | | |
| Instructional strategies that utilize digital images/primary sources | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Digital media such as a digital camera, cell phone, iPod, or digital video | | | | | |
| Course development software, such as Elluminate, WebCT, Blackboard, Edulastic, etc. | | | | | |
| Digital resources provided by the school district | | | | | |
| Picture Books or Trade Books | | | | | |

19. During social studies instruction, how often do your students engage in the following:

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|----------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Cooperative learning assignments | | | | | |
| Whole class discussion | | | | | |
| Textbook-based activities | | | | | |
| Lecture on the content | | | | | |
| Group projects | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Use of computer-based applications | | | | | |
| Watch videos/film | | | | | |
| Inquiry-based learning | | | | | |
| Writing assignments | | | | | |
| Answer questions/define terms from the textbook | | | | | |
| SWIRL (speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening) | | | | | |
| Building of academic vocabulary | | | | | |
| Use of technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the needs of the students | | | | | |
| Application of technology to develop students' higher order skills and creativity | | | | | |
| Facilitate technology enhanced experiences that address the content standards | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|--|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Interactive multi-media presentations | | | | | |
| Instructional strategies that utilize digital images/primary sources | | | | | |
| Digital media such as a digital camera, cell phone, iPod, or digital video | | | | | |
| Course development software, such as Elluminate, WebCT, Blackboard, Edulastic, etc. | | | | | |
| Digital resources such as, Channel One News, Discovery Ed, iCivics, etc. provided by the school district | | | | | |
| Picture Books or Trade Books | | | | | |

20. During social studies instruction, how often do you emphasize the following:

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Core democratic values | | | | | |

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| The US Constitution | | | | | |
| Social history of the US and/or World | | | | | |
| Political history of the US and/or World | | | | | |
| Issues of race and class | | | | | |
| Fundamentals of local, state, and/or federal government | | | | | |
| Diversity of religious views | | | | | |
| Basic economic concepts | | | | | |
| Civic responsibility | | | | | |
| Current events | | | | | |

21. How often do you have students use the Internet during social studies instruction?

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|--|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| To find and examine primary source materials | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| To complete an inquiry activity | | | | | |
| To take a virtual field trip (ex. Online museum) | | | | | |
| To collect information for reports or projects | | | | | |
| To communicate with others (i.e., students, experts, historians, etc.) | | | | | |
| To communicate with students from another country | | | | | |
| Develop Web projects | | | | | |

22. Please indicate how you would rank the following reasons for teaching social studies.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To prepare good citizens | | | | | | |
| Because it is required by state standards | | | | | | |
| To teach students content knowledge | | | | | | |
| To teach students life skills | | | | | | |
| To prepare students for the next grade level | | | | | | |
| To develop skills in ELA/reading | | | | | | |

23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| My primary goal in teaching social studies is to help students master basic facts, concepts, and content. | | | | |
| My primary goal in teaching social studies is to help develop students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. | | | | |
| Necessary materials such as textbooks and supplies are available to adequately teach social studies. | | | | |
| My school's administration is supportive of social studies as a subject area. | | | | |
| I collaborate with those in my social studies department or grade level on social studies instruction on a regular basis. | | | | |
| Student discipline problems influence my social studies instruction. | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Students receiving remediation or enrichment services affect my social studies instruction. | | | | |
| State standards influence my instructional decision-making. | | | | |
| State standards influence my evaluation and assessment of students. | | | | |
| State/district standards have a positive impact on my social studies teaching. | | | | |
| I believe that state/district test results will affect my job security. | | | | |
| I believe tested content areas of ELA/reading and mathematics drive my curricular day. | | | | |
| I am generally satisfied with social studies teaching at this school. | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Students are well prepared for the next grade level social studies instruction. | | | | |
| I am satisfied with the current time allotted for social studies instruction. | | | | |

24. To what extent do you agree with these statements?

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| I have the freedom to choose my professional development sessions. | | | | |
| Professional development is offered in each content area | | | | |
| Administrators determine how instructional time will be used | | | | |
| Teachers determine how instructional time will be used | | | | |
| A set policy exists for the school, but teachers have some flexibility in how instructional time will be used | | | | |

25. How often do you integrate the following subjects?

| | Never | Rarely (2-3 times per year) | Occasionally (2-3 times per month) | Frequently (1-2 times per week) | Almost daily |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| ELA/reading with Social Studies | | | | | |
| Mathematics with Social Studies | | | | | |
| Science with Social Studies | | | | | |

26. How much control do you believe you have over your planning and teaching in the scenarios listed below?

| | No control | Minor control | Moderate control | A great deal of control |
|---|------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Selecting textbooks and other materials | | | | |
| Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught | | | | |
| Choosing which parts of the curriculum to emphasize in my instruction | | | | |
| Selecting teaching techniques | | | | |
| Evaluating and grading students | | | | |

27. If social studies were added to the *Georgia Milestones Assessment System* in your grade, how many minutes per week (on average) would you devote to social studies instruction?

- 15-30 minutes per week
- 31-45 minutes per week
- 46-60 minutes per week
- 61-75 minutes per week
- 76-90 minutes per week

- More than 90 minutes per week

28. My highest educational level:

- Bachelor's
- Bachelor's plus 15 hours
- Bachelor's plus 30 hours
- Master's
- Master's plus 30 hours
- Specialists
- Ph.D. or Ed.D.

29. Please indicate the total number of years you have taught.

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20
- 20-24
- 25 or more

30. The number of years I have taught in a state other than Georgia

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20

- 20-24
- 25 or more

31. How many college or university courses (i.e.3-credit hour classes) have you taken in history or the social sciences (economics, geography, psychology, political science/government, sociology):

- 0-2 courses
- 3-5 courses
- 6-8 courses
- 9-11 courses
- 11 or more courses

32. Did you receive your teaching certification degree from a public Georgia university or college?

- Yes.
- No.

33. Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female

34. My race/ethnicity is:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian/Pacific American
- Black or African American
- Mexican American or Chicano
- Puerto Rican
- Latin American or other Hispanic

- White, non-Hispanic
- Other