

PRACTICING TEACHERS AS ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES METHODS
INSTRUCTORS: THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT THE ISSUES THEY ENCOUNTERED IN
PREPARING PRESERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

By

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Brian K. Lanahan

This dissertation is dedicated to Ty Thebaut in gratitude for her example of how to live life with your glass more than half full.

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PREPARING PRESERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

By

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Given the currently threatened status of social studies instruction in elementary schools, there is a need for strong methods instruction. However, elementary social studies methods instruction at the university level can be idiosyncratic and difficult to characterize, because methods courses often are taught by teachers from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, including inservice teachers. The individuals examined in this study served in the “dual roles” of inservice teachers and elementary social studies methods instructors. The study was informed by four major areas of literature: portraits of practice in social studies methods instruction, teaching and learning of elementary social studies, elementary social studies methods, and teacher beliefs. Case study methodology was employed, and the theory that teacher beliefs drive practice was the lens used to examine the beliefs and practices of the three participants while

chronicling the issues they encountered. Observations of methods instructors, interviews, and written documents supplied the data to complete this investigation.

Findings from this study suggest that individuals serving in these dual roles engaged in practices based on their personal beliefs and experiences, and were privy to unique information about the status of elementary social studies in the elementary curriculum. These individuals also encountered issues related to methods students, the status of elementary social studies and field placements, and filling dual roles. To further support individuals serving in these dual roles, recommendations for supporting and improving social studies methods instruction by inservice teachers are included. Suggestions for further study are recommended, including research about inservice teachers serving as methods instructors, elementary social studies methods instruction in general, and further elementary social studies research. Finally, conclusions about the status of elementary social studies are discussed. Overall, filling these dual roles served to facilitate the participants' methods instruction and gave them unique insights into the status of social studies. The ability of the participants to relate and react to the experiences and concerns of the methods students proved to be valuable.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Elementary social studies methods instruction at the university level can often be idiosyncratic and difficult to characterize (Slekar 2006). While there is generally an agreed upon need to understand how methods courses can better prepare preservice teachers to engage in social studies practice to meet the needs of diverse student populations (e.g., McCall & Andringa 1997; Ukpokodu 2003), portraits of those typically instructing these courses are rare. Elementary social studies methods courses are often taught by teachers from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds: “Retired (secondary) social studies teachers, retired principals, teachers with a Masters degree in curriculum and instruction and other willing but possibly not qualified people carried the bulk of the load” (Slekar 2006, p. 255). This observation is mirrored at the University of Florida, where inservice teachers often serve as social studies methods instructors. A need exists to understand the particular beliefs that fuel the methods practices of these instructors and the issues they encounter as inservice teachers instructing a methods course.

Rationale for Study

The teacher education experiences of classroom teachers concerning social studies “cannot be overlooked as factors that shape teachers’ knowledge and classroom practices” (Yeager & Wilson 1997, p. 122). Despite the power that such experiences have over teachers, little is known about how the beliefs of inservice methods instructors

influence their methods practices, and how filling these dual roles in turn influences their beliefs about social studies at the elementary level. Nespor (1987) suggested a further examination of such beliefs: “Little attention has been accorded to the structures and functions of a teacher’s beliefs about their roles, their students, the subject matter areas they teach, and the schools they work in” (p. 317). While there are many powerful portraits of how beliefs influence the instruction of social studies teachers (e.g., Wineburg & Wilson 1991), portraits of how beliefs affect the methods practices of inservice teachers serving as social studies methods instructors are virtually nonexistent. This study seeks to fill this void in the literature.

Statement of the Research Problem

Given the currently threatened status of social studies instruction in elementary schools, there is a need for strong methods instructors. In many colleges of education, it is common practice to employ inservice teachers to teach methods courses. A void in the literature exists concerning the beliefs, practices, and issues encountered by these instructors, so little is known about how to best support them as they perform their duties. Thus, whatever new information is collected adds to the scholarship about the practitioners who fill this role, and in the future will assist colleges of education to better support these instructors.

Research Questions

This research study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What beliefs about social studies education do these inservice teachers hold?
2. How do the beliefs these inservice teachers hold inform their practice in their social studies methods course?
3. How does filling these dual roles inform their beliefs about the place of social studies in the elementary curriculum?
4. What do these inservice teachers believe are the issues they encountered while teaching the methods course?

Theoretical Orientation

It is customary for qualitative researchers to detail their philosophical and epistemological assumptions, such as the choice of methodology and procedures for data collection and analysis, because these assumptions guide all aspects of their study (Gale 1993; LeCompte & Preissle 1993). This study is built upon a constructivist framework (Crotty 1998; Schwandt 1994). Central to constructivism is inquiry into the experiences of individuals and a description of the world as it is felt and understood by the individuals (Schwandt 1994). In this study, the experiences are those of the inservice methods instructors as they understand them. These experiences form the basis for constructed meanings of events, situations, and beliefs. This process occurs over time and is influenced by the individual's actions, but also by personal histories and contextual factors (Schwandt 1994). In this study, it appears that the individual inservice methods instructors draw upon their dual roles of methods instructor and inservice teacher to form their mental constructions, which in turn inform their methods practice.

The results of this study are reported in the tradition of dissertations to fulfill the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at the University of Florida. In this tradition:

The main purpose of the study is to describe (and analyze) a particular situation or a chronicle of events for a particular sample. A theory, or components of a theory, may be used to generate descriptive categories, but advancement or testing of the theory is less important than documenting the event for this specific sample. (University of Florida 1983)

For other requirements for an Ed. D. dissertation see figure 1-1. Therefore, the intent of the study is to determine how the instructors' beliefs about elementary social studies

influence how they perform their role as “curricular- instructional gatekeepers” while serving as methods instructors (Thornton 1991, p. 237).

	Ph.D.	Ed.D.
1.	Guiding questions for the study are formulated in association with theoretical constructs. For example, the main purpose of the study may be testing application of a particular theory or competing theories. Failure to be able to meaningfully apply the chosen theory to the data collected would result in abortion of the study. If new theory is developed, its need is justified by pointing out inadequacies in previous theories.	The main purpose of the study is to describe (and analyze) a particular situation or a chronicle of events for a particular sample. A theory, or components of a theory, may be used to generate descriptive categories, but advancement or testing of the theory is less important than documenting the event for this specific sample.
2.	The literature review is focused heavily on the theory and empirical studies in which researchers have tested that theory, perhaps in different settings with different samples.	The literature review may be focused more on studies of similar events, similar settings and/or similar samples to those in this particular study.
3.	Questions or hypotheses that guide the data analyses must be generated around variables that play prominent roles in the "guiding theory."	Questions or hypotheses that guide the data analysis may be generated from either a theoretical perspective or a practical perspective to yield information useful to decision-makers in this or similar settings.
4.	Primary target audience for the study is the community of scholars who do research on the theory chosen to guide the study.	The primary target audience for the study is primarily educational decision-makers, who work with the type of group studied.
5.	Data will be analyzed and reported around themes that have direct bearing on the theoretical focus of the study.	Any interesting themes that arise from the data are likely to be reported if they have implications for educational practice.
6.	Organization and presentation of results are primarily related to underlying theoretical constructs, rather than the surface structure of documents reviewed or data collection instruments.	Organization and presentation of results may be based on themes corresponding directly to content and structure of documents or interview protocols.
7.	Data are analyzed using methods learned in the Ph.D. qualitative track. (For example ethnography, historiography, or educational criticism methods are more common; case study methods that do not permit in-depth analysis are unusual.)	Data may be analyzed using methods learned in the Ed.D. qualitative track (For example, case studies and content analyses of interview protocols are common).
8.	Discussion of results must include a section on how the present findings extend the body of knowledge, supporting or failing to support the guiding theory.	Discussion of results must include a section dealing with implications for practice.

Figure 1-1 Ph. D. vs. Ed. D.

Also, within this tradition, “[q]uestions or hypotheses that guide the data analysis may be generated from either a theoretical perspective or a practical perspective to yield

information useful to decision-makers in this or similar settings” (University of Florida 1983). Given that the intention of this dissertation is to understand the beliefs and practices of inservice teachers who serve as social studies methods instructors, the questions and hypotheses that guide this study are guided by a practical perspective to generate data that will facilitate the improvement of instruction by individuals in similar situations.

Guiding Research

This study draws upon four major areas of research as the basis for the literature review in Chapter 2: the literature regarding portraits of practice in social studies methods instruction (e.g., Slekar 2006), the teaching and learning of elementary social studies (e.g., Barton & Levstik 2004) and elementary social studies methods (e.g., Owens 1997), and teacher beliefs (e.g., Pajares 1992). A brief description of each area literature follows examples from each of the areas of literature to be discussed in Chapter 2.

In a recent work, Slekar (2006) detailed the connections between the beliefs and resultant practices of an elementary social studies methods professor. Slekar found that the professor believed the goal of social studies education was transmission of the American cultural heritage (see Martorella 1994). This belief about social studies education informed the professor’s beliefs about social studies methods instruction. The professor in question stated that the main job of elementary social studies teachers was to serve as “knowledge conveyors,” a belief that served as the basis of his methods instruction. In 2004, Barton and Levstik published an extensive discussion of the teaching and learning of history at the elementary level, *Teaching History for the Common Good*. In their book, Barton and Levstik discuss the multitude of positions, perspectives, and stances that are adhered to for the teaching of history at the elementary level. Illustrative

of the absence of consensus in history and social studies education is Barton and Levstik's statement about the central concern of history education: "We cannot answer the question, 'What kind of education prepares students for participatory democracy?' because, quite frankly, no one knows" (p. 35). Given the lack of definitive answers to important questions such as this, teachers often rely on their beliefs to inform their instructional practices.

Also important to understanding the practices of teachers, methods instructors included, is Barton and Levstik's suggestion: "To understand why teachers engage in the practices they do, perhaps we need to turn to the socially situated purposes that guide their actions" (p. 244). In the case of the inservice instructors in this study, the consideration of "socially situated purposes" aids in understanding the basis of their particular beliefs and resultant practices. While the literature focused exclusively on elementary social studies methods is not as extensive as the literature focused on elementary social studies education or teacher beliefs, a number of works exist that are important to this study. One such work is Owens' 1997 article, "The Challenges of Teaching Social Studies Methods to Preservice Elementary Teachers," in which Owens describes six issues specific to methods instruction of elementary social studies. Chapter 2 also details the literature concerning teacher beliefs, which serves as the theoretical lens for this study and is briefly described below.

Guiding Theory

The theory that teacher beliefs drive practice has been applied to many educational situations (e.g., Armento 1996; Brownell, Yeager, Rennels & Riley 1997; Clark & Peterson 1986; Cuban 1984; Cuban 1986; Fang 1996; Goodlad 1984; Leming 1989; Onosko 1989; Pajares 1992; Sarason 1996; Shulman 1987; Thornton 1991; Wilson 2000;

Wilson, Konopak & Readance 1994). This theory holds promise for understanding teacher practices: “Educators are now beginning to realize that teachers (preservice teachers, beginning, or experienced) do hold implicit theories about students, the subjects they teach, and their teaching responsibilities” (Fang 1996, p. 51). The theory that beliefs drive practice has been applied more often to preservice (e.g., Armento 1996) and inservice teachers (e.g., Shulman 1987). Recently, the effects of teacher beliefs on practices have been applied to the beliefs and resultant practices of an elementary social studies methods professor (Slekar 2006). The present study extends this theory to the beliefs and practices of inservice teachers serving as social studies methods instructors.

The Rationale for the Choice of a Qualitative Design

The choice of a qualitative design is based on Patton’s (1990) assertion that the intent of qualitative research is to “provide perspective rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decision makers’ theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound explorations rather than generalizations” (p. 491). In this study, the local decision makers are the inservice instructors; the study explores their beliefs concerning their social studies methods instruction. Important to this study is a design that facilitates a depth of understanding over breadth: “Qualitative methods permit the evaluation researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail” (Patton 1990, p. 165). The study employs a qualitative approach to create a rich description of each participant’s beliefs in order to understand his or her practices (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The complexity of teacher beliefs makes it difficult to study them well using quantitative methodology (Nespor 1987).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I have the advantage of having focused on social studies instruction in my own work as an elementary teacher and during my doctoral studies. Moreover, I hold the advantage of being a fellow instructor of the same social studies methods course taught by the study participants. The role of the researcher in any qualitative study is to capture the reality and/or contexts the research subject inhabits. The researcher should become the human instrument for data collection and interpretation by having a theoretical sensitivity that creates an awareness of the subtleties of the data being collected and analyzed (Lincoln & Guba 1985). This theoretical sensitivity is demonstrated by the researcher's insights and ability to derive meaning from the data. In the case of this study, my theoretical sensitivity is based on my experiences as an elementary social studies teacher, my knowledge of the professional literature concerning elementary social studies, and my concurrent experience of teaching the same methods course.

Methodology

This study employs case study methodology to investigate three different participants and “seeks out both what is common and what is particular about the case” (Stake 1994, p. 238) through the analysis of multiple sources of data such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Patton 1990; Stake 1994; Yin 1994). Case studies allow for an intensive, holistic, and in-depth investigation of each teacher as a unit (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg 1991; Merriam 1998; Stake 1994). Finally, Merriam's (1998) contention that a case study is more focused on process than on outcome, and more on context than on specific variables, is important for the current study because of the complex and unique nature of teacher beliefs and their influence on teaching practices.

Participants

I selected participants as a result of criterion sampling “to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton 1990, p. 176). The participants meet two criteria: They are inservice teachers, and they instruct an elementary social studies methods course. I gained access to the participants by approaching each of them in the context of our shared role as elementary social studies methods instructors and inviting them to take part in the study. I secured institutional permission through the Institutional Review Board of the University of Florida and the Research and Evaluation Department of the School Board of Alachua County. The participants are all inservice elementary teachers under the age of 35, with at least five years of teaching experience, who instruct a section of Social Studies for Diverse Learners (SSE 4312) at the University of Florida.

Data Collection Methods

Data sources include interviews, observations of social studies methods instruction, and document analysis. This approach is based on Patton’s (1990) belief that “[q]ualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents” (p. 10). All of these sources are used in this study to create a comprehensive description of the participants and their beliefs. The use of multiple data sources is also based on Yin’s (1994) suggestion to use multiple sources of data when constructing case studies in order to increase the reliability of the data and provide multiple examples of the participants’ approach to the topics of interest. Finally, interviews allow the participants to explain and describe their beliefs about methods instruction and the issues they encountered during

the process, as well as provide a frame of reference for the observations of methods instructors.

A large proportion of the data analyzed in this study is generated from at least two interviews with each participant lasting approximately 60-90 minutes, based on Patton's (1990) belief that "[d]irect quotations are the basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry" (p. 24). The first interview provides data about the participant's personal and professional background and his or her beliefs about teaching. The second and any follow-up interviews are based on information from previous interviews and observations. The interviews are semi-structured based on Patton's (1990) interview guide approach, in which the format, topics, and issues are covered in a specified outline form and the interviewer determines the order and the wording of each question. The interview guide approach allows for adjustments to the particularities of each interview and/or participant. Interviews are audio taped and transcribed. The interview questions reflect the major areas of interest in this study.

Observations

Data collection includes five to six three-hour observations of social studies methods instruction for each participant. During the observations, I positioned myself in the back of the classroom to make my presence as unobtrusive as possible. All observations conclude with an informal conversation with the instructor to provide him or her with the opportunity to discuss the class just completed. During each observation, I took extensive field notes to describe the events that take place during the class.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurs as a process of "examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence" (Yin 1994, p. 102). It proceeds in order to generate

useable information about the areas of interest of the study, and it occurs *within-case* and *cross-case* to ensure high-quality accessible data while generating documentation of the analysis, as well as retention of the data and the associated analysis after the study is completed (Huberman & Miles 1994). Also, data reduction “makes sense of massive amounts of data, reduces the volume of information, and identifies significant patterns” (Patton 1990, p. 371). The data in this study need to be reduced to a salient and manageable set in order to be properly analyzed. Several qualitative researchers have stated that analysis should be an ongoing process starting at the beginning of the study and not reserved for the end (e.g., Merriam 1998; Stake 1995). Based on this belief the data reductions in the following order:

- Free coding after the first round of interviews; then data analysis and development of codes to be used as a starting point to analyze instructional observation data
- Codes verified by a second coder
- Data analysis after all observations are completed using the previously generated codes, adjustments of codes as necessary after this analysis, and then use of codes to analyze the teacher-provided documents and the final interview data
- Analysis of data to identify the emerging themes across the data (Lincoln & Guba 1985) and verification of analysis by the research auditor
- Reduction of the data set on the basis of the identified themes in order to draw conclusions (Patton, 1990)
- Presentation of conclusions to participants for verification
- Verification of interpretation

In order to keep the interpretations, reductions, and resulting conclusions closely linked to the data, I incorporate a series of verification steps into the process. Two experienced researchers supervise the study in order to create investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1984), which is especially important in light of the difficulty of understanding

the complex interactions of the two roles that each of the participants performs and the influence of these roles on instruction. I also perform member checking throughout the project, including the verification of findings, conclusion, and final presentation. The chair of my doctoral committee serves as research auditor (Cutcliffe & McKenna 2004).

Study Limitations and Delimitations

The proposed study is restricted to three elementary teachers in the Alachua County area who also instruct a section of Social Studies for Diverse Learners at the University of Florida. The study is limited by the amount of access granted by the teachers to their instruction and their teaching philosophy.

Description of Chapters

This dissertation uses a traditional format. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the background of the problem. Chapter 2 reviews the literature regarding portraits of practice in social studies methods instruction (e.g., Slekar 2006), the teaching and learning of elementary social studies (e.g., Barton & Levstik 2004) and elementary social studies methods (e.g., Owens 1997), and teacher beliefs (e.g., Pajares 1992). Chapter 3 describes the methods, including information about each of the participants and their settings, the sampling rationale, the research design, and the process used to analyze the data. Chapters 4–6 describe each participant and the *within-case* findings related to each particular participant. Chapter 7 presents the *cross-case* findings and conclusions of the study. Chapter 8 summarizes the findings, makes recommendations to support social studies methods instruction by inservice teachers, suggests directions for further research, and provides conclusions about the status of elementary social studies.

Potential Significance of the Study

The study may advance our knowledge of how to utilize social studies methods instructors from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds to teach a methods course effectively. In addition, by addressing the issues the participants recognize, this study informs us about the specific supports inservice teachers need in order to be effective. The results from this study also fill a particular void in the literature:

Is what Merrill (a methods instructor) did more common in social studies methods courses than I wish to believe? However, I cannot really answer that question because the literature lacks descriptive accounts of social educators engaged in the practice of teaching and learning in social studies methods courses. (Slekar 2006, p. 255)

This study provides such accounts.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of the literature addresses four major areas of research related to the beliefs, practices, and issues encountered while serving as elementary social studies methods instructors. These four areas include: teacher beliefs, portraits of the practice of elementary social studies methods professors, the issues of elementary social studies methods, and finally, research in elementary social studies. In keeping with the dissertation guidelines for the Ed.D. degree, this review consists of literature “focused more on studies of similar events, similar settings, and/or similar samples to those in this particular study” (University of Florida 1983).

The review of the literature on teacher beliefs describes how a teacher’s personal beliefs about teaching and learning have a profound effect on his or her relationships with students, curriculum, and instruction. This body of research provides insight into the relationship between the beliefs and instructional practices of the participants in this study. The literature concerning portraits of the practice of elementary social studies methods professors reveals the paucity of such scholarship and the unique ways their beliefs influence practices within the context of an elementary social studies methods course. An examination of the closely related research on elementary social studies methods reveals the specific issues related to teaching social studies methods in the current high-stakes environment, where social studies is not currently included in accountability systems and is thus less of an instructional priority. Finally, a survey of the

literature on elementary social studies leads to a discussion of a possible revision of the elementary curriculum and the influence of the No Child Left Behind Act and high-stakes testing on elementary social studies.

Teacher Beliefs

The literature concerning teacher beliefs provides a lens through which I examine the research participants. Following is a description of the body of literature that examines how the specific beliefs teachers hold influence and, at times, dictate their instructional practices. In the context of this study, the beliefs held by these inservice teachers are especially interesting because of the influence of their dual roles, the ambiguous nature of social studies in general, and the currently imperiled status of elementary social studies. In their positions as methods instructors, they are introduced to a variety of strategies and social studies theories through various instructional materials that influence their beliefs about elementary social studies instruction. In their positions as inservice elementary teachers, they are able to ‘road test’ the knowledge they have gained through the methods course and judge the effectiveness and practicality of these strategies and theories. Given the unique and powerful relationship of these dual roles on the participants’ beliefs, it is imperative not only to label these beliefs, but also to understand their effects on methods instruction. Challenging the participants’ beliefs will be a whole array of outside factors that can influence their methods instruction. These outside factors include the expectations and biases of their methods students, the expectations of the course’s supervising professor, the imperiled status of elementary social studies, the restrictions and boundaries of the methods course, and the culture of university, among other things.

The background of a teacher is important to consider due to its effect on beliefs about teaching (Fang 1996; Nespor 1987). In the case of these instructors, each has a unique personal, educational, and professional background that has served to form his or her beliefs about teaching and learning in general, and social studies in particular. These beliefs must be examined: “To understand teaching from teachers’ perspectives, we have to understand the beliefs with which they define their work” (Nespor 1987, p. 323). As Sturtevant (1996) stated, “We must learn far more about the beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives of teachers in the educational process” (p. 251). This examination is especially important for social studies teachers. Given the many dilemmas they face in the current educational climate, beliefs are often the basis for making instructional decisions when there are no clear-cut choices because beliefs help in “distinguishing between better and worse courses of action, rather than right and wrong ones...” (Hargreaves 1995, p. 15). These dilemmas have been exacerbated by the impact of high stakes testing as teachers are faced with decreasing instructional time for social studies.

In general, teachers and their beliefs are typically conservative in general (Cuban 1984; Cuban 1993; Goodlad 1990; Lortie 1975; Owens 1997; Sarason 1996). Conservative instructional beliefs are often formed early in teachers’ lives when they themselves are students (Calderhead 1991; Lortie 1975; Sugrue 1997; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon 1998). In addition to this “apprenticeship of observation,” many other factors, such as socioeconomic status, type of school attended, and parental and societal influence, can inform a teacher’s beliefs (Wilson, Readence & Konopak 2002). These more conservative instructional beliefs have endured largely because the people typically attracted to the teaching profession were once successful students in schools with

traditional instructional methods, and thus, they form beliefs based on these experiences (Fehn & Koeppen 1998; Slekar 1998). These beliefs extend to all areas of education, including curriculum, teaching, learning, and often extend in to the social realm (Pajares 1992).

The Beliefs-to-Practice Connection

Numerous studies have suggested teacher beliefs form the basis for instructional decisions (e.g., Armento 1996; Brownell, Yeager, Rennels & Riley 1997; Clark & Peterson 1986; Cuban 1984; Cuban 1986; Fang 1996; Goodlad 1984; Leming 1989; Onosko 1989; Pajares 1992; Sarason 1996; Shulman 1987; Thornton 1991; Wilson 2000; Wilson, Konopak & Readance 1994). This situation is especially important for understanding the practices of the instructors in this study because of the autonomy that university level instructors often enjoy. Yet, while the beliefs-to-practice connection has been implicitly understood for decades, the research community has not explored it in depth because of the difficulty of examining beliefs with quantitative methods (Pajares 1992). Reflecting a ‘coming of age’ of the beliefs-to-practice research, Fang (1996) stated:

Educators are now beginning to realize that teachers (preservice teachers, beginning, or experienced) do hold implicit theories about students, the subjects they teach and their teaching responsibilities, and that these implicit theories influence teachers’ reactions to teacher education and their teaching practice. (p. 51)

Despite the inextricable connection between beliefs and practices, teachers sometimes have conflicting beliefs that lead to contradictory instructional decisions (Cornett 1990). These contradictions often appear as a mismatch between the content taught and the methods used to deliver the content. For example, a teacher may have a strong belief in teaching the principles of democratic participation, yet may favor instructional methods

that are didactic and authoritarian. Beliefs are also constrained by other factors that may be imposed upon teachers – for example, they may experience tension between their expressed belief in preparing students for positive social interactions and the pressure to cover content (Cornett 1990). In situations like this, the teacher is responding to an external pressure that creates a mismatch between beliefs and practices.

The reality that practices do not always follow beliefs extends to preservice teachers. Often, education students arrive at their first field placement full of exciting and innovative teaching ideas, and then see their actions constrained by the institutional expectations in the field placement (Armento 1996; Owens 1997; Wilson & Yeager 1997); thus, there is a disconnect between what they have been learning in their teacher education program and the unique challenges of a real classroom (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004). This disconnect in social studies is described by Leming (1992) as the ‘two cultures’ of the academy and the classroom. Often, preservice teachers end up conforming to the more conservative instructional practices and expectations of their mentor teachers (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Owens 1997; Wilson, Konopak & Readance 1994; Wilson & Yeager 1997), and this desire to conform creates difficulties in fulfilling the ‘theory to practice’ promise of a concurrent field placement (Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). Moreover, when preservice teachers begin their first year of teaching, inconsistencies between their stated beliefs and actual practices may continue if there is no opportunity to address the discrepancy (Mallette & Readance 1999; Wilson 2000).

Changing Beliefs

Within the educational research community, a certain level of disagreement exists regarding the difficulty of changing teacher beliefs. Much of the research on the

possibility of changing beliefs has focused on the beliefs of preservice teachers. Some researchers believe that it is possible to influence preservice teachers' beliefs during a teacher education program (Angell 1996; Featherstone 1992; Guyton 2000; Johnston 1990), while other researchers believe it is difficult to change preservice teachers' beliefs at all (Lortie 1975; Pajares 1992; Richardson 1996), particularly in the area of social studies (Virta 2002). It may be that the degree to which preservice teachers change their instructional beliefs depends upon the extent to which the new ideas they encounter conform to their previous beliefs (Angell 1996). Nonetheless, simply having preservice teachers discuss and express their beliefs is insufficient for change:

While reflection is central to teacher development, the mirror of reflection does not capture all there is to see in a teacher. It tends to miss what lies deep inside teachers, what motivates them most about their work, and it is this motivation to achieve a precise purpose that also influences their instructional practices. (Hargreaves 1995, p. 21)

When preservice teachers leave their teacher education programs, researchers have noted, their first year of work can profoundly change their beliefs (Featherstone 1992; Hargreaves 1995). In such cases, the strain of understanding and performing their new roles as classroom teachers is a strong enough force to influence previously firm beliefs. When teachers do settle into their roles as “curricular-instructional gatekeepers” (Thornton 1991, p. 237), they often resist changes to their instructional beliefs and practices, especially in light of specific educational reforms or mandates that regularly come down the pike. Moreover, if teachers are denied input into these reform initiatives, their instructional beliefs are not likely to change to reflect the imposed reforms (Cuban 1986). Thus, teachers will always retain some control over instruction in their classrooms (Hargreaves 1995). This fact is important in understanding the beliefs and practices of

the methods instructors in this study in relation to externally imposed pressures that influence social studies instruction at the elementary level.

Finally, as noted earlier, Pajares (1992) has argued that beliefs are shaped in childhood and often endure throughout one's career. Pajares also claimed that beliefs may change when individuals experience a change in authority. His claim is especially important to this study because of the "change in authority" experienced by inservice teachers as they move into the role of methods instructor.

Teachers in various subject areas have differing beliefs and justify their instructional decisions based on those beliefs (Readence, Kile & Mallette 1998); social studies teachers are no different (Leming 1991; Wilson 2000). One of the difficulties in determining teacher beliefs about social studies is the ongoing debate – still taking place – over what exactly should be taught (Brophy & Alleman, in press; Thornton 2005). Yet it is also important to note that, no matter how the current debate over what should be taught is resolved (if ever), social studies teachers continue to exert a great deal of control over what actually happens in their classrooms (Thornton 1991).

Summary of Teacher Beliefs

Research on teacher beliefs has examined the enduring nature of these beliefs (Lortie 1975) and their powerful influence on instructional practice (Pajares 1992). Some researchers have noted inconsistencies between the stated beliefs of teachers and their actual instructional practices (Cornett 1990). Most often, these inconsistencies relate to external constraints imposed on teachers. There also has been much debate about whether teacher beliefs can really change. Some researchers have reported it is possible to change beliefs (Guyton 2000), while others have noted that beliefs are formed early in life and are very resistant to change (Richardson 1996). Finally, the research on beliefs of social

studies teachers shows their similarity to those of other subject area teachers (Leming 1991), and that social studies teachers do indeed use these beliefs to make instructional decisions (Thornton 1991).

Portraits of Practice in Elementary Social Studies Methods Instruction

Shulman (1987) observed, “One of the frustrations of teaching as an occupation and profession is its extensive individual and collective amnesia, the consistency with which the best creations of its practitioners are lost to both the contemporary and future peers” (p. 11). While significant portraits of practice exist in elementary social studies methods literature, they are rare; fortunately, two recent portraits of practice have been added. In order to analyze and organize the information in these portraits, I have applied four conceptual categories: beliefs about teaching at the elementary school level, including instructional traditions and the nature of teachers; beliefs about the nature and purpose of social studies as a school subject; beliefs about teaching elementary social studies; and beliefs about teaching social studies methods to preservice teachers.

Dr. Henry Merrill

Slekar (2006) analyzed the beliefs and practices of Dr. Henry Merrill, while arguing the beliefs and practices of social studies methods professors are “largely absent from the research literature” (2006, p.244), and that this absence leaves important questions unanswered: “How does a methods professor view social studies subject matter? How does a methods professor view teaching and learning? What are the underlying beliefs that guide the social studies methods professor?” (2006, p. 244). Slekar also points out elementary social studies methods courses are taught by instructors from a wide range of professional and philosophical backgrounds; thus, “the idea of ‘common practice’ in these courses may not be too common” (2006, p. 241).

As a former elementary principal, Merrill held particular beliefs concerning teaching and learning at the elementary level. Merrill believed his methods students came to his course with “negative thoughts about this course already. . .” stemming from their experiences as students (2006, p. 246). Merrill thought elementary teachers had too many other responsibilities and argued that this burden often led to “poor content being taught” (2006, p. 250). Based on this belief, Merrill required his students to plan their lessons based on Hirsch’s Core Knowledge because “it gives you the materials and what to teach” (2006, p.250), stating, “They (teachers) could just concern themselves with weaving Core Knowledge into engaging lessons that elementary children would find enjoyable” (2006, p. 251). These beliefs connected to Merrill’s beliefs about social studies and social studies teaching.

Merrill also held specific beliefs concerning the nature and purpose of social studies, adhering to a “philosophy of social studies education with particular attention paid to his passionate belief in the American story as the core” (2006, p. 241). For Merrill, the stories of America’s past formed “our common” heritage and were part of his vision of history as “transmission of the cultural heritage” (Martorella 1994). Merrill believed it was important for children to learn about historical figures through instruction like his ‘Monument Man’ lesson, where students created a monument to important historical figures using strips of paper with quotations and important facts. Consistent with his “cultural heritage” vision, Merrill did not “introduce his students to what some social educators might view as common practice—historical thinking, participatory democracy, and multiculturalism” (2006, p. 241). By ignoring these skills and focusing

solely on the “grand narrative,” Merrill intended to provide an exclusively celebratory history to elementary children.

For Merrill, the main job of elementary teachers was to serve as ‘knowledge conveyors,’ not historians. Merrill stated that elementary students should have “exposure to deep content” that was “made enjoyable” by including “gimmicks” (2006, p. 247) and other devices to ensure the content was fun for elementary students. This “deep content” was to be organized around Hirsch’s Core Knowledge: “... I think this is a great curriculum to teach in the elementary school” (2006, p. 250).

Merrill wanted his preservice teachers to re-explore history content as students. Consequently, he taught lessons to his methods students that were “exciting activities and enjoyable experiences with history subject matter” (2006, p. 254). Merrill argued his methods students should acquire a large fund of historical knowledge through a survey course, based on the Core Knowledge curriculum. Merrill employed a three-step approach to support his vision: He used the works of Diane Ravitch to explain what was wrong with the elementary curriculum; he used Hirsch’s Core Knowledge curriculum and Cultural Literacy theory to argue for a history curriculum; and he introduced Joy Hakim's history text as a teaching resource.

Slekar argues that more methods professors need to create “self-portraits” in the action-based research tradition to improve methods practice (2006, p. 256). He concludes:

The social studies professoriate consists of scholars from large research universities, practitioners from colleges at liberal arts institutions, research practitioners from state teaching universities, adjunct faculty from hidden corners of higher education. We need to ask questions about each of these populations. We need to know who they are. We need to know why they are engaged in the social

studies endeavor, and we need to know why and how they teach as they do (p. 256).

Dr. Rahima Wade

Misco (2005) reviewed the beliefs and practices of Dr. Rahima Wade through a lens of moral education, revealing how her strong beliefs in civic participation influenced her social studies methods course. Wade is a nationally recognized scholar on the preparation of elementary social studies teachers to teach for social justice and civic engagement through service learning.

Wade believed that preservice teachers often had very limited knowledge backgrounds and needed structured experiences to broaden their understanding of social problems and to give them a working knowledge of the issues. With regard to social studies specifically, Wade's beliefs are in almost direct contrast to the "transmission of the cultural heritage" (Martorella 1994) vision of Merrill. Wade adhered to a "reflective inquiry" and "informed social criticism" vision of social studies (Martorella 1994). To support her vision, Wade introduced students to her "Toward the Common Good" curriculum model for elementary social studies, which focuses on developing understanding concerning "issues of conflict, democracy, human rights, and interdependence" to promote the "common good" by teaching skills of "discussion, decisions, and details" (Misco 2005, p. 538). Part of Wade's curriculum included discussions about what Misco labeled "closed and grey areas," which require students to practice dealing with decisions having no clear-cut answers (p. 542). These acquired skills were part of Wade's focus on helping elementary students understand multiple perspectives on complex civic issues.

Wade advocated problem-solving instruction, which included discussion and deliberation at weekly class meetings where elementary students could voice concerns and find commonalities. Wade also advocated introducing elementary students to the idea of the "common good" with an examination of free trade "through role-playing the perspectives of different institutions, participants, and stakeholders involved" (p. 539). Another instructional activity favored by Wade was a more structured form of deliberation where students assembled a "top-ten" list covering students' opinions on a contentious topic. In addition, Wade believed in having her methods students actively participate in the instruction they were to deliver to elementary students. To experience democratic deliberation, Wade's methods students deliberated the use of scarce resources and took field trips to investigate the sources of trash in their community.

Self-Portraits of the Practice of Elementary Social Studies Methods Professors

A number of self-portraits created by various elementary social studies methods professors are important to the current study. While none of these pieces of scholarship was created exclusively to be expository self-portraits, they still illustrate the direct connection between the individual beliefs and practices of these professors and their approach to methods instruction. I have applied the same conceptual categories to these self-portraits.

Dr. Marilynne Boyle-Baise

Boyle-Baise described her beliefs and practices in a 2003 article titled, "Doing Democracy in Social Studies Methods." Her beliefs concerning the nature of teaching and learning at the elementary level were rooted in Paley's (1992) book, "*You Can't Say You Can't Play*" (1992). Like Paley, Boyle-Baise promoted a classroom culture where students "learn to care for others and to connect across difference" (Boyle-Baise 2003, p.

61). In addition, Boyle-Baise thought most preservice teachers did not believe that “doing democracy” was part of their job as teachers. Their concept of “making a difference” mostly included helping elementary students improve their behavior and perform better in school. Boyle-Baise sought to expand the responsibilities of her methods students to include ‘doing democracy’.

Boyle-Baise conceptualized social studies as “reflective inquiry” and “informed social criticism” (Martorella 1994), in which the principles of democracy serve as the foundation. This vision of social studies directly connects to Boyle-Baise’s belief that social studies should create a citizen who is “a reformer: critical, socially conscious, comfortable with dissent, and ready for activism” with a “justice-oriented, difference-sensitive stance” (Boyle-Baise 2003, p. 51). This approach aims to create citizens prepared for participatory democracy.

Boyle-Baise believed elementary children should receive instruction that allows them to:

investigate, deliberate, serve, and act; using deliberation to identify, mull over, and critique causes of inequities; providing opportunities to serve with and learn from members of disenfranchised communities; and grappling with issues of injustice, pondering their redress, planning for, and possibly acting for, social change. (2003, p. 59)

To teach these skills, Boyle-Baise advocated particular instructional activities such as the creation of a “cooperative biography” where students chronicled the life of “an outstanding citizen” (p. 61). This activity integrated history, geography and civic study, and required students to work together and make democratic decisions concerning the book’s content.

Boyle-Baise also discussed her beliefs about social studies methods instruction, saying that “the social studies methods course is an appropriate place to practice and

reflect upon doing democracy” (p. 50). In addition to doing democracy in a methods course, Boyle-Baise stated, “[w]e can locate social justice and change at the center of our agenda” (p. 53). Boyle-Baise admitted that some instructional activities traditionally considered part of a methods course may need to be eliminated in order to meet the goals of the course: “In a tightly packed methods course, adding service learning usually means deleting something else...the inclusion of service learning will likely displace the teaching of an original, thematic unit of study...” (p. 60). Difficult instructional choices such as these highlight a challenging dilemma facing methods instructors who have strong beliefs that displace traditional methods practice. This situation also illustrates Hargreaves’s (1995) claim that when faced with a dilemma and no clear-cut choices, teachers will often use their own beliefs to make their decisions.

Dr. John Benson

In a somewhat narrower and more focused work, Benson’s (1998) article “Using an Inquiry Approach with Preservice Teachers to Explain the Process of Facts, Concepts, and Generalizations” described his beliefs based on the work of Banks (1990) and the resultant practices related to promoting the understanding and use of generalizations by preservice teachers for instruction. Benson believed that the typical preservice teacher only has experience with elementary social studies instruction focused on memorization of facts, especially memorizing such things as the states and capitals.

Benson conceptualized social studies as “social science” (Martorella 1994) by actively engaging his methods students in the creation of generalizations. Benson explained how the typical states-and-capitals activity does not teach any “concepts” or “generalizations,” or even ensure understanding of what a “state” or a “capital” is. Concerning social studies instruction, Benson stated that “teachers need to have the

blueprint of the knowledge pyramid in mind as we plan our lessons” (Benson 1998, p. 227). Benson argued that facts can be interesting, but they need to be presented in a manner in which children can build a higher level of conceptual understanding that can then be applied to other situations.

Benson contended that preservice teachers have a difficult time grasping teaching for generalizations and seeing the “big picture” when planning instruction. To model teaching for generalizations, Benson engaged his preservice students in creating a unit where students worked with facts to develop concepts and create generalizations based on those concepts. To help his students see the “big picture,” Benson engaged them in “building their own pyramids of knowledge....to think of the big picture in planning their social studies units and lessons” (Benson 1998, p. 227). Benson’s attention to these issues illustrates one of the issues faced by methods professors described later in this chapter.

Dr. Omiunota Ukpokodu

Ukpokodu’s (2003) article, “The Challenges of Teaching a Social Studies Methods Course from a Transformative and Social Reconstructionist Framework,” drew upon the works of McLaren (1989) and Ladson-Billings (1991) “to develop preservice teachers’ skills for teaching from a critical pedagogy” (Ukpokodu 2003, p. 78). Ukpokodu’s approach often put her at odds with her typically socially conservative (e.g., Owens 1997) preservice teachers from middle-class European-American backgrounds. Ukpokodu expressed the belief that preservice teachers need to “develop an appreciation for human interdependency, learn to construct a pluralist perspective and a sense of collective responsibility, and commit to promoting a just and peaceful solution to global concerns” (p. 75). Ukpokodu argued that preservice teachers bring biases, misconceptions, and stereotypes to their work, which creates resistance to a transformative social studies

methods course. To overcome these biases, Ukpokodu showed videos such as “500 Nations,” including the video’s discussion of the events at Wounded Knee, to demonstrate the concept of multiple perspectives on a historical event.

Ukpokodu’s vision of social studies was “informed social criticism” (Martorella 1994). She relied on multicultural knowledge and understanding to reach the stated goals of social studies (NCSS 1994), unlike the civic skills approach of Wade and Boyle-Baise. Like Wade (2003), Ukpokodu was critical of the elementary social studies curriculum, and she argued that it failed to educate a great majority of students, including preservice teachers, about their identities, roles, and responsibilities in a participatory democracy. But unlike Benson, Ukpokodu did not discuss her beliefs about actual social studies instruction at length, only mentioning the need to teach elementary students to discuss controversial issues in an effective and civil manner, and advocating for the use of books such as *This Is My House* by Arthur Dorros (1996) to teach the NCSS theme of “people, places, and environment.”

Ukpokodu taught her methods course from a “transformative and social reconstructionist perspective” with a desire to “[expand] the curriculum to include people of color, women, unsung heroes, children, and global perspectives” (2003, p. 75). The course aimed to help preservice teachers develop the skills for using critical pedagogy with the use of “open inquiry, exploration of social issues, study of human conditions, social justice, and activism” (p. 75). In order to overcome multicultural illiteracy, Ukpokodu required her students to research the personalities, roles, contributions, and perspectives of diverse individuals from American history using Takaki’s (2003) *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* and similar books.

Dr. Janice McArthur

McArthur's (2004) article, "Involving Preservice Teachers in Social Studies Content Standards: Thoughts of a Methods Professor," focuses specifically on instructing preservice teachers how to use standards. McArthur's goal for her methods instruction was "to convince preservice teachers to use standards as a foundation for improving the quality of social studies education and to develop their positive attitude toward social studies content" (2004, 82).

Concerning teaching in general, McArthur believed, based on federal mandates, the choice of teachers is not whether to include standards, but how to do so. McArthur stated that most preservice teachers hold the limited view that elementary social studies is based on the content and skills found in textbooks, and on memorization. Professing her faith in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), McArthur stated the crafters of the act "embraced increased teacher accountability with the intent of advancing student learning" (p. 79).

Interestingly, McArthur did not discuss her beliefs about the purpose and nature of social studies. Perhaps indicative of the current educational climate, McArthur presented a vision of social studies as "standards based," a concept not included in Martorella's (1994) descriptive typology of the five most prevalent visions of social studies instruction. Moreover, McArthur did not mention any particular instructional methods for elementary social studies, only discussing the importance of using scientifically proven instructional methods.

McArthur also approached methods instruction with a strong advocacy of the No Child Left Behind Act, claiming it has "a well-documented record of success" (2004, p. 79) and a reliance on "standards based" instruction. McArthur believed preservice

teachers should understand the concept of standards early in their teacher preparation programs. Based on this belief, her social studies methods course concentrated on teaching the required standards with “appropriate preparation for planning and teaching” (2004, p. 80).

Summary of Portraits of Practice in Elementary Social Studies Methods Instruction

Portraits of practices in elementary social studies methods instruction are rare, but “eminently educative” (Slekar 2006, p. 255). Portraits of the practices of two very different and thoughtful methods professors were featured in this section. Both Dr. Henry Merrill and Dr. Rahima Wade made explicit connections between their beliefs and instructional practices. Also reviewed were self-portraits of the beliefs and practices of four other methods instructors. Dr. Marilynne Boyle-Baise and Dr. Omiunota Ukpokodu both described methods instruction with the aim of social justice, the former using democracy as the vehicle, and the latter using multicultural knowledge and competency. Dr. John Benson presented a model of methods instruction to provide his students with the skills and knowledge to teach social studies using generalizations. Finally, the social studies vision of Dr. Janice McArthur demonstrated the growing power and influence of ‘standards based’ instruction and its ability to dictate instructional practices of methods professors. These portraits suggest that beliefs do indeed influence practices in elementary social studies methods courses.

Issues of Social Studies Methods Instruction

To understand the issues of teaching an elementary social studies methods course, it is helpful to look at Owens’ (1997) study of instruction at seven institutions of higher education in South Florida, where he identified six specific issues to elementary social studies methods instruction. While explaining these issues, Owens (1997) observed it is

especially important, “when generalists in elementary education may be teaching social studies methods...the generalists must be aware of the challenges that come with the territory” (p. 113). What follows will be a discussion of these issues, guided by Owens’ (1997) six challenges as a framework.

Challenge #1: Negative Past Experiences with Social Studies

The first challenge for elementary social studies methods instructors is how to overcome the negative perceptions held by many preservice elementary teachers of social studies in general (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Owens 1997). In Owens’ (1997) study, more than two-fifths of the preservice teachers described their own past social studies courses as boring, a perception formulated during their “apprenticeship of observation,” (Lortie 1975, p. 65), when instruction generally emphasized textbooks and rote memorization (e.g., Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; McArthur 2004). Attempts to overcome these negative experiences have at times met with little success. This is doubly unfortunate, as teachers can communicate their own dislike of the subject and reproduce the poor instruction they themselves once received (Chapin & Messick 1999; Turner 1999), continuing a vicious cycle that can only serve to weaken the future of the subject.

Challenge #2: Lack of Interest in Teaching Social Studies

The second challenge awaiting methods instructors is the belief that other subjects in the curriculum are more desirable to teach than social studies. In Owens (1997) study, 33.2% of the preservice teachers surveyed reported their interest level for teaching social studies as "low." This finding has been supported by many methods professors (Benson 1998; McArthur 2004, Slekar 2006). This challenge leads to an even greater one: how can the preservice teachers get excited about the varied possibilities for social studies

instruction when they lack interest in the field itself (McArthur 2004; Owens 1997; Slekar 2006; Wade 2003)?

Challenge #3: Confusion Over the Nature of Social Studies

The third challenge awaiting methods instructors is confusion over the definition of social studies: “How can preservice elementary teachers adequately understand the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of social studies if they believe social studies is one of the academic disciplines in the social sciences” (Owens 1997, p.114)? In a situation where preservice teachers are unable to articulate the correct definition of social studies, there is little hope they will be able to deliver effective instruction. This situation is not entirely the fault of the preservice teacher. The history of social studies is full of conflicting views about its nature and definition (e.g., Barr, Barth & Shermis 1977; Brophy & Alleman, in press; Thornton 2005). This creates a ‘moving target’ for preservice teachers to understand.

Practicing teachers, curriculum specialists and school administrators, whose views concerning the field of social studies have the most immediate impact on students, are sometimes at odds with the definition proposed by the National Council of the Social Studies (NCSS). While NCSS has determined that effective social studies instruction should “prepare young people to identify, understand, and work to solve problems facing our diverse nation in an increasingly interdependent world” (NCSS, p. 159), many practitioners have interpreted the field far differently. For example, Thornton (2001) has argued that many view social studies instruction as a method to inculcate specific values within a child, whether those values are patriotism, idealism and free enterprise or cultural pluralism, environmentalism and community service. Even elementary social studies methods professors have struggled with a definition of the field, with some

emphasizing “facts, concepts and generalizations” (Benson 1998), while others approach methods courses with a “multicultural social reconstructionist approach” (Ukpokodu 2003). At whatever level, the nature and purpose of social studies is assuredly going to be determined, not by a relatively faceless organization, but by the instructor in the classroom (Thornton 1991).

Challenge #4: Conflicting Conservative Sociological Beliefs

The fourth challenge is to persuade preservice elementary teachers to adopt and teach the social studies goal of working to improve society (Owens 1997). Often, preservice teachers will agree with liberal and egalitarian ideals, but then disagree on specific, contentious social issues related to reaching that ideal. Most preservice teachers come from rural areas, small towns or suburban communities, with little experience or knowledge of diverse cultures, and many prefer to teach children who are similar to themselves and have little interest in multicultural ideals (e.g., Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; McCall & Andringa 1997; Owens 1997; Ukpokodu 2003). These preservice teachers bring biases, misconceptions and stereotypes that contribute to their negative disposition toward teaching minority children (McCall & Andringa 1997; Ukpokodu 2003), and are difficult to change (Parajes 1992). This is of particular interest for this study. Owens details how often methods professors hold significantly more liberal social beliefs than the preservice teachers they instruct. Confirming that beliefs inform practices, the methods professors often instruct from the more liberal “reflective inquiry” or “informed social criticism” (see Martorella 1994) perspective, which is often at odds with the “far more conservative” social beliefs of a typical preservice teacher (p. 116). When preservice teachers hold conservative social beliefs they often do not feel the need to teach with the goal of social change, which put them at odds with the goal social

studies: "prepare young people to identify, understand, and work to solve problems facing our diverse nation in an increasingly interdependent world" (NCSS, 1994, p. 159). While conservative beliefs are the norm occasionally preservice teachers hold more liberal social beliefs that are more aligned goals of social studies. More liberal social beliefs often led teacher to question the status quo and teach for social change. There is hope, as Angell (1998) determined it was difficult, but possible, to change the "traditional" instructional beliefs of preservice teachers during a social studies methods course. Slekar (1998) drew a similar conclusion, attributing the difficulty to disagreement between the experiences of preservice teachers during their "apprenticeship of observation."

Challenge #5: Selecting What to Teach

The fifth challenge relates to the continuing expansion of the number of topics deemed pertinent to social studies education at the preservice level (Owens 1997). As content demands increase, so does pressure on instructors to prepare preservice elementary teachers to teach this new content adequately. Currently, methods courses are overburdened with too many demands, begging the question, "How should teachers be educated to tend the curricular-instructional gate?" (Thornton 2001, p. 72). This burden also relates to the fact that elementary social studies teachers are lacking in content knowledge (Chapin and Messick 1999; Fritzer & Kumar 2002; Owens 1997; Parker & Jarolimek 1997; Thornton 2001; Ukpokodu 2003; Slekar 2006). Consider, for example, that elementary teachers scored only 54 percent correct on a basic test of chronological events in American history (Fritzer & Kumar 2002). Based on such findings, teachers' subject matter knowledge has become a central concern of some educational research in

determining the depth and breadth of knowledge teachers must know to teach elementary students (Thornton 2001).

The content problem is also related to the “liberal arts component of teacher education and...to methods in the professional education component....[T]his separation of subject matter and method in the education of social studies teachers, although conventional, poses problems” (Thornton 2001, p. 77). In this traditional division of studies, it is assumed that preservice teachers have learned the necessary content during the liberal arts component of their education. However, this is often not the case, shifting some content obligations to the methods course. Social studies methods teachers cannot cover all the content knowledge in their methods courses, and yet, they cannot assume adequate content knowledge of their preservice teachers (Fritzer & Kumar 2002) resulting in a true “Catch 22”.

Despite the documented lack of content knowledge of preservice teachers, a widely held belief (e.g., Fresch 2003; Morin 1996, Thornton 2001) exists that methods courses should retain a singular focus on social studies methods, such as “inquiry, immersion, small group discussion, and problem solving, cooperative learning, simulation, role playing, storytelling, guided fantasy, modeling, demonstration, historical investigation, research, creating, and reflecting” (Fresch 2003, p. 70). The best solution is most likely a balanced approach covering a “thorough education of teachers in the subject matters of the curriculum, methods, and their interrelationships” (Thornton 2001, p. 78), achieved with a thoughtful alignment of social studies prerequisites and methods instruction.

Challenge #6: Using the Concurrent Social Studies Field Experience

The sixth and final challenge awaiting methods instructors is the difficulty of utilizing a concurrent field placement effectively (Owens 1997). This is associated with

the reality that almost all the instructional strategies suggested in most elementary social studies methods courses, such as role-playing, simulation and inquiry projects, are active and social learning experiences that are often at odds with the more ‘traditional’ teaching styles of cooperating teachers. In certain cases, cooperating teachers actively discourage the use of more progressive teaching methods and require students to employ traditional methods (Yeager & Wilson 1997). Despite the reluctance of many cooperating teachers to support the innovative practices introduced to preservice teachers in methods courses, there is an agreed-upon need for a concurrent field placement for elementary social studies methods students (e.g., Fresch 2003; Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Morin 1996; Owens 1997). Despite the unfortunate disconnect between what is taught in a methods course and what is practiced within the placement, research has shown the field placement is beneficial for both elementary students and preservice teachers (Kelleher & Cramm 1996; Leming 1989; Morin 1996; Owens 1997); as Fresch states, “The ability of the preservice teachers to make connections between the course on campus and the teaching in the field enabled them to provide challenging and enriching experiences for the children” (2003, p. 75). Further adding to the challenge of concurrent field placements are school settings where social studies is not tested or part of an accountability scheme—social studies is often given only 30 minutes a week or is nonexistent—making what is learned in a methods course impossible to see in classroom practice (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). To address this challenge, colleges of education need to monitor field placements to ensure that preservice teachers have an opportunity to witness social studies instruction and are allowed to utilize the social studies strategies they have learned (Owens 1997).

Summary of Issues of Social Studies Methods Instruction

In summary, there are a number of issues specific to elementary social studies methods instruction. The first is related to the preservice teachers' negative past experiences with social studies as students during their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie 1975). If their perceptions based on these experiences are not changed, preservice teachers will communicate and reproduce the poor instruction they received when they become classroom teachers (Chapin & Messick 1999; Turner 1999). The current challenge of a lack of interest in teaching social studies creates further challenges for methods professors (Benson 1998; McArthur 2004; Slekar 2006). Another challenge is the longstanding confusion and debate over the nature of social studies (Thornton 2005). This situation makes for difficulty when preservice teachers are unable to articulate the definition of social studies (Owens 1997). The generally conservative social beliefs of preservice teachers also are a challenge, as those who choose to become teachers often have conservative social beliefs (Goodlad 1990; Lortie 1975), and this inhibits them from fully embracing the more progressive views that characterize social studies (NCSS 1994).

The lack of content knowledge among preservice elementary teachers (Fritzer & Kumar 2002) creates yet another challenge for methods instructors as they select a curriculum. When methods students are content-deficient, methods instructors must use their own judgment to determine the workable instructional balance of "content" to "methods" (Thornton 2001). The final challenge is how best to capitalize on the concurrent field placement when the cooperating teacher limits the instructional freedom of the preservice teacher (Owens 1997), or the preservice teacher is placed in an environment where social studies instruction is nonexistent or extremely limited (Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004).

Recent Research in Elementary Social Studies

The Expanding Horizons Curriculum

The standard curriculum for elementary social studies (since 1934) has been slightly differing versions of Paul Hanna's expanding horizons/environments curriculum (EH) (Thornton 2001; Turner 1999; Wade 2002). In the last few years, EH has been critiqued for, among other things, a lack of content at the first three grade levels and a lack of exposure to other countries until middle school (e.g., Fritzer & Kumar 2002), prompting some more conservative critics to advocate for including only history in the social studies curriculum (Ravitch 1987). However, as Barton and Levstik (2004) have pointed out, definitive answers in social studies education, especially on critical questions, are not easily decided and often result in endless debate. As a result, EH has been the subject of a number of critiques over the years, but the curriculum has proven to be quite durable (Wade 2003).

Most recently, in response to the 'history only' critics, Brophy and Alleman (in press) suggest a reconceptualization of the elementary social studies curriculum based on cultural universals. They seek not to abandon the EH curriculum completely; rather, they favor "retaining most of the same topics, but developing them more coherently and shifting emphasis from the expanding communities sequence to introducing students to the fundamentals of the human condition..." (in press). Brophy and Alleman's reconceptualization rejects some of the recent calls (Ravitch 1987) to abandon a pandisciplinary approach and replace it with a history emphasis, disputing point by point the arguments put forth by the history-only advocates. For example, Brophy and Alleman especially reject the notion that children need "fanciful" heroes to emulate. These advocates for a "cultural universal" conception of the field of social studies describe a

curriculum model that focuses on "...human activities involved in pursuing needs and wants related to cultural universals....because teaching students about how their own and other societies have addressed these purposes provides a sound basis for developing fundamental understandings about the human condition..." (in press). Also of particular interest to this study are the critiques and alternatives to EH provided by one of the methods professors profiled in the "portraits of practice" section of this chapter. Based on a review of the literature concerning EH, Wade (2002) summarized the three major critiques of EH as: "(1) the nature of children's life experiences and learning in modern society; (2) the nature of the EH curriculum; and (3) the present state of elementary social studies" (p. 117). In light of these critiques, Wade (2002) proposed the "Toward the Common Good" curriculum, with the goal of helping students learn about and address the problems and needs of a contemporary and diverse world.

Research on Effective Elementary Social Studies Practice

In 1987, Lee Shulman broke new ground with his article, "Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations for the New Reform." Shulman called for the documentation of the "wisdom of practice" of teaching. While arguing many effective teachers kept their knowledge in their classrooms, Shulman also called for extensive and contextualized case studies of effective teachers and their practices. To understand these case studies, Shulman described the seven categories of knowledge for effective teaching of them "pedagogical content knowledge," or "the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8), is often perceived as indispensable. Case studies based on the observation of expert teachers are central in modeling pedagogical content

knowledge. Building on the work of Shulman, O.L. Davis called for “educational practitioners and researchers to undertake, write, and publish case studies of wise practices” (Davis 1997, p. 3). By doing so, social studies methods instructors will be provided with a model for new teachers to emulate, and perhaps develop an understanding of what it means to be an effective educator within social studies.

In October 2000, the journal *Social Education* devoted almost an entire issue to “wise practice in challenging classrooms.” In this issue, the wise practices of teachers working in challenging settings were documented, an idea that Yeager and Davis (2005) slightly modified and explored in their book, *Wise social studies teaching in an age of high-stakes testing: Essays on classroom practices and possibilities*. In 1994, the National Council of Social Studies issued “Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies,” which listed five requirements for powerful social studies teaching and learning. The following section will summarize those five requirements and provide examples of “powerful social studies” by drawing on examples from Yeager and Davis’s (2005) book.

Five Requirements for Powerful Social Studies

The first requirement is that instruction should be meaningful to both teacher and students. The course material must meet the objectives of the teacher, and the content must be useful to students in and out of class. Effective teaching will consist of meaningful learning activities and assessments focused on the central ideas of the instruction. The effective teacher will “construct, together with her students, based on their needs and interests” the content to be learned (Barton, 2005, p. 28). One method, which makes instruction meaningful, is for teachers to capitalize on students’ interests about a particular subtopic. For example, during a unit on Florida history, students

revealed a curiosity about the identities and roles of loyalists and patriots during the American Revolution. In an effort to make the lesson relevant and meaningful, the teacher seized upon this interest and had his students explore those identities and roles to satisfy their curiosity and encourage a greater understanding of Florida history (Yendol-Hoppey, Jacobs & Tilford 2005). By encouraging students to explore their interests within a broad but defined area, the instruction was both meaningful and memorable.

The second requirement for powerful social studies teaching and learning is integrative instruction. Effective instruction will integrate a wide range of content and instructional approaches and whenever possible, the most effective teachers will be capable of incorporating the use of technology to expand the variety of sources students can draw upon (Libresco 2005). There are two types of integration: integration across the disciplines in the field of social studies, and integration across school subjects. The former shows students how all the disciplines within social studies interact: “If students are to understand how the social world operates, they cannot study history or geography or economics or any of the other components of social studies in isolation” (Barton 2005, p. 23). To this end, teachers are required to use skills from all areas of social studies to ensure students have complete understanding of the content.

Given today’s overloaded curriculum, “integration across subject areas is a practical necessity” (Barton 2005, p. 26). If teachers are to deliver powerful instruction, they must “learn how to integrate” social studies instruction into other subjects (Libresco 2005, p. 37). Integration across subject areas is not only efficient, but pedagogically sound: “How would students learn the content if not through text, visual images, and the collection of data? How would they construct their understanding if not through

speaking, writing, drawing, and other such displays” (Barton 2005, p. 25)? These questions must be answered if students are to be exposed to effective social studies instruction.

The third requirement for powerful social studies teaching and learning is value-based instruction. Effective instruction will raise ethical questions about content, with the aim of fostering student concern for the common good (McBee 1995). This instruction will highlight the implications of controversial content and challenge students to make value-based decisions (Hess 2005). To this end, teachers must be aware of their personal opinions and seek out sources to provide a balanced presentation of information. By raising ethical questions and controversial issues that “challenge students to think beyond the boundaries of their own community” teachers “open students’ eyes to the perspectives and values of others...” (Foster and Hoge 2000, p. 368), teachers can accomplish two important tasks: “to encourage students to realize that they can effect change and to open students’ minds to the beliefs of others” (Foster & Hoge 2000, p. 369). The teacher should also encourage students to act upon their beliefs and remind students that taking action in the name of their beliefs is part of the “socio-political protest” history of America (Foster & Hoge 2000, p. 368).

The fourth requirement is instruction must be challenging. Effective instruction will have ambitious goals and standards. The teacher is responsible to ensure students meet those goals and standards. Moreover, instruction should compel students to think creatively and critically, suggest solutions, and take positions on public issues. Teachers should challenge the beliefs and the academic skills of their students, and teachers should expect their students to “work with a variety of sources, encounter varying perspectives

and conflicting opinions, develop conclusions and arguments based on evidence, and collaborate with others as part of a learning community” (Barton 2005, p. 19). Through careful questioning about their beliefs, students are pushed to go beyond their own experiences and examine their own prejudices and misinformation (Foster & Hoge 2000).

The final requirement is instruction to be active for both teacher and students. The teacher must design and adjust the curriculum to reach the instructional goals in such a way that students must actively construct their knowledge. Such activities involve making decisions and solving problems, and “they provide students the chance to pursue their own interests, as well as to relate new learning to previous knowledge and experience” (Barton 2005, p. 14). Moreover, by actively constructing their own knowledge, students build their own interpretations, “to create something, to put things back together, to ‘transform,’ self-consciously, the data in front of them” (Bryom 1998, p. 2). Such interpretations must be based on the available evidence and held up to inspection.

In order to strengthen their own teaching, educators must be able to adapt a lesson in progress to meet the students’ needs and reach the objective of the lesson, according to the “specific contexts and clues” of each unique classroom (Foster & Hoge 2000, p. 370). Teachers also need to be active outside of the classroom by continually interrogating their own instruction (Barton 2005). This reflection comes in the form of thinking “long and hard about why she teaches and what she teaches” (Libresco 2005, p. 37). What better method to develop within students the ability to think reflectively and critically than by having educators ensure that they practice such thinking themselves?

The Effects of the No Child Left Behind Act and High-Stakes Testing on Elementary Social Studies

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the resultant focus on high-stakes testing is exacerbating, rather than solving, educational problems (Neill 2004; Neill Guisbond & Schaeffer 2004; Von Zasztow, & Janc 2004; Wade 2002; Yeager 2005). NCLB is built on four principles: “accountability for results, more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research” (U.S. Department of Education 2004). NCLB mandates an accountability model to be used by America's public schools by attaching sanctions for states that did not comply with its policies (Guthrie & Springer 2004). Under its provisions, performance standards are used as benchmarks for improvements that must show ‘adequate yearly progress’ (AYP). All schools must show continual progress towards meeting their AYP goals or face consequences, such as allowing students to leave the school in favor of a more successful school, or the replacement of existing teachers and administrators (Guthrie & Springer 2004).

In her article, “Staying Alive: Social Studies in Elementary Schools,” Angela Pascopella (2005) describes the harsh reality concerning social studies and the impact of high-stakes testing: “It’s a crisis. Social studies, particularly in the elementary grades, has been pushed to the back burner in schools” (p. 30). Because measurements of social studies achievement are not included in the NLCB accountability system, social studies is in sharp decline, prompting some to initiate nationwide discussions of how to salvage social studies in the school curriculum (Howard 2003). The severity of the situation is such that “members of visiting accreditation teams have heard administrators and faculty proudly announce that they do not teach any social studies or science in elementary

school because they focus all their attention and energy on reading and math” (Fritzer & Kumar 2002, p. 51).

In the state of Florida, the high-stakes testing program is the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The data generated by the FCAT is used to assess schools under the No Child Left Behind Act. The Florida Department of Education explains that FCAT is “part of Florida’s overall plan to increase student achievement by implementing higher standards. The FCAT, administered to students in Grades 3–11, contains two basic components: criterion-referenced tests, measuring selected benchmarks in Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing from the Sunshine State Standards; and norm-referenced tests in Reading and Mathematics, measuring individual student performance against national norms (Florida Department of Education 2006). As a result, social studies achievement is not assessed on the FCAT. While almost every state has its own set of elementary social studies standards (Buckles, Schug, & Watts 2001) and “[m]ore than half of the states (not Florida) have statewide assessments in social studies” (Chapin & Messick 1999, p. 11). Mirroring national trends, social studies has nearly disappeared from the curriculum in many schools in Florida (Fritzer & Kumar 2002; Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Neill & Guisbond 2005; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004).

There is hope, however. In cases where social studies instruction is “blocked” and children change classrooms for social studies, actual instruction is more likely to occur (Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). In addition, professional development schools are more likely to emphasize the untested subjects because of their focus on teacher preparation in all subjects (Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). Despite the efforts of many,

the prognosis from the elementary social studies community for the subject's long-term health is 'fair.' If there is not a concerted and organized effort that prognosis could become 'terminal.'

Accountability-driven assessment also has had two major effects on teaching and learning in elementary schools: less time for social studies instruction and a diminished quality of the overall educational experience. All the focus remains on assessment testing, in spite of the fact that evidence indicates that a focus on tests actually decreases student motivation and increases the proportion of students who leave school early (Amrein & Berliner 2003).

Loss of instructional time

Instructional time for social studies is shrinking. As previously discussed, under the weight of the No Child Left Behind Act, schools must demonstrate "adequate yearly progress" in the assessed subjects. As a result, "schools nationwide have scaled back on P.E., health, social studies, and foreign language classes to devote more time and resources to reading, writing, math, and science—courses tested under the federal law and used to evaluate schools" (NEA 2004, p. 26). Not surprisingly, this situation has led to increased tension in the elementary school over the teaching of social studies: "The test is the curriculum, and instruction is controlled by the imperative to raise test scores" (Neill & Guisbond 2005, p. 31). When social studies is not assessed, instructional time shrinks and social studies teachers end up at odds with administrators who "are demanding more reading and math instruction" (Knighton 2003, p. 293). Moreover, this situation is heightened in schools with poor test scores, "where nearly half of the principals report moderate or large decreases in social studies instruction" (NEA 2004, p.

27). As a result, the actual amount of time devoted to social studies instruction ends up being determined by administrators.

Quality

The greatest effect of the loss of social studies and other areas not assessed on high-stakes assessments is a drop in the level of quality of students' experiences with the subject. In response to the pressure to raise test scores, teachers have reported "a sacrifice in the quality of their teaching and students' experiences in the classroom" (Neill & Guisbond 2005, p. 31). The result is a decline of quality instruction within elementary social studies. As is often the case, state standards offer a narrow curriculum that "revolves around memorized random information that turns the subject into a travesty" (Neill & Guisbond 2005, p. 31). Finally, and most tragically, teachers are required to teach testing skills from expensive commercially produced materials "as early as the second grade" (Knighton 2003, p. 291). Surely, the influence of high-stakes testing has produced a situation where powerful social studies instruction is becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible (Yeager 2005). This only serves to reinforce the perception among students that social studies is "worthless," ensuring that Owens's (1997) second challenge, integral to creating effective social studies teachers, may never be overcome.

Summary of Recent Research in Elementary Social Studies

There has been considerable important recent research relevant to this study. Critiques of the "Expanding Horizons" curriculum have grown louder in the last few decades, calling for teaching a more history-based elementary social studies curriculum. As a result, proponents of retaining a pandisciplinary approach (e.g., Brophy and Alleman, in press; Wade 2003) have offered their own curriculum revisions that promote

problem-solving skills and global awareness. There also has been research on effective social studies practice in elementary teaching.

Much of the recent scholarship on effective social studies practice has grown out of Shulman's (1987) work titled, "Knowledge and teaching: foundations for the new reform," in which he called for the documentation of the "wisdom of practice" of effective teachers. Shulman's ideas have been applied to social studies instruction and have resulted in a number of pieces of scholarship that capture effective social studies practices. This scholarship, in combination with the 1994 (NCSS) statement "Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies," provided illustrative examples of the five requirements for effective practice. Finally, the negative effects of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on elementary social studies were discussed. Overall, NCLB has reduced both the quality and frequency of social studies in elementary schools, ultimately influencing perceptions of the field among both students and preservice teachers.

Conclusion

To understand the beliefs of these inservice teachers who serve as elementary social studies methods instructors, I reviewed the literature concerning teacher beliefs. The research on teacher beliefs suggests a strong beliefs-to-practice connection exists as teachers perform their duties. This connection means the particular beliefs teachers hold often heavily influence their instructional practices; thus, knowledge of these beliefs is necessary to understanding and improving instructional practices. At times, there are inconsistencies in the beliefs and practices of teachers, stemming most often from conflicting beliefs they hold or external pressures mandating practices inconsistent with those beliefs. There is a certain level of disagreement among researchers about the

difficulty of changing teacher's beliefs about social studies instruction, but there exists a general agreement that a teacher's attitudes toward the field are formed early in life, during the time they are first exposed to social studies as young students. The instructional beliefs of social studies teachers, like all other teachers, tend to be rather conservative, and enable the teacher to retain ultimate control over what happens in his or her classroom.

To understand the practices of elementary social studies methods professors, I examined research literature concerning methods instruction by examining the relevant portraits of practice in the field. These portraits revealed unique perspectives concerning social studies instruction while serving to highlight the individual issues faced and solutions developed by elementary social studies methods instructors. Consider, for example, the portraits of two very different methods professors, which revealed two thoughtful and highly organized examples of methods instruction, both of which exhibited a strong belief to practice connection. In addition, four distinct self-portraits also suggested a strong beliefs-to-practice connection among four methods professors who adhered to four distinct visions of social studies education.

I reviewed the research literature concerning elementary social studies methods instruction and elementary social studies to understand the issues associated with teaching an elementary social studies methods course. I used Owens' (1997) six challenges as an organizational structure and supported or illustrated each one by examining the literature. While all six issues are important to understanding the situation, two issues stood out as particularly interesting because how they have been exacerbated by the current focus on high-stakes testing. The "lack of interest in teaching social

studies” and “using the concurrent social studies field experience” issues have been compounded in recent years because of the increasing focus on other subject areas now stressed as part of testing accountability systems. These accountability systems also have served to create negative perceptions of social studies.

I also surveyed the literature concerning recent research in elementary social studies to understand the relevant topics currently under review. The pandisciplinary ‘Expanding Horizons’ curriculum has proven durable, despite the perpetual debate about its effectiveness and appropriateness. Most recently, ‘Expanding Horizons’ has been criticized by some conservative historians who seek to replace it with a history-based curriculum. This recent round of criticism has spurred advocacy of pandisciplinary social studies and the putting forth of alternative models of social studies that retain at least parts of the ‘Expanding Horizons’ curriculum. To capture the ‘wisdom of practice’ of effective social studies instruction, some recent research has focused on recording the practices of effective teachers. Finally, I reviewed recent research regarding the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act and high-stakes testing on elementary social studies. This review revealed the negative effect this legislation and its resultant accountability schemes are having on elementary social studies due to its untested status.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

Review of the Purpose of the Study

As detailed in Chapter 2, there is a paucity of literature reviewing the beliefs and practices of elementary social studies methods professors at the university level. Of the few existing quality portraits, all the professors cited the 1994 NCSS position statements concerning the aims of social studies as validation for the basis of their methods instruction. However, their practices varied greatly and depended mostly on their personal beliefs about social studies education. There is a total lack of portraits of inservice teachers serving as methods instructors (Slekar 2006). At the university where the study was completed during the spring 2006 semester, four of the five elementary social studies methods sections were taught by inservice teachers and the fifth was taught by the researcher. Based on a need to understand the beliefs, practices, and issues of these instructors, this study was designed to capture portraits of three of these instructors.

Statement of Problem

Given the currently threatened status of social studies instruction in elementary schools, there is a need for strong methods instructors. In many colleges of education, it is common practice to employ inservice teachers to teach methods courses. A void in the literature exists concerning the beliefs, practices and issues encountered by these instructors, so little is known about how to best support them as they perform their duties. Thus, whatever new information is collected adds to the scholarship about the

practitioners who fill this role, and in the future will assist colleges of education to better support these instructors.

Research Questions

This research study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What beliefs about social studies education do these inservice teachers hold?
2. How do the beliefs these inservice teachers hold inform their practice in their social studies methods course?
3. How does filling these dual roles inform their beliefs about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum?
4. What do these inservice teachers believe are the issues they encountered while teaching the methods course?

Question one addresses the participants' beliefs concerning teaching in general, social studies, teaching social studies, and teaching social studies methods. Question two addresses their belief-to-practice connections noted in the data and confirmed by the participants. Question three addresses the information the participants have about the status of elementary social studies, how they come by that information in each of their roles, and what beliefs they have about the status of elementary social studies and testing. Finally, question four comprised the majority of the findings and focused on the issues related to methods students, the status of elementary social studies and the field placement, and issues related to filling dual roles.

Rationale for the Choice of a Qualitative Design

Babbie (1983) defined qualitative research as “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observation for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (p. 537). A qualitative design was selected for a number of reasons. The study was exploratory, while the beliefs and practices of elementary social studies methods professors have been chronicled, the beliefs and practices of other

educators who instruct elementary social studies methods courses remain unrecorded. Because the study was exploratory, a qualitative design was selected to allow for a flexible yet rigorous inquiry; such flexibility is difficult with a quantitative design (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The choice of a qualitative design also was based on Patton's (1990) assertion that the intent of qualitative research is to "provide perspective rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decision makers' theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound explorations rather than generalizations" (p. 491). This study required a design that facilitated depth of understanding over breadth (Creswell 1998): "Qualitative methods permit the evaluation researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail" (Patton 1990, p. 165). For depth and detail, a rich description of each participant's beliefs was created to better understand his or her practices (Lincoln & Guba 1985). A "rich description" is possible with a qualitative design that uses interviews and observations to understand teachers' beliefs and the context in which those beliefs are enacted (Cornett 1990; Pajares 1992). The underlying beliefs were specific to each teacher, and it was necessary to understand these beliefs while looking through the lens of an inservice teacher working as a methods instructor. Moreover, a qualitative approach accounts for the context in which the phenomenon of interest takes place (Creswell 1994; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Patton 1990). A consideration of context is especially important for this study, given the many external factors discussed in Chapter 2, which affect how these instructors perform their duties. Like all qualitative studies, this research did not intend to present a definitive "truth" of the given situation; the intention was to elicit reflection by the reader to create an opportunity to learn about the situation under examination (Stake 1995).

Study Methodology

The study employed a case study methodology. The choice of case studies is consistent with the dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Education degree: “Data may be analyzed using methods...For example, case studies and content analyses of interview protocols are common” (University of Florida 1983). The study included three participants and sought to uncover “both what is common and what is particular about the case” (Stake 1994, p. 238) through the analysis of multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Patton 1990; Stake 1994; Yin 1994). Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) defined a case study as “an in-depth, multi-faceted investigation, using qualitative research methods” (p. 2). For this study, a case was defined as a “single bounded system or an instance...” (Merriam 1988, p. 153); each participant served as a specific case. Case studies allowed an intensive, holistic, and in-depth investigation of each teacher as a unit (Feagin et al. 1991; Merriam 1998; Stake 1995). Merriam’s (1998) contention that a case study is more focused on process and context was important for this study because of the complex and unique nature of the teachers’ beliefs and teaching practices (Nespor 1987). Perhaps the most important factor in the selection of a case study methodology was the Feagin et al. (1991) statement that case studies explore in detail the how and why of specific situations. Yin (1994) added that case studies are not only suitable for answering how, but also what.

Regarding qualitative research, Marshall and Rossman have noted that “there is no such thing as a perfectly designed study” and case studies are no exception to this rule (1999, p. 42). Case studies have a number of limitations; chiefly, a case is one instance of a “single bounded system or an instance...” and not representative of a certain population (Merriam 1988, p. 153). Moreover, case studies rely on descriptive information provided

by researchers and participants, leaving room for the loss of important details and differing perceptions. Finally, much of the interpretation in case studies is based on the recollection of past events, and therefore is susceptible to problems inherent to memory.

Guiding Theory

This study was guided by the theory that teachers' beliefs drive their practice (e.g., Armento 1996; Brownell, Yeager, Rennels & Riley 1997; Clark & Peterson 1986; Cuban 1984; Cuban 1986; Fang 1996; Goodlad 1984; Leming 1989; Onosko 1989; Pajares 1992; Sarason 1996; Shulman 1987; Thornton 1991; Wilson 2000; Wilson, Konopak & Readance 1994). Specifically, Pajares (1992) stated that "the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom" (p. 307). This theory was applied to understanding participants' practices based on Fang's (1996) statement that "educators are now beginning to realize that teachers (preservice, beginning, or experienced) do hold implicit theories about students, the subjects they teach, and their teaching responsibilities" (p. 51). The theory that beliefs drive practice has been applied most often to preservice (e.g., Armento 1996) and inservice teachers (e.g., Pajares 1992). In Chapter 2, the effect of teachers' beliefs on their practices is illustrated by the stated beliefs and the resultant practices of elementary social studies methods professor Dr. Merrill (Slekar 2006). The current study extended this theory to the beliefs and practices of inservice teachers serving as social studies methods instructors.

Theoretical Orientation

It is customary for qualitative researchers to detail their philosophical and epistemological assumptions regarding methodology, procedures for data collection, and analysis (Gale 1993; LeCompte & Preissle 1993). This study was based on a

constructivist framework (Crotty 1998; Schwandt 1994). Constructivism is not a strictly dictated set of beliefs or procedures, but a general descriptor of a family of methods and philosophies to provide researchers with a general direction, and merely suggests “directions along which to look,” rather than “provide descriptions of what to see” (Schwandt 1994, p. 221).

Constructivism views each individual as the central agent in creating his or her own understanding of the world through experience (Crotty 1998). Central to constructivism is an inquiry into individuals’ experiences and a description of the world as felt and understood by the individuals (Schwandt 1994). In the case of this study, the experiences were those of the inservice methods instructors as they felt and understood them. These experiences formed the basis of constructed meanings of events, situations, and beliefs. This process occurs over time and was influenced by the individuals’ actions, personal histories, and contextual factors (Schwandt, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this qualitative study was to capture the reality and contexts that the research subjects inhabited. As the researcher, I attempted to become the human instrument for data collection and interpretation while being aware of the subtleties of the data collected and analyzed (Lincoln & Guba 1985). This theoretical sensitivity was demonstrated by my insight and ability to derive meaning from the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe humans are the “instrument of choice” for qualitative research because they are able to respond to environmental cues, interact with the given situation, collect information at multiple levels simultaneously, perceive situations holistically, process data upon receipt, request verification of data, and explore unexpected occurrences. Included in any qualitative study is a brief biography of the

researcher: “Interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher” (Denzin 1989, p. 12).

I began my teaching career working with poor and minority students as part of Teach for America. I was drawn to Teach for America because of its social justice agenda. During my two years with Teach for America, I worked in the inner city of Houston, Texas, in a school where more than 95 percent of the students qualified for Title I funding. During the 1998–1999 school year, I taught a fifth grade ESOL class, composed mostly of students transitioning to full-time English instruction after exiting a bilingual education program. During the 1999–2000 school year, I taught a third grade bilingual class, with Spanish as the language of instruction.

During the 2000–2001 school year, I attended the University of California at Santa Barbara and earned a Masters of Education degree in Elementary Education. My masters’ thesis was an action research project involving ESOL students and mathematics instruction. I also completed ESOL coursework and professional development to support second language learners during their acquisition of the English language. During the 2001–2002 school year, I relocated to Jacksonville, Florida, and taught second grade ESOL to an extremely diverse class with a number of students from Eastern Europe and Central Africa. During the 2002–2003 school year, I again taught second grade ESOL while emphasizing social studies instruction as a means by which to connect to my diverse student population.

As the researcher in this study, I had the advantage of focusing on social studies instruction in my own work as an elementary teacher and during my doctoral studies. I also held the advantage of being an instructor of the same social studies methods course

taught by the study participants. As a full-time doctoral student, I had the luxury of almost a singular focus on this study. This was beneficial for a case study approach because, as Merriam states, “case study investigators immerse themselves in the totality of the case...” (Merriam 1988, p. 60). In this study, my theoretical sensitivity was based on my experiences as an elementary social studies teacher, my knowledge of the professional literature concerning elementary social studies, and my concurrent experience of teaching the same methods course.

Along with the advantages of my previous experiences were a few disadvantages that surfaced in the form of bias. The acknowledgement and understanding of a researcher’s bias are important in a qualitative study because, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), “there is a strong and often unconscious tendency for researchers to notice supporting instances and ignore ones that don’t fit their pre-established conclusions” (p. 263). While my personal philosophy concerning social studies education is still evolving, I do hold a number of beliefs about what I think is effective social studies instruction. For example, I favor social studies instruction that attempts to connect to the lives and perspectives of minority students. I also have a strong conviction that social studies instruction should be designed to allow students to make their own interpretations of both historical and contemporary events and issues.

Participants

The unit of analysis was one instructor and the context he or she inhabited (Merriam, 1998). Participants were selected as a result of criterion sampling “...to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton 1990, p. 176). Participants selected for the study met two criteria: They were inservice teachers, and they instructed an elementary social studies methods course. Participants were

approached in the context of our shared role as elementary social studies methods instructors and invited to participate in the study. Institutional permission was secured through the Institutional Review Board of the University of Florida and the Research and Evaluation Department of the School Board of Alachua County. The three participants were inservice elementary teachers under the age of 35 with at least five years of teaching experience who instructed a section of Social Studies for Diverse Learners at the University of Florida. Two of the participants were female and one was male. Two of the participants taught fourth grade; one taught first grade. All were White/European American and from middle-class backgrounds. For one participant, this was the first experience with any university level instruction; another had taught the social studies methods course during the previous semester, while the third had previous experience teaching the social studies methods course, along with a methods course in literacy. To ensure confidentiality, each participant assumed a pseudonym for use in the final report. A full description of each participant and his or her settings can be found in Chapters 4–6.

Explanation of “Dual Roles”

‘Dual roles’ signifies the participants served concurrently as inservice teachers and methods instructors. Traditionally, elementary methods courses are taught by professors and graduate students trained in the specific discipline. In larger teacher education programs, there are multiple sections of the same methods course needing an instructor. Few advanced graduate students specialize in elementary social studies, thus creating the need to recruit advanced graduate students who are “generalists” or who specialize in other disciplines. In situations when there are no advanced graduate students available, inservice teachers with a master’s degree in education are recruited. Among the

participants, Dan and Alexis were part-time advanced graduate students specializing in literacy and also serving as inservice teachers. Nora was an inservice teacher with a master's degree in Special Education. Furthermore, all three participants were teachers at the field placement site of roughly half of their methods students.

Course Information

Because this course often is taught by instructors without specialized elementary social studies training, a suggested syllabus and course materials have been developed to facilitate instruction. Each instructor was given the freedom to instruct the course as they wished, within the guidelines established by the supervising professor, Dr. Young. The participants taught "Social Studies for Diverse Learners," which served as the singular social studies methods course in the teacher education program. The course focus in the provided syllabus states, "Throughout the social studies methods course you will learn how to use the tools of inquiry as a teacher in a social studies classroom. Inquiry is a 'questioning' stance that good teachers assume as professionals who plan for, carry out, and study the impact of their instruction" (See appendix B). While the course closely aligns to the "reflective inquiry" vision of social studies, it incorporates elements of "social science" and "informed social criticism" into the provided syllabus as well (Martorella 1994). The "Key Tasks" represent a social science vision: "The content exploration should result in the prospective teacher presenting the following: an enduring understanding (generalization) supported by a synthesis of content from a variety of resources, and identification of related standards" (See appendix B). James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, which the students read and then presented a chapter, represents an "informed social criticism" vision. The course does not focus exclusively

on these three visions; it presents all five competing visions of elementary social studies as described by Martorella (1994) in detail during the first class.

The syllabus describes a suggested culminating assignment, the social studies integrated teaching project, as “a mini-unit integrating social studies and another content area. This mini-unit will be a culmination of all that we learned this semester and consist of three Pathwise lessons” (See appendix B). As the first unit that the methods students plan and actually teach, this assignment is quite challenging. During the final two classes, the methods students make ten-minute presentations on their units by sharing their lesson plans and providing student work samples.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through interviews and observations of social studies methods instruction. This approach was based on Patton’s (1990) belief that qualitative methods require three types of data collection: in-depth, open-ended interviews of the participants; direct observations of actions in their context; and collection of written documents. The use of multiple sources of data enhanced the credibility of the findings. That is, each type of data collected affords an opportunity to create an understanding of the topics being analyzed; this, in turn, provides more credible findings. The use of multiple data sources also was based on Yin’s (1994) suggestion to use multiple sources when constructing case studies in order to increase the reliability by providing multiple examples of the participants’ approach to the topics of interest.

Data was collected in the following sequence. The first interview of all the participants was conducted following an initial observation all the participants. After the first interview five to six observations were conducted of each of the participants. After completion of the observations a interview was conducted with all of the participants.

Interviews

Patton (1990) stated that “qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 278). In this study, interviews made instructors’ perspectives explicit by giving participants an opportunity to explain themselves and their situations (Spradley 1979). Interviewing was “a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives constitute education” (Seidman 1991, p. 7). Much of the data was generated from interviews based on Patton’s (1990) statement: “The raw data of interviews are the actual quotations spoken by interviewees. There is no substitute for these data” (p. 347). Two interviews lasting approximately 60–90 minutes each were conducted with each participant. The first was a background interview to gather data about the participant’s personal and professional background, beliefs about teaching, and the major areas of interest in the study (See appendix A). The questions for the first protocol originated from my own personal experiences as a methods instruction, my initial observations of all the participants and the relevant recent research. In addition three articles in particular informed the creation of the first protocol. Owens (1997) provided information about the challenges of elementary social studies. Yendol-Hoppey and Tilford (2004) shed light on the contextual issues facing elementary social studies methods instruction and the lack of professional development focused on elementary social studies. Thornton (2005) highlight the ‘content versus methods’ tension found in all elementary social studies methods courses.

The questions for the second interview were developed using the following steps: First, the transcripts from the first interview were reviewed for missing data and to

determine areas in need of clarification, verification, or extension. Next, methods instruction observation field notes were reviewed to determine actions, events, or statements in need of clarification, verification, or explanation. Finally, a general protocol was developed for use with all participants, and individuals protocols were developed for each individual participant (See Appendix A). Included in both of these protocols were specific examples of actions, events, or statements used as text for the participants' responses, in order to gain deeper access to their beliefs and insights. Included in these examples were statements made by a participant or students during the previous interviews or observations, and presented to all the participants to add further depth to the data. Moreover, some comments made by methods students during class that were unknown to the participants at the time were made known to them, in order to provide another perspective to which the participants could respond.

All interviews were semi-structured based on Patton's (1990) interview guide approach in which the format, topics, and issues were covered in a specified outline form, and the interviewer determined the order and the wording of each question. The interview guide allowed for adjustments of each interview and participant. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher, and reviewed by the participant for accuracy (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Observations

In order to collect data and gain greater insight into comments made during the initial interview, I conducted observations based on Patton's (1990) statement that in addition to interviews, "the description of events observed remains the essence of qualitative inquiry" (p. 392). During the observations, I paid special attention to how the participants' beliefs about social studies surfaced during methods instruction, including

belief statements and actions representing or related to new or previously stated beliefs. Also during the observations, I paid close attention to events, actions, or statements that represented an issue encountered during the participants' methods instruction for future verification.

Data collection included five to six three-hour observations of social studies methods instruction for each participant. These observations were conducted as direct observations (Patton 1990). Direct observation differs from participant observation in that, as a direct observer, I did not become a participant in the instruction and attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible. In this study, direct observation was the only type of observation possible, given that each instructor was responsible for the section he or she taught. Moreover, my participation might have distorted the data. All observations concluded with a conversation with the instructors to give them an opportunity to discuss the class. During each observation, I took extensive field notes to describe the events that took place and comments made during class.

Written Documents

Written documents were examined to provide further data related to the participants (Patton, 1990). Access to written documents in this study was limited. The participants were asked to provide any documents they felt would shed light on their methods instruction. They had no documents to offer. The majority of the data generated by written documents was from the provided syllabus, which each participant slightly adapted to reflect the logistical particularities of his or her section, such as contact information and class days (See appendix A). Nonetheless, the example syllabus did provide insights into the suggested structure and focus of the course. In addition, the books and readings suggested by the provided syllabus were used as sources of data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was a process of “examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence” (Yin 1994, p. 102). Data analysis occurred within and across cases and was “aimed at ensuring (a) high-quality, accessible data; (b) documentation of just what analysis were carried out; and (c) retention of data and association analysis after the study is complete” (Huberman & Miles 1994, p. 27). Data reduction was used to “make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information and identify significant patterns...” (Patton 1990, p. 371). Several qualitative researchers have stated that analysis should be an ongoing process starting at the beginning of the study (e.g., Merriam 1998; Stake 1995); thus, analysis was an ongoing process.

Data reduction proceeded in the following order: Following the first round of interviews, free coding was completed, data were analyzed, and codes were developed and used as a starting point to analyze instructional observation data. These initial codes were based on the main research questions of the study to be consistent with the tradition of dissertations for the Doctor of Education degree, where “results are based on themes corresponding directly to content and structure of documents or interview protocols” (University of Florida 1983). After all observations were completed, the data were analyzed using the previously generated codes. To better represent and organize the data, codes were adjusted after analysis of the observation data and used to analyze the final interview data. All data were analyzed to identify the emerging themes across the data (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The data set was reduced to data related only to the identified themes in order to draw conclusions (Patton 1990). These conclusions were presented to the participants for verification.

Verification of Interpretation—Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness, this study considered one central question: “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 301). Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed four criteria to establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

To increase credibility, Stake (1995) stated it is “better to give the reader a good look at the researcher” (p. 95). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a number of strategies to increase the probability that findings and interpretations of a qualitative inquiry will be credible, including peer debriefing and member checking. Peer debriefing is defined as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 308). Member checking was important to ensure the researcher “represented those multiple constructions adequately; that is, that the reconstructions that have been arrived at via the inquiry are credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities” (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 296). Member checking also improved the quality of the findings by “regularly provid(ing) critical observations and interpretations” (Stake 1995, p. 115). I performed member checking throughout the project, including during the verification of findings, conclusion, and final presentation.

Transferability

External validity and generalizability, in the quantitative sense, are not relevant to qualitative research, so Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the use of the term

“transferability” (p. 288) to discuss similar notions for the results obtained from a qualitative inquiry. Results from a qualitative inquiry are specific to the context in which they are studied, which limits the possibility of external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is determined by the readers and their interest “in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Transferability in this sense depends on the presentation of “solid descriptive data” or “thick description” (Patton, 1990) in order to determine the “degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts” (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 297).

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability both were established with one “properly managed” (Lincoln & Guba 1985) research audit. To establish dependability, the auditor reviewed the entire process through each stage of inquiry, including all methodology. The auditor then established that the research process was correctly and consistently applied to the research questions being considered, after which the findings were confirmed (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Description of Chapters

This dissertation adopted a traditional format. Chapter 1 introduced the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the background of the problem. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature regarding portraits of practice in social studies (e.g., Slekar 2006), teacher beliefs (e.g., Pajares 1992), the teaching and learning of elementary social studies (e.g., Barton & Levstik 2004), and elementary social studies methods (e.g., Owens 1997). Chapter 3 described the methodology, the sampling rationale, the research design, and the process used to analyze the data. Chapters 4–6 describe each participant and the *within-case* findings related to each particular participant. Chapter 7 presents the *cross-case*

findings and conclusions of the study. Chapter 8 summarizes the findings, makes recommendations to support social studies methods instruction by inservice teachers, suggests directions for further research, and provides conclusions about the status of elementary social studies.

Summary of Methods

This study is an inquiry into inservice teachers' beliefs, practices and issues encountered while they serve as elementary social studies methods instructors. The rationale for the choice of a qualitative design was based primarily on a desire to create in-depth and holistic portraits of the participants. Specifically, the study employed a case study methodology and each participant served as an individual case. The theory that a teacher's beliefs influence his or her instructional practices guided the study. Theoretically, the study was based on a constructivist framework and the associated notion that individuals create their own understanding of the world through their experiences. In this study, the role of the researcher was to serve as the human instrument for data collection and analysis. The participants for this study were selected to fulfill criteria of being inservice teachers and elementary social studies methods instructors. All of the participants taught the same elementary social studies methods course, more or less based on a provided syllabus and suggested lessons and activities described in this chapter. Data were collected through interviews and observations, and analyzed through coding procedures in order to organize and reduce the data. Verification of interpretation and the findings was carried out to enhance credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

CHAPTER 4
ALEXIS JOHNSON

Introduction

Chapter 1 served as an introduction to the research questions and an overview of how the study was to be conducted. Chapter 2 was a review of the literature relevant to the research questions. Chapter 3 offered an explanation of the research methods used to conduct the study. The purpose of chapters 4–6 is to present the case findings for each participant. As previously noted, the results of this study are reported to fulfill the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at the University of Florida (University of Florida, 1983). To be consistent with this tradition, the results reported in this chapter were organized in a manner to inform educational professionals in any subject area, particularly elementary social studies methods instructors. The findings in chapters 4–6 are organized by research questions:

1. What beliefs about social studies education do these inservice teachers hold?
2. How do the beliefs these inservice teachers hold inform their practice in their social studies methods course?
3. How does filling these dual roles inform their beliefs about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum?
4. What do these inservice teachers believe are the issues they encountered while teaching the methods course?

Following this chapter are chapters 5 and 6, the *within-* case findings related to these research questions for two other participants. These chapters also are organized by the research questions. Chapter 7 presents the *cross-case* findings of the study. Chapter 8 summarizes the findings, makes recommendations for support of social studies methods instruction by inservice teachers, suggests directions for further research, and provides

conclusions about the status of elementary social studies. Following are the findings for Alexis Johnson.

Background Information

Alexis, a fifth year teacher in her late 20s, taught first grade at the K–12 laboratory school affiliated with a large state-supported “research one” university that offered the social studies methods course. Alexis was also a doctoral student in curriculum and instruction at the university, focusing on reading and literacy and also on professional development of teachers.

The only memory of elementary social studies Alexis had was memorizing the states and capitals in fourth grade. In high school, Alexis was especially interested in contemporary history and civics. After earning an A.A. at a community college, Alexis earned both her Bachelors degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Education degree with a specialization in Reading and Literacy from the university where she now instructs the methods course. During her teacher education program, Alexis took one social studies methods course taught by a dynamic instructor whom she described as “very inspiring to me” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). This instructor focused on using social studies to integrate all academic subject areas, and Alexis used the unit she created during the course as an example for her methods students.

Recently Alexis became a National Board-certified elementary teacher and was very active in professional development activities. She attended the Florida Technology Conference and the International Reading Association National Conference, and presented at the National Association of Laboratory Schools Conference. During the semester in which the study took place, Alexis was instructing the methods course for a

second time, having also done so the previous semester. She also expressed an interest in teaching a literacy course in the future.

Professional Experiences

Alexis began her teaching career in an adjoining county, where she taught at a small rural school that served a mostly White population from low socioeconomic backgrounds. During her five years there, she taught first grade exclusively and was provided a prescribed curriculum in every subject area, including social studies. However, during this time, Alexis maintained control over her classroom in her role as “curricular-instructional gatekeeper” (Thornton 1991) stating, “I would just close my door and do what I wanted” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

Petty Research and Development School

Alexis has taught the last two years at Petty Research and Development School, which functions as a part of the university’s College of Education and is not administered by the local county School Board. As a laboratory school, this K–12 institution serves students from all parts of the county, and the school population intentionally reflected the race, gender, and socioeconomic characteristics of the state as a whole. The school’s web site explains the role of a laboratory school: “to serve as a vehicle for research, demonstration, and evaluation regarding teaching and learning while utilizing the resources available on a state university campus” (Petty 2006). Alexis’s classes were non-tracked, and the teachers, as employees of the university, were expected to experiment with innovative teaching methods.

At dismissal time, the school’s diversity was obvious as children of different ages, socioeconomic, and cultural groups mix easily. While the school has a number of portable classrooms connected by walkways, the campus visually appeared well

organized and overall radiates a positive learning environment. Alexis enjoyed teaching at Petty: “The way I teach now is the way I’ve always dreamed of teaching and never had the opportunity to in a county setting and in a district setting” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis believed Petty was not “as concerned with high stakes testing as some other places are” and was more focused on “having kids be very well rounded” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis served as the elementary math coordinator at Petty and participated in the Florida Reading Initiative.

Elise Elementary

The methods students in Alexis’s class comprised interns from Petty Research and Development School, as well as from Elise Elementary, which is located in a small, predominantly middle class town close to the university and serves a mostly White population with a small percentage of African American and Hispanic students. The school’s web site noted its status as an "A" school the two previous years and proudly proclaims its affiliation with the university:

Elise Elementary is a partner with the University. We host pre-service teachers each semester and provide them a place to learn and grow. They help us by providing extra helping hands in our classroom and help our teachers grow and improve in their skills. Welcome! (Elise 2006)

Alexis’s Classroom and Instruction

Alexis’s classroom seemed typical of many first grade classrooms, stuffed with learning resources and lined with printed material on every possible surface, while maintaining a cramped, yet organized appearance. The room was configured with tables to seat four to five students, a specially carpeted area large enough for the entire class to congregate and many bookcases containing learning materials. Alexis had a positive rapport with students during methods instruction. Her sense of humor was evident, with

comments such as, “Are you really that blonde?”(Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). Also evident was her tremendous patience and professionalism when confronted with a rude student

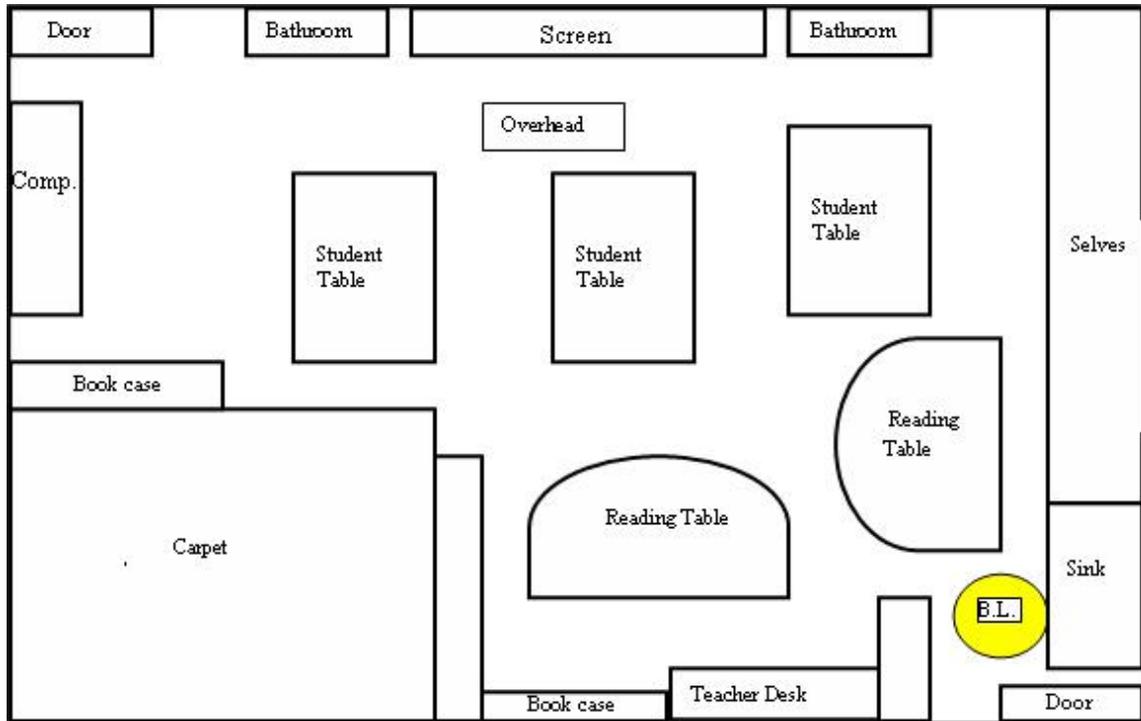


Figure 4-1 Alexis' classroom

while attempting to set up for class (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06). Overall, she projected a very knowledgeable and confident persona.

Alexis's teaching style was a mix of teacher-led discussion and activities, or group activities that took place at the student tables. During the lecture, students often accessed Alexis's knowledge as an experienced teacher; during table discussions, Alexis would circulate and quietly listen to the various conversations and then offer her comments, which she often prefaced with “in my opinion.” The methods students were very attentive and gave the impression they respected and liked Alexis. Overall, Alexis's instruction appeared organized, informed, and effective.

What Beliefs About Social Studies Education Do These Inservice Teachers Hold?

As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers' beliefs about the subjects and students they teach greatly influence their instruction. These beliefs are important to consider because of the variety of definitions regarding what constitutes social studies and the currently imperiled status of social studies education. The word "belief," like many words, has a somewhat variable and subjective meaning. This is especially true in the context of "teacher belief" research, as noted by Pajares: "It will not be possible for researchers to come to grips with teachers' beliefs, however, without first deciding what they wish 'belief' to mean. . ." (1992, p. 308). This study used a definition of the term 'belief' similar to that of Dewey (1933). Dewey defined 'belief' as:

...something beyond itself by which its value is tested; it makes an assertion about some matter of fact or some principle or law [and] covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon...and also the matter that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future. (p.6)

The findings for this question are organized into three sections: beliefs about teaching, beliefs about social studies and teaching social studies, and beliefs about teaching social studies methods. This organization extends to the findings for the same research question in Chapters 5 and 6.

Beliefs Concerning Teaching

Alexis Johnson expressed a number of beliefs about teaching in general. When asked to define teaching, Alexis responded, "Teaching by definition, I think, is showing someone how to do something..." (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). This belief was evident during Alexis's methods instruction, particularly when working with students to craft a generalization for their units. Alexis expressed her belief in the importance of teaching with the goal of creating lifelong learners, "...essentially what I'm trying to do is get kids

to be lifelong learners” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis expressed her belief in sharing power in both the elementary classroom—“Your kids should have a voice in your classroom” (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06)—and during methods instruction—“I think we should give the methods students more voice...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). This belief is consistent with chapter 2, “Respecting Children,” in Wolk’s (1998) *A Democratic Classroom*, a reading in the syllabus. Alexis discussed her belief in teaching a well-rounded child: “I believe in teaching the whole child and not just material. I don’t teach material. I teach kids” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). In order to meet the needs of each child, Alexis believed “it is my job to always find a way to reach every child no matter where they are in whatever subject area that I happen to be teaching them in or instructing them in” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). A similar sentiment is also found in *A Democratic Classroom*, where Wolk offered his “ten things I believe about children”; number two is “children grow and develop differently” (p. 14).

Beliefs Concerning Social Studies and Teaching Social Studies

The basis for her elementary social studies practice was Alexis’s belief that “social studies is everything that’s happening around us all the time. It’s our social world and I think it’s the study of people and life” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). While not explicitly related to the “cultural universals” curriculum promoted in Brophy and Alleman’s book *Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students*, a reading in the syllabus, Alexis’s remarks do resemble Brophy and Alleman’s definition of cultural universals as “basic needs and social experiences found in all societies, past and present” (1996, p. 13).

Concerning social studies teaching in general, Alexis expressed her belief in the power of innovative instructional practices (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). This was evident in the practices she shared with her methods students: “Did I tell you guys about using

my smart board to use Google Earth to ‘fly’ to Egypt and the Nile...” (Alexis, Class 4/11/06). The key to understanding Alexis’s approach was her fervent belief in teaching for “understanding” rather than teaching for “coverage.” She explains: “We’re teaching for real understanding. Am I teaching kids to memorize the states and capitals? Or am I teaching kids to understand that land is divided up in different ways? That’s a bad example, but that’s it” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). This belief emanated from the social studies methods instruction Alexis received as a teacher education student. Her methods course was taught by an innovative instructor who “encouraged us to write units that had...generalizations to create understanding rather than coverage” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Teaching for generalizations focuses on how the facts are related and using those concepts to build generalizations that can be applied to similar situations (Benson, 1998). Teaching for generalizations was the goal of the instructional unit and a “Key Task” in the suggested syllabus:

Students will demonstrate subject matter expertise by synthesizing social science content and developing an enduring understanding for an assigned social studies topic to a named grade. The content exploration should result in the prospective teacher presenting the following: an enduring understanding (generalization) supported by a synthesis of content from a variety of resources, and identification of related standards. (See appendix B)

Alexis also expressed her belief in integrating social studies into other subject areas to give students multiple experiences with the same content: “I definitely think that integration is key. When you can integrate social studies into math, or economics ...there’s just tons of ways that I think it could be integrated to improve understanding” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Integration of social studies into other subject areas also was a requirement of the teaching unit to be completed by the methods students: “Each

partnership will be required to complete a mini-unit integrating social studies and another content area” (See appendix B).

Alexis also believed in delivering instruction that was both critical and balanced: “When we talk to kids, we need to talk about the fact that all people have parts that are not good” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). The book *Lies My Teacher Told Me* presented a critical view of history aimed at providing a more balanced portrayal of American history. The book was a reading in the suggested syllabus and provoked some of the most interesting and revealing dialogue of the semester (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). A critical and balanced presentation of social studies also connected to Alexis’s belief in the need for civics instruction: “teaching kids how to make decisions and teaching kids how to survive in a community ...” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). This sentiment is also conveyed in *A Democratic Classroom*, which devotes an entire chapter to “Classroom as Community” (Wolk 1998). The tension between teaching students to be both critical and constructive citizens presented a challenge to Alexis: “How do we teach kids about things that are not that good and still teach for civic participation?” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies Methods

An extension of her belief in the importance of teaching elementary social studies for “real understanding” was Alexis’s main goal for methods instruction: “The main thing I want them to understand... is to stop worrying about coverage of facts and to teach the bigger idea” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Her goal was also reflected in the “Key Tasks” in the suggested syllabus (See appendix B). Alexis strongly conveyed her belief in the ubiquitous nature of social studies when told by her methods students that they would not be able to include social studies because of FCAT pressure: “I tell them that there’s no way not to include social studies in their instruction” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis

also believed in the importance of her methods students seeing her as a credible teacher who walks her own walk: “I think it’s very important for them to see me as a teacher first and foremost. I am a teacher of students and this is what I do every day, and I want them...to believe what I say” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Finally, she believed in the importance of exposing her methods students to the same type of active instruction that she advocated for elementary students: “When I set up the centers where they’re actually engaging in different ways to use social studies experiences...I feel like they get a feel for how powerful this kind of instruction is” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

How Do the Beliefs These Inservice Teachers Hold Inform Their Practice in Their Social Studies Methods Course?

Based on their beliefs, all teachers make decisions daily about the material they teach and the type of instruction they provide (Richardson 1996; Thornton 1991; Wilson Konopak & Readance 1994). The findings in this section provide specific examples of belief-to-practice connections related to teaching an elementary social studies methods course. During the final interviews, connections between the beliefs and practices recorded during observations or the first interview were discussed and my associations verified by the participants.

Alexis voiced strong beliefs about the importance of teachers researching the content they want to teach and resisting the pressure to “cover” material from a textbook: “I never want to turn out a teacher that feels like they need to rely on something else to provide the instruction, rather than themselves” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). This belief is supported in Brophy and Alleman’s book and was the basis of the “Content Info” assignments in Alexis’s syllabus (See appendix B). Based on this belief, Alexis

constantly reminded her students, "...you have to really prepare for the units you're going to teach and you need to know your content..." (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06).

In order to capitalize on her dual roles, Alexis believed "it's important for them to see me teaching because what it actually shows is that I walk the walk" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). To allow her methods students to see how she instructs her elementary students, Alexis showed video of her teaching:

Here it is in reality. Here's what...I'm telling you is important instruction. Here's what it looks like in my classroom. It's not a public video. It's not perfect student; it's not perfect kid; it's not perfect me. It's just reality. And I think that it's important for them to see what I'm talking about in action. (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06)

In addition, the use of video provided examples of Alexis's often stated belief, "everything happens in social studies...my end-of-the-year video were the highlights of our year; 70 percent of it is of social studies events that have happened in our classroom. So I feel like it just makes concrete what I'm trying to tell them" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

Another of Alexis's beliefs was the importance of having other subject areas integrated into social studies in meaningful ways: "Amazing things that can be done because everything is integrated into social studies..." (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). One way this belief was communicated to the methods students "is with the reading strategies (in the provided course materials) so they have to apply reading strategies to their own content area of reading" (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis engaged her methods students in conversations about what meaningful integration would look like (Alexis, Class, 2/28/06). She explained the lesson: "We worked through some ideas of what would meaningful integration look like? So, throwing out an example, having a

discussion about that... is that really math that you're integrating or is that just junk..." (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

How Does Filling These Dual Roles Inform Their Beliefs About the Status of Social Studies in the Elementary Curriculum?

The participants in this study had access to a unique perspective on the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum. With connections to both of the "two cultures" of social studies education (Leming 1989), they were able to see how elementary social studies was being presented to preservice teachers in a social studies methods course; they also saw the realities of classrooms and schools and were privy to information unlike anyone else in the social studies teaching profession. The findings in this section focus on three issues: what information the participants had access to about elementary social studies, how they received this information, and, most importantly, their opinions about the status of social studies based on information and experiences in both roles.

Information Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Channels of Communication

Alexis had access to exclusive information about the status of elementary social studies at Petty Research and Development School and Elise Elementary. While discussing how filling these dual roles informed her beliefs about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum, Alexis lamented, "I think that it has definitely made me see how important it is, and how much it isn't happening" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

When asked how she came by information about the status of social studies at Elise Elementary, Alexis reported, "only through the (methods) students and the university supervisor..." (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Even with this limited knowledge, Alexis

assessed the differences between the two schools: “I think teaching social studies ‘traditionally’ happens more at Elise” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Based on her knowledge of both schools, Alexis knew that “...in a lot of schools social studies is integrated into the reading block” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis’s fellow teachers at Petty often asked her for clarification of the course’s requirements: “...a teacher here whose (methods) students I had was constantly asking me ‘What is it you’re really expecting of them?’” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06) The cooperating teachers’ questions gave Alexis information about the kind of social studies instruction the cooperating teacher offered in her classroom. Referring to this cooperating teacher, Alexis reported, “She did not really understand what the (methods) students were doing, which gave me an idea of what she was really doing in her classroom...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). She explained as a methods instructor, she had a window into many classrooms at Petty: “I have insights into a lot of different classrooms around here” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis knew social studies was indeed being taught in a majority of classrooms at Petty, but felt the quality of instruction was not always the highest (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Beliefs Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Testing

Alexis also made astute comments about a possible disconnect between what the methods students were learning about teaching social studies and what they would be able to retain working in schools that do not support social studies instruction: “I think to myself, ‘Okay, here they are. They’re not teachers yet. Here we’re teaching them all this really hip stuff; are they going to forget it?’” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Concerning the amount of actual social studies instruction going on in most public schools, Alexis

reported, “It’s quite appalling, actually....and it makes me wonder what we can really do” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

Despite the relatively elevated status of social studies at Petty, Alexis was acutely aware of the secondary status of social studies in other schools statewide. Asked what she believed was necessary to raise the status of social studies instruction in the state of Florida, Alexis was frank: “What is it going to take?...It’s going to have to be tested on the FCAT, and I think that’s the most horrible thing they could do...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis’s concerns about social studies being added to the FCAT were based on her belief that “true understanding of generalizations and true understanding of people in social studies can’t really be assessed a whole lot on a written test” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). She also believed there was a need for accountability, but was concerned with the current “snapshot” approach: “I think that we have to have accountability, but I have a problem with so much being hinged on one test” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

What Do These Inservice Teachers Believe are the Issues They Encountered While Teaching the Methods Course?

As noted by Owens (1997), teaching an elementary social studies methods course is accompanied by a number of particular issues, each of which creates an opportunity for improvement. In order to examine the issues encountered by an inservice teacher serving as a methods instructor, I have organized the findings related to this research question into the following three categories: issues related to students, issues related to the status of elementary social studies and the field placement, and issues related to dual roles. In addition, there are issues faced by the participants were particular to inservice teachers serving as methods instructors and there were issues any person could encounter while instructing an elementary social studies methods course. The issues related to methods

students and the issues related to the status of elementary social studies and the field placement are endemic to the instruction of any elementary methods course and the issues related to filling dual roles are issues specifically related to participants. The organization of these findings extends to chapters 5 and 6.

Issues Related to Methods Students

The issues discussed in this section are those most closely related to the methods students themselves and how those students influence elementary social studies methods instruction.

Conservative social beliefs

Teachers tend to come from White/European American backgrounds and to have traditional and conservative social beliefs (e.g., Cuban, 1984) that may inhibit their ability to embrace the social studies goal of promoting social progress. That goal was summarized by NCSS in 1979: “to engage students in analyzing and attempting to resolve the social issues confronting them” (267). Similarly, these students’ conservative social beliefs favor the status quo. These findings were supported by the students in Alexis’s class. When asked if her students held more liberal or more conservative social beliefs, Alexis reported, “more conservative. I tend to have some liberal beliefs and that can be very difficult for them (methods students)...They seem to view their beliefs as reality...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis’s students’ traditional and conservative social beliefs surfaced during the discussion about the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James Loewen. In the discussion, one student flippantly stated, “Do you... [think] she would really teach her kids this stuff, like all the Indians died. . .go home and have a feast?” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). The other students at the table also were very doubtful about the truthfulness of the book. Later, during class discussion, the same student asked

Alexis, “How do you teach this, with all the bad stuff?” To which Alexis responded, “What do I teach? I do not teach Thanksgiving day...I teach a unit about immigration” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). During the final interview, Alexis reflected on these comments: “It just shows how ingrained those beliefs are and how difficult it is to change beliefs...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Interestingly, this class of students began the semester by asking “how do we not teach just ‘white man’s history’” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). The students’ previous experiences apparently served as a filter that inhibited them from learning new ways of thinking about certain historical events and figures. Angell (1998) noted a similar difficulty in changing the beliefs of preservice teachers concerning the teaching and learning of social studies.

Tension between content and methods

While discussing possible solutions to the tension between content and methods, Alexis highlighted another complication: “I don’t know how much more we can add onto the (teacher education) program. I don’t know that one class in anything is sufficient knowledge to prepare teachers” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). In an attempt to overcome this challenge, Alexis often reminded her students to do their own research on the topics they teach because “you will never know everything you need to know about American History” (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06).

Students’ negative experiences with Social Studies

Other issues discussed in chapter 2 included methods students’ negative previous experiences and dislike of social studies (Cuban 1991; Downey & Levstik 1991; Levstik 1996, Owens 1997), and the widespread lack of social studies historical content knowledge among elementary social studies methods students (Fritzer & Kumar 2002). This lack of content knowledge extends to all the other disciplines that are parts of social

studies, such as geography and economics. This lack of knowledge creates an inherent tension in instructing an elementary social studies methods course. Methods instructors must convey how to teach social studies, as well as the content of the disciplines that make up social studies.

Students' past negative experiences with social studies were evident in Alexis's course when many students reported having boring social studies instruction in elementary school (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06). Many of these negative experiences were the result of "social studies teaching that generally was not the most powerful, and they remember having to memorize the states and capitals" (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Issues Related to the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Field Placement

As noted by Yendol-Hoppey and Tilford (2004), field placements can complicate methods instruction because of both the varieties of instruction and, in some cases, the lack of instruction provided to students.

Lack of respect and professional development for elementary Social Studies

When asked if she believed her students approached this class with the same amount of respect as they approached methods courses for the assessed areas, Alexis responded, "I would say probably the first couple of classes, and I would say especially the group that I have this semester didn't really" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). However, she believed that the group's approach to the course improved during the semester, saying, "halfway through the semester they definitely put as much importance on it as they do some other subjects" (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). This initial lack of respect was at least partially, if not totally, related to the untested status of elementary social studies. "We were talking about the democratic community, *A Democratic Classroom*, the book. One of them was concerned that taking time to do extended projects would detract from

‘real learning’ that they needed to show on the FCAT” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). After this comment, Alexis engaged the class in a serious discussion about what “real learning” was. Alexis believed that the students’ level of respect for the course and elementary social studies improved as a result of her efforts: “I don’t want to say my pressure, but my pressure on them to see this as something equally as valuable as anything else that they’re doing...My enthusiasm for it, I hope, impressed them” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

Alexis also noted that the lack of professional development opportunities was a challenge: “I can’t think of any professional development experience I’ve had in social studies, ever” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). When asked why she believed there was a lack of professional development for social studies, Alexis frankly reported, “...my first response is that I think that because it’s not tested on FCAT, nobody cares about it. I also think that social studies is seen as not as important as the other subject areas” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). While not directly related to methods instruction, this lack of professional development may lower the overall quality of social studies instruction witnessed by the methods students in their placements.

Lack of time for elementary Social Studies

Due to FCAT pressure, many cooperating teachers gave the methods students limited time to teach their units. During unit presentation, the students made many comments about their limited instructional time, such as, “We only had thirty minutes and this was taught during...reading time...” (Alexis, Class 4/11/06). However, a few students reported that their teacher did provide them with an acceptable amount of instructional time: “We had a very good teacher; she was very flexible; she gave us lots of time” (Alexis, Class 4/11/06). Despite ever-present FCAT pressure, Alexis believed

the social studies methods course was helping to change the attitudes of the methods students. She stated: “Seeing them understand that teaching for democracy is important. And getting them to feel like, yes, this is really possible. Yes, I can really do this” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Other field placement issues

One of the main issues effecting Alexis’s instruction was the poor quality of examples, or lack of examples, of social studies instruction provided by the cooperating teachers. This placed Alexis in a difficult position because “...it becomes very difficult for me to espouse something that they don’t actually get to see in practice very much” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Due to Petty’s higher level of social studies instruction, this challenge only highlighted the differences between the two schools. The Elise interns had a very different setting than those at Petty, Alexis said:

The classroom settings that a lot of my students are in are not exemplary classrooms. Or they certainly aren’t exemplary social studies teaching....That is the biggest challenge, trying to make sure that they get everything that they need without stepping on the toes of another teacher. (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06)

Significantly, some methods students at Elise Elementary reported a complete absence of social studies instruction: “They never had social studies, except what we did...” (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06). Reflecting back on statements like this, Alexis lamented, “I know the students at Elise did not see as much social studies” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). This situation required Alexis to make instructional and assessment compromises: “How do you grade students in completely different placements?” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Another field placement challenge occurred because some cooperating teachers mandated either the content or the instructional methods for the students’ units. This challenge was evident from student comments such as, “She just wants us to teach about

what the book taught” (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06); “she (cooperating teacher) wanted us to stick to the teacher guide” (Alexis, Class 4/11/06); and “the teacher gave us the entire unit” (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06). However, Alexis reported the following situation in which she was successful in helping her students overcome a difficult situation: “These methods students were given a topic that they had to teach kids map skills...the teacher had really dug her heels in” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis met with the students outside of class and, with Alexis’s help, the students were able to plan and teach a successful unit. “In the end we were able to work out a generalization, and the lessons turned out to be great” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). However, Alexis also recalled a pair of methods students in a similar situation who did not seek her assistance and ended up with a less successful unit.

During the final interview, Alexis discussed the issues associated with kindergarten placements. She noted a possible source of the difficulty: “Kindergarten is really an interesting year of development...until you have a firm grasp of what that level of development is, planning a social studies unit is very difficult” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). The methods students’ inability to accurately assess kindergarten students’ developmental levels often resulted in instruction beyond the students’ skills. For example, “one group had a unit where they just could not understand where the students were and had to start over” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Alexis also noted that much of the instruction in kindergarten is very “social in nature,” and often students had difficulty recognizing instruction that was a part of social studies (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Methods students’ inability to recognize the opportunities for social studies instruction

could possibly be related to their limited overall experience with social studies and their resultant narrow concept of the nature of social studies.

Issues Related to Filling Dual Roles

Discussion of inservice elementary teachers who also serve as methods instructors is barely present in the research literature. Slekar (2006) discussed the situation, but only to acknowledge the absence of research on the topic. The following discussion describes issues Alexis encountered while serving in these dual roles.

Content and theoretical knowledge

Alexis noted her own lack of content knowledge related to the disciplines of social studies, a situation that can be traced back to her own experiences as a student: “I can’t remember a whole lot of elementary social studies experiences besides the common memorizing of the states and capitals and the preamble to the Constitution” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Fortunately, Alexis received better social studies instruction during high school. “I had excellent social studies teachers in high school, excellent in my view that they hooked me” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). The connection between Alexis’s topics of interest and her elementary social studies instruction was obvious. One of the units Alexis covered with her first grade students was about ancient Egypt. Alexis recalled, “The history parts were the parts that hooked me. I’ve always been very interested in Civil War history, American history, world history, ancient Egypt; things like that were always very interesting to me” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). However, Alexis realized she did not have an expansive content knowledge: “I lack content knowledge in many areas” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Also, when asked about her knowledge of the current theory and research concerning elementary social studies,

Alexis again noted a perceived deficiency: “Sometimes I feel like I am talking about things I do not have a lot of depth of knowledge about” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Limited time

Alexis noted her lack of time related to being both an inservice teacher and a social studies methods instructor: “Time is my biggest disadvantage. I don’t have as much time to devote to my methods students as I do, of course, to my own students” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Often the requirements of filling both roles created the need for Alexis to make decisions about her priorities: “my priority is my original students, not necessarily my master’s students” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). During a particularly stressful week, Alexis commented to me, “Thinking about getting all these units graded next week...just sends me over the edge...for my stress level...” (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06). During the final interview, the time issue came up again when discussing grading the units. However, Alexis noted grading was not as difficult as the previous semester “because I had already seen where they were with the presentations” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Her close attention to the students’ presentations was obvious, as she provided feedback and led the class in discussion about each unit (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06).

Credibility

One of the first things that became apparent when I observed Alexis during methods instruction was the substantial amount of respect her methods students gave her. This was obvious during my first observation when a student asked me, “Are you here to observe her? She rocks” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). The credibility Alexis enjoyed came primarily from her status as an alumna of the same teacher education program as her students, her visibility and accessibility as an on-site cooperating teacher, and her use of instructional videos that featured her teaching social studies to her first grade class. When

asked if she believed being an inservice teacher affected her credibility, Alexis noted, “It’s amazing. I think that they listen more to what I say because I am actually doing this work every day than they would to somebody who was a professor and was at the university” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis went on to explain why she believed being an inservice teacher enhanced her credibility in the eyes of her methods students: “I know what it’s like to be the teacher. I know what it’s like to have limited time. I know how to integrate social studies into my other subject areas” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). After further reflection, Alexis noted another factor in her credibility: “I will not teach those methods students anything I have not taught myself” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Negotiations for instructional time and freedom

The resistance of some cooperating teachers to provide students with total instructional freedom and instructional time put Alexis in an awkward position. For example, she did not relish initiating negotiating for instructional time and freedom with her Petty colleagues: “A disadvantage for me, especially being on site, is fielding other teachers who may not see social studies in the same light as I do. I have to navigate some of that for my students in some ways” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis acknowledged some of this resistance was due to a lack of knowledge by the cooperating teachers: “...some teachers don’t teach for generalizations and they don’t have an understanding of that, and when I send students out to go do that kind of teaching...I have to run some interference there sometimes” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). During their unit presentations at the end of the semester, the students also noted some cooperating teachers’ lack of knowledge about social studies. When discussing the cooperating teacher who had “dug her heels in” when insisting her methods students teach map skills, I asked Alexis if she attempted to negotiate with the teacher. Alexis said the teacher was

at Elise Elementary and she did not know her, but noted, “There would have been an attempt to negotiate using the university supervisor. That’s their job...I would not approach the teacher” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Advantages of filling dual roles

Alexis also discussed the advantage she had by being able to provide narrated, real-world, first person instructional examples through the use of a video recording of herself teaching. Alexis believed this was important because it allowed her students to see instruction in a real classroom. “I’ve shown them a lesson...of me teaching or of me working with a group of students ...and you see kids acting like total turkeys. Not listening. You see me...redirecting attention” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Moreover, by using video, Alexis was able to demonstrate how she also struggled as a social studies teacher: “I showed them a video of me trying to ask students what they thought about the Chinese zodiac. That completely flopped... So I showed them where I went wrong...” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). By viewing these struggles, students were able to see the real-world challenges of teaching elementary social studies.

Another advantage to filling these dual roles was having access to elementary social studies resources for use during social studies methods instruction. While discussing the “centers” activity, Alexis noted she not only used the resources provided to her as a teacher at Petty, but she also included her own, saying, “a lot of that stuff was my stuff, my personal stuff” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). During the final interview, Alexis also mentioned her intention to use additional personal resources, such as her grandfather’s tax return from the 1940s, along with a new commercially-produced resource: “I picked this up for next year; it is a primary sources kit, reproductions of Ellis Island documents” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). With access to these resources, Alexis

felt she could ensure her methods students would learn about teaching social studies with student-tested resources.

Themes and Summary of Findings for Alexis Johnson

Alexis Johnson voiced a number of beliefs about social studies education, including her definition that teaching is “showing someone how to do something...” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Many of Alexis’s beliefs were supported by the suggested syllabus or by readings in the suggested syllabus. Regarding social studies in general and social studies teaching in particular, Alexis emphasized her conviction that social studies is part of everyday life and should be a part of everyday instruction. Her belief-to-practice connections were evident during my interviews and observations. Two particular beliefs had the greatest effect on Alexis’s instructional practices: “teaching for understanding” and the importance of social studies instruction. Many of Alexis’s instructional practices were related to these two issues. While filling the dual roles of methods instructor and inservice elementary teacher, Alexis was privy to unique knowledge about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum and about the overall lack of quality and frequency of social studies instruction. Alexis’s experiences in these dual roles convinced her that the inclusion of social studies on the FCAT test, which she thought would be unfortunate, may be the only way to improve the status of social studies education.

Alexis faced a number of issues while teaching the methods course: issues related to the students themselves, issues related to the status of elementary social studies and field placement, and issues related to filling these dual roles. The next chapter will discuss the findings in regard to another research participant, Dan Charles.

CHAPTER 5 DAN CHARLES

Introduction and Background Information

Chapter 5 discusses the case findings for Dan Charles. Dan was an experienced fourth-grade teacher in his eighth year at Owen Elementary. As a child, Dan “always knew I was going to be a teacher. There was never any doubt” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). His only memories of social studies instruction as an elementary student were “memorizing the states and the capitals, memorize where this goes on the map, memorize whose export...”, all of which he felt was “very, very less than relevant to me” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). After completing high school in South Florida, he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Elementary Education at the same university that offered the elementary social studies methods course that he taught. He was nearing completion of a specialist’s degree in Education at this same university. During his teacher education program, Dan had one social studies methods course, about which he noted, “I must say that I was not real thrilled with it when I was finished....I really don’t remember much about the class at all” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). In the final year of his teacher education program, Dan was placed at Owen Elementary and was hired before he graduated.

Professional Experiences

At Owen Elementary, Dan taught third and fifth grades during his first year and fourth grade for the last seven years. Dan defined teaching as “helping someone else gain understanding of something new” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Recently Dan became a

National Board-certified elementary teacher. Dan also benefited from the school's close relationship with the university, based on the designation of Owen Elementary as a Professional Development School (PDS), which is defined:

Professional development schools are partnerships formed by teacher education programs and pre-K–12 schools intent on sharing responsibility for the preparation of new teachers, the development of experienced faculty members, and the improvement of practice-all with the goal of enhancing student achievement. (Levine 2002, p. 65)

In addition to his relationship with the university as a methods instructor, he was also an advanced graduate student. Through his school's PDS status, Dan was part of a program that enabled inservice teachers to earn graduate credit by taking specifically designed classes with university personnel to address issues specific to their schools. This relationship has had a profound effect on his school: "Our school has grown so much that I can't even describe all the changes" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). This relationship provided Dan with a number of opportunities to participate in professional development activities, including making presentations at the Professional Development Schools Council conference. In addition to these professional development activities, he served as a cooperating teacher by taking a full-time intern during the previous school years. During the semester in which the study was completed, Dan was teaching the social studies methods course for the second time. He also instructed a language arts methods course during two previous semesters. Overall, he benefited from a longstanding and multifaceted relationship with the university.

Owen Elementary

Owen Elementary is also situated in Dennis County, but unlike Petty Research and Development School, it is under the auspices of the county school board. Owen is in a town approximately fifteen miles from the university. Situated in a rural setting, Owen is

a unique school that only serves students in grades three, four, and five. It has a diverse student population, including a majority of Whites with some African Americans and a few recently settled students from Mexico. In the school year before the study, Owen Elementary was labeled as not making “adequate yearly progress” under the NCLB accountability system, due to poor performance of a student subgroup on standardized tests. This created pressure to improve student achievement in the assessed subjects. Owen Elementary has a longstanding tradition of a fourth-grade field trip to St. Augustine as part of the study of Florida history. The tradition of this field trip has provided room in the curriculum every year for social studies instruction. The school building is an interesting design intended to promote “open classrooms” with the use of movable partitions. However, most of the rooms have been permanently renovated into traditional classrooms. The methods students in Dan’s class comprised interns from Owen Elementary and More Cooperative School.

More Cooperative School.

More Cooperative School is a K–8 school located in a small town twenty miles from the university. Also in a rural setting, More serves a mostly White population with a few African American students. The top of the school’s website reads, “More Cooperative School—Developing confident, motivated, self-disciplined learners who will contribute to improvement of self, family, and nation” (More 2006). From comments made by the methods students, instruction at More tended to be more “traditional” and based on a prescribed curriculum in each subject area (Dan, Class, 3/22/06).

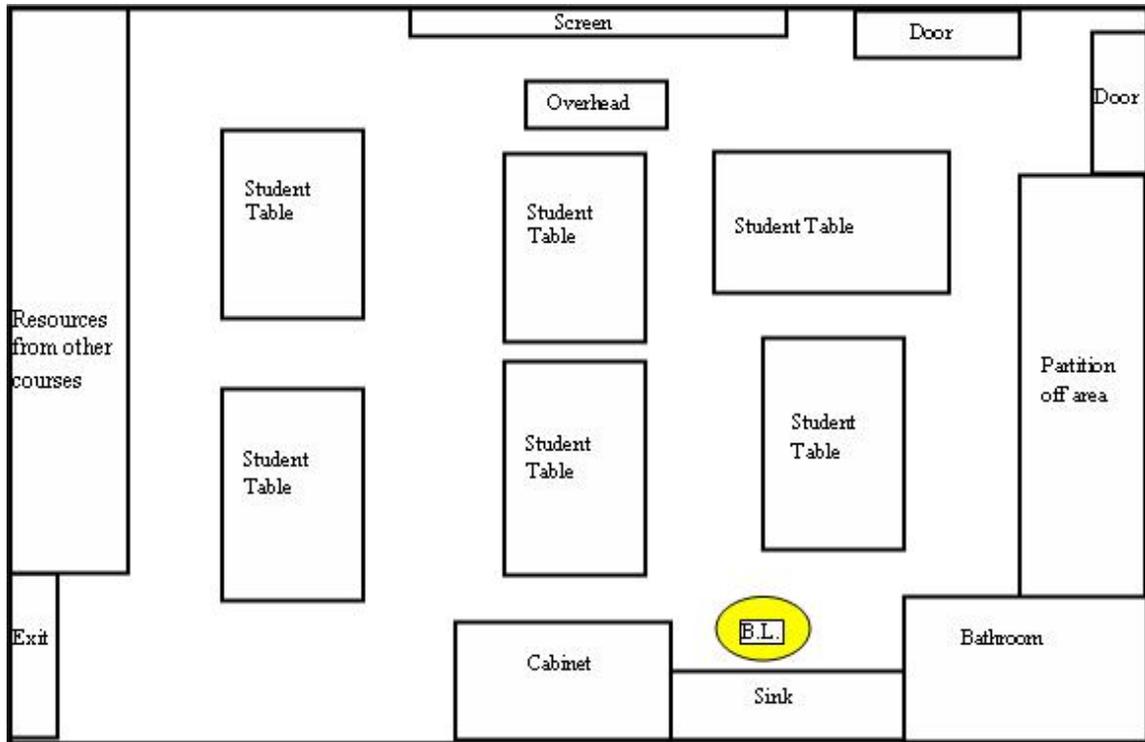


Figure 5-1. Dan's Classroom.

Dan's Classroom and Instruction

In his early thirties, Dan had a positive and easygoing manner that worked well with both his fourth grade and his methods students. This attitude was evident in his discussion of the NCLB act, about which he quipped, "If a teacher would have named it, it would have been 'all children leap forward'" (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). Unlike the other participants, Dan did not instruct the methods course in his classroom; instead, he used a larger classroom set aside for instruction of education classes. The room was used by many different instructors; the walls were adorned with evidence of the varied courses taught there. I observed from the back of the class and was able to hear the conversations at many of the tables where the students sat.

Dan's teaching mostly comprised brief instruction about the topic of interest, followed by directions for an activity based on the topic and ending with a class

discussion. Often, Dan provided examples from his own teaching and always seemed to have a relevant piece of student work on hand. The activities were very exploratory in nature, as students worked together to create a position or a visual representation of their ideas. During discussions, Dan would take the role of facilitator rather than leading the discussion, and he mostly acted only to keep the conversation on topic and ensure that everyone was able to contribute. Overall, Dan's instruction appeared very well planned, student-centered, and interactive.

What Beliefs About Social Studies Education Do These Inservice Teachers Hold? Beliefs Concerning Teaching

Dan believed that teaching should be student-centered and based on meeting the students' particular needs. When asked about his approach to teaching, he replied, "Teaching can never be the same because you teach a person. You never teach a subject to a person" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This belief was evident in the way he planned and conducted his methods course. He also voiced this belief to his methods students during a discussion about planning their own instruction: "You are going to have to change your teaching to meet your students" (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). As an example, Dan explained how he calculated his reaction on 9/11: "I needed to know who my kids were. . . I knew that those kids did not need to see what was going to be on TV" (Class 4/19/06). While "Meeting the Needs of Students" was listed as an objective in the suggested syllabus, Dan discussed working towards meeting his students' needs on many occasions prior to his involvement with the course (See appendix B).

Beliefs Concerning Social Studies and Teaching Social Studies

When asked to define "social studies," Dan responded with a complex and multifaceted definition that illustrated his still-developing beliefs:

I think social studies has become more over-encompassing than before...I always kind of explained it as more removed from where you are right now. And in the past few years, what I've kind of been developing is this definition of social studies happen(ing) all the time. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Dan went on to describe how social studies was not only its many individual disciplines, such as history, geography, and economics, but also encompassed things such as “social skills, social awareness, social understanding” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This broad-based belief about the nature of social studies led to a definition that was a “more concrete understanding of social studies...before it was more of an abstract. I thought of history and different things versus more social skills and more affective elements of social studies” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). These skills also figured heavily in Dan’s beliefs about the importance of social studies instruction for students:

...in order to become part of a social society, and the society as a whole. To be able to participate, to be able to cope with problems, solve problems...[Social studies] has a role in everything that all of your students do all day. So if you ignore it, you’re really going to hurt your students in the long run. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Dan’s broad definition of social studies was evident when he addressed 9/11 during class: “It’s basically a social studies issue that...takes over every part of the students’ daily lives...how are we going to address it?” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). While Dan’s idea of social studies reflected elements of Brophy and Alleman’s concept of “life application” of social studies (1996, p. 43), it appeared from his comments that Dan’s ideas had been developing over a number of years before he taught the methods course.

Dan’s belief in an all-encompassing definition and in the importance of social studies was one of the themes for the course, along with three other specific beliefs about social studies: teaching students to be critical consumers, presenting honest portrayals, and integrating other subject areas. First, he discussed the importance of teaching elementary students to be critical consumers of the information presented to them by

saying: “One of the most important things is that you want your students to question their sources...” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). This also related to Dan’s belief in the importance of presenting appropriately complex and honest portrayals of events, issues, and people to elementary students: “We should be teaching all of the qualities that some people may have” (Dan, Class, 4/2/006). However, as discussed later in this chapter, teaching elementary students to be critical of their sources and presenting honest portrayals of historical figures turned out to be difficult for some of his methods students to fully embrace. Finally, Dan made constant reference to his belief in the importance and feasibility of integrating other subject areas into social studies instruction: “Use social studies to teach other things...it can be done if you try hard enough to make the connections” (Dan, Class, 4/19/06). Dan noted his firsthand experience and success during the previous year in integrating social studies into reading: “It gave us the ability to teach pretty good social studies” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies Methods

Dan also exhibited very student-centered beliefs concerning social studies methods instruction. While discussing his approach to helping his methods students craft a generalization for their teaching unit, Dan explained how he met with each pair on multiple occasions until all the pairs had a suitable generalization. While meeting students’ needs was a theme, his dominant belief specific to social studies methods instruction was summarized by the following statement: “Well, I almost think like I’m trying to save social studies, keep it in the classroom” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This belief was related to Dan’s experience at Owen Elementary, when the school failed to meet “adequate yearly progress” the previous year and devoted more and more attention to the assessed subjects. This led to a cutback in social studies instruction.

How Do the Beliefs These Inservice Teachers Hold Inform Their Practice in Their Social Studies Methods Course?

On numerous occasions, Dan discussed the importance of making lessons meaningful for elementary students. He believed that when students were required to think critically and make their own judgments about presented material, it was more likely the lesson would be meaningful. This belief carried over into his methods instruction and was evident during his discussion of the centers activities (Dan, Class, 3/14/06). Instead of immediately telling the methods students how he would have used a particular center, he instructed them to “look at the things critically and make decisions...here [are] some things...What can you do with [them]? What are some drawbacks? And it really gets them to make sound judgments...and it would be more meaningful” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This belief was particularly evident during the 9/11 discussion, when he posed the question, “If you were in the classroom on 9/11, what would do you for the moment, and then thereafter...for the rest of the year?” (Dan, Class, 4/19/06). Instead of beginning the conversation with how he handled the situation, he posed the question and let the students come up with their own solutions. The methods students recalled their own personal experiences as students on 9/11 and then as a table group formulated and defended possible reactions to similar events in the role of classroom teachers. Each group came up with very different plans and the ensuing discussion was a powerful and meaningful experience because each student used their personal experiences to consider their reactions as teachers. If Dan had simply told the class how he reacted to the situation then twenty eight other perspectives would have gone unheard and unconsidered.

Dan also believed his methods students needed a variety of instructional examples: "...this is what a fourth-grade RAFT (assignment) looks like..." (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). In addition to his personal examples and those provided in the course materials, he also solicited instructional examples at the beginning of each class by asking for "social studies sightings" because he did not "want them to think that I'm the only way. Because, I mean, I'm one person and one grade level at one school in one place. And so I want them to be able to see a broader picture" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

Because Dan believed in a broad definition of social studies ("It's social skills, social awareness, social understanding"), he wanted to expand his methods students' definition of social studies by bringing in examples from his classroom: "I try to get students to discuss it and talk about why they think this is something that can be addressed in social studies. Why is this social studies?" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

Directly related to his past experiences as a social studies methods student was Dan's belief that he needed to make a "a personal connection" with his methods students (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). The instructor in his methods course did not share information about previous professional experiences, making it difficult for Dan to connect to the instruction. Based on this experience, he began his first methods class with "overheads of my kids and where I've taught and populations..." (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). As discussed later in this chapter, such a practice created a strong personal connection between Dan and his methods students.

Dan's stated belief "that no matter what happens I'm never going to be doing it the same way twice" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06) aligned with his practice of surveying his methods students during the first class with a questionnaire that "asks the students how

they appreciate learning best...and how they learn...and so what they'll do is look at that, and that's how I try to craft the rest of the semester..." (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). This practice also related to his belief that "to make the most meaning out of the content, I have to help meet their learning styles, just like any other kid" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Dan had strong beliefs regarding the need to focus his methods instruction on "saving social studies" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). That is why he instructed his methods students in how to address critical barriers to social studies instruction. One such critical issue was the lack of time for instruction:

I have to teach them how to negotiate, in addition to what social studies is and how to do it. I teach them, well, here's how you have to negotiate. You have to say, here's one of the things that I have to do; can we somehow try to integrate it with other things? Can I teach 'cause and effect' through my unit on social studies? (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06)

How Does Filling These Dual Roles Inform Their Beliefs About the Status of Social Studies in the Elementary Curriculum?

Information Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Channels of Communication

Based on serving in the dual roles of elementary social studies methods instructor and elementary teacher, Dan had access to unique information about the status of elementary social studies at his school, More Cooperative School, and Dennis County. Dan knew that allocated time for social studies was shrinking: "...a couple years ago they had a different schedule...but everyone in Owen Elementary and More Cooperative School had social studies time blocks" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). The results of the new time schedule were clear: "If you follow all the procedures perfectly, there is no time for social studies...I think 20 minutes or 15 minutes, some amount of time that's impossible to do anything" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Because of this change, the choice to reduce social studies instruction often was not up to the cooperating teacher, "and most of the

mentor teachers that I know who love teaching social studies....think it's really valuable, think it's very important. But they feel like they can't teach it because of the other things..." (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). He also noted some teachers were unwilling to allow social studies instruction until after the FCAT test was administered. However, he saw a silver lining to the situation. Some cooperating teachers were using their interns as an excuse to "make room for social studies in their curriculum" and resisted "whatever pressure they might have from their CRT or principal..." (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Alarmed, Dan reported that testing pressure was even limiting the freedom to integrate social studies:

We taught reading through social studies. So we would do units on something and we would do...comprehension strategies and things [like] that...But this year we were unable to do that because of—I don't know if the guidelines are stricter or the monitoring is tighter or what...we were told before that we were not allowed to do that because if we have a different group of students that we teach for reading or for social studies, we were unable to overlap them... (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

The mandated time schedule was also hurting methods instruction, because methods students were unable to witness actual instruction: "This year the interns are having to rework their schedules so they can see social studies, if it is happening at all, much less participate in it and do their units" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This created a situation where methods students "have to work probably twice as hard to get something done with social studies...because of all the other factors that are preventing them (the cooperating teacher) from being able to do it themselves" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

As a teacher, Dan was aware of how a prescribed and enforced time schedule created situations in which powerful social studies instruction was difficult if not impossible: "We received little nasty letters lately saying that we are to teach 90 minutes of direct reading instruction...I don't know where it comes from...I'm sure it's from the

county office but I don't know that for a fact" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Dan summed up how working as a methods instructor provided him with information:

Being the methods instructor and by experiencing and by looking at all the trends over time, over other places...I can see what's happening. I think other teachers right now don't see what's happening with social studies...They don't realize that it's really being swept under the rug (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

As a teacher in Dennis County for eight years, Dan recalled times when there was more flexibility in regard to the subjects to be taught, and how much time was to be allotted to each subject. He noted when changes started: "I guess two or three years ago the county...I don't know if it's a state thing or whatever...they've reworked the way the schedule is..." (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Also, as a teacher, Dan was subject to oversight to ensure he was teaching only the assessed skills: "We have people who are constantly reminding us, you have to be doing reading. And reading is not this. Reading is not that. Reading is not the other" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Beliefs Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Testing

Dan humorously summed up his beliefs about the status of social studies: "It's almost like, shhhh, we're doing social studies – don't look!" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Based on this situation, Dan believed schools were not preparing students for the future: "Students that are graduating are going to have a real hard time in society because they're not going to know how to solve a lot of the problems that they have..." (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan explained the results of all the pressure: "Because of these bureaucratic issues, we're having to change the way we're teaching" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). He shared a common belief concerning the 'give-and-take' of social studies testing:

I think if it was put on the FCAT, it would be sort of a doubled-edged sword, because it would be taught more in classrooms, it would be more of a priority in classrooms, it would be something that would be on your prescribed curriculum schedule, but at that same time it might be cheapened...because it will probably

just assess standards which will be facts/concepts. It probably won't be able to assess the generalizations the kids take away because how can you assess that with a standardized test? You can't (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

For Dan, a clear understanding of the situation carried its own burden: "Pretty much the biggest struggle...is knowing that there's less and less of it happening..." (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

What Do These Inservice Teachers Believe are the Issues They Encountered While Teaching the Methods Course?

Issues Related to Methods Students

The following section is a discussion of issues Dan encountered related to the methods students.

Conservative social beliefs

One of the most difficult issues Dan encountered during the methods course was the conservative social beliefs of his methods students. These beliefs were most evident during discussion of the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, when students were having a hard time accepting the information in the book. One group shared the following comments:

- Who says this guy is like the bible of history? Kids will end up fighting over history.
- A parent is going to be like, 'Why is my kid learning this?'
- This is a very hateful book.
- We have a shared history. That is what textbooks do.
- You want kids to question things, but not everything.
- I was reading this stuff...and I consider myself an educated person...I did not know what he was talking about (Class, 3/22/06).

While discussing this during the final interview, Dan summed up the situation:

I mean, the reason I like to have that book around is to engage in conversations like this...what happened was they held their experiences stronger, so they thought that this guy (Loewen) was the one who was lying, not their classroom teachers (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Dan's observations illustrate why it can be difficult to overcome students' conservative social beliefs, which may constrain an inservice teacher's ability to align his/her teaching practices with students' ideological beliefs. To cite another example, in the "Social Studies Philosophy" assignment, one of Dan's methods students said that she believed the student should be the center of the curriculum, but during instruction she clearly needed to be in charge. According to Dan, "her whole philosophy of teaching interfered with her idea of what social studies is" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Tension between content and methods

Dan noticed that the typical preservice elementary teacher reached his social studies methods course with limited content knowledge, noting that most of his students, "had a real, real weak, limited background in the social studies we've taught. And they've had to do a lot of work to figure things out" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). This situation prompted Dan to suggest to his methods students, "You are all going to be students and teachers of social studies if you are going to teach it..." (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). Dan noted that this lack of knowledge often surfaced when methods students included inaccurate historical information in their lesson plans. Dan reported that he was often able to catch these mistakes before the methods student taught the lesson and suggested the student "review the material" in order to correct the information (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Dan's method students' lack of basic content knowledge created a dilemma for his methods instruction, forcing him to choose between teaching content or helping students

correct their mistakes, which took away time that should have been focused on teaching instructional methods. His students' lack of exposure to social studies created another challenge for Dan: His students did not really know what social studies is. He stated:

The first day of class they come in with this preconceived notion that it's maps and dates and people. And we have to talk about...a whole bunch of different things" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). The methods students' narrow conception of social studies most often included celebratory history and holiday art projects, prompting one student to quip, "My mom still has my turkey I made in first grade. (Dan, Class, 3/22/06)

Students' negative experiences with Social Studies

Students' negative experiences with elementary school social studies instruction challenged Dan's methods instruction. Most often, these negative experiences came from textbook reading, answering questions on worksheets, and rote memorization activities. Dan explained, "It was all segmented. There were no connections...I had to know the states and capitals" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). While evidence of the students' negative experiences was not as prevalent in Dan's class as with the other participants, it was nonetheless an issue he had to consider.

Issues Related to the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Field Placement

The following section is a discussion of the issues Dan encountered related to the status of elementary social studies and the schools where the methods students were placed.

Lack of respect and professional development for elementary Social Studies

The methods students in Dan's course were well aware of the peripheral and untested status of elementary social studies. This caused some students to openly question the feasibility of some of the more in-depth and time-consuming social studies instructional methods he suggested during the course. When asked about the situation,

Dan confirmed, “There are many experiences that I can think of where a lot of people would bring up the FCAT, and we can’t do that because of the FCAT, or can’t do this because of FCAT” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). He used such comments to remind his students of the importance of social studies, stating, “Social studies is something that’s important and it’s being left out” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06).

Another challenge related to the status of elementary social studies was the lack of available social studies professional development opportunities. When asked about any social studies-related activities in which he had participated, Dan responded, “I wish our district provided a lot more with social studies...If there’s a reading in-service, your sub will be paid for. If it’s social studies, you have to pay if you want to do it” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Lack of opportunities for professional development in social studies made it difficult to share social studies practices directly with other experienced teachers. However, based on his own personal interest and his position as a fourth-grade teacher, Dan sought out his own professional development opportunities: “The only thing that I’ve really done as far as I know has just been through my own personal interest, and just working with the (grade level) team that I have” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

Lack of time for elementary Social Studies

The secondary status of social studies became most evident at the school and classroom levels during the students’ unit presentations at the end of the semester. The following comments were made by Dan’s methods students during their presentations:

- We had to focus down due to time constraints.
- We started a unit on the middle ages...but FCAT and spring break messed it up... We ran out of time.
- We had about ten minutes a day.

- We are in first grade and they do not ever have social studies... We had to stay within the constraints we were given.
- We did not have the chance to go over it because we were running out of time (Class 4/26/06).

When asked about challenging situations, including lack of time for social studies, Dan replied, "I think we're very limited in what we're able to do because...the experiences they're having with external pressures or whatever limit what we're able to do" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Despite the widespread nature of this challenge, Dan felt that the elementary social studies methods course was more successful at creating awareness about these issues than when he was a methods student:

I think...actually the way it's structured right now is a whole lot better than it was when I was there eight, nine, ten years ago...it has a more active stance to where it's alerting people to what's going on and trying to make people more aware [not to] do that when you become a teacher. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Other field placement issues

Other challenging issues related to the placement but not directly to the status of elementary social studies emerged during the semester. One challenge was cooperating teachers mandating the content or instructional methods of the social studies units created by the methods students. The methods students commented during the unit presentations at the end of the semester, "We did not have very much leeway"; "we had to give a test"; "we had to give a study guide" (Class, 4/26/2006). When asked about this situation, Dan responded: "This semester it seemed to be about 40 percent of the cooperating teachers said exactly what had to be taught" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Most often when cooperating teachers mandated the content and instructional methods, the units were textbook-driven and resulted in weak generalizations and student work.

Kindergarten placements posed another interesting challenge related to the field placement of students. Some methods students felt their students were not ready for some of the more challenging social studies skills, saying, “Our kids have a hard time seeing things from other points of view” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). When asked about some of the comments made by his methods students related to difficulties in kindergarten placements, Dan responded, “[In] a lot of lower grade levels, a lot of the interns...don’t seem to think their kids can do it. They almost feel like, well, we have to teach them to read first or they just play” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). To overcome this challenge, he pushed his methods students “to think out of the box a little bit” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Dan reported when methods students rose to this challenge, they were able to create meaningful instruction for their students.

Issues Related to Filling Dual Roles

The following section is a discussion of the issues Dan encountered related to filling the dual roles of inservice teacher and methods instructor.

Content and theoretical knowledge

A particular challenge to Dan’s social studies methods instruction was his own limited theoretical and historical content knowledge in social studies. This challenge stemmed from his experiences as an elementary and high school student, where he felt he did not learn adequate historical content, and from his experiences as a teacher education student in the social studies methods course, where he felt he did not gain enough theoretical knowledge about social studies instruction: “I don’t feel like I know enough about teaching social studies sometimes” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan offered insight into the difference between a practicing teacher serving as a methods instructor and a university-based person in the same role, “I think that the big difference between

university-based and school-based is [that] university-based people just are more familiar with that (theoretical knowledge), have more experiences with that” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

When discussing his own historical content knowledge, Dan quipped, “I’ve always thought that I have...the worst social studies background as far as facts content” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Dan believed this gave him something in common with his methods students because of his similar experiences in elementary and high school, which included taking an advanced placement American history class. Dan believed his own lack of historical content knowledge had improved because of his position as a fourth-grade teacher: “I’ve learned a whole bunch more since I’ve been teaching fourth grade...and every year I’ll learn more about it” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Limited time

Like all teachers, Dan himself was pressed for time to complete the obligations associated with being a classroom teacher; being a methods instructor added another set of obligations: “Yeah, time is really tough...sometimes it really is hard to get a lot of this stuff done” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). As the semester drew to a close, he had to do additional work grading the methods students’ units. When asked if this work took away from his preparations for teaching his elementary students, he responded, “It really didn’t...and I don’t know if I should say this, but I always made my [elementary students] kids the first priority” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Credibility

When observing Dan’s methods instruction, I could clearly see that he had a personal connection and a substantial amount of credibility with his methods students. This can be traced to three particular sources of credibility: his status as a former student

of the same teacher education program as his methods students; his visibility, approachability, and expertise as an on-site teacher and cooperating teacher; and his connections with the university as an advanced graduate student.

As a former student of the same teacher education program, Dan was familiar with his methods students' experiences. He reminded them of his experiences in the same program with comments such as, "When I started, I was a shy person" (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). He stated: "I told them that I went through (the program), so I think that's part of it...knowing that I graduated from the same [program]...so I talk about things that I did with them and I think that's part of it" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Dan was also able to ensure his credibility and establish a positive connection with his students because of the perspective gained from his position as a fourth-grade teacher: "My most important priority is getting it (social studies) into my kids, and a lot of the interns; that's where they are right now...it's harder for them to connect to what somebody's study said or...somebody's theory" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). When asked why he believed this type of credibility was not extended to former teachers who become university-based professionals, Dan explained,

In their (methods students) mind, because you're two feet away from a classroom or one year away, they don't consider you in the same area or the same field as someone who has been in there this morning or five minutes ago or right there... (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

However, Dan's close connection with his methods students and approachability as an on-site teacher had an interesting drawback:

A lot of times the interns will say things and do things that I just don't know that they would say or do if it was a university-based person. . .talk about their other instructors, and how they are this, they have this mannerism, or they do this thing, and they're not very intelligent...(Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

This attitude of familiarity placed Dan in an uncomfortable position, and he had to remind his methods students of the unprofessional nature of such comments.

Negotiations for instructional time and freedom

A final advantage Dan believed he had as an on-site practicing teacher was his ability to help his methods students negotiate with their cooperating teachers for instructional time and creative freedom for their social studies teaching units. Dan let his methods students know he was willing to help with negotiations: “If you are ever having trouble where I can help you, let me know” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). When asked how he approached such discussions, Dan said:

The interns would say, ‘My teacher won’t let me.’ And I am able to negotiate more because I know the conditions; I know most of the teachers. I don’t know all of the ones from More, but I know some of them. And I can say, look, I know what she’s teaching, I know how she does it. I’ll go with you. We can talk together and we can come up with an idea. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Thus, given the limited amount of instructional time and freedom afforded by some cooperating teachers, Dan’s position as an on-site, practicing teacher may have been one of the most important advantages he had.

Advantages of filling dual roles

In addition to enhanced credibility and opportunities for a personal connection with his methods students, Dan felt that being a practicing teacher serving as a methods instructor had additional advantages. Being an inservice teacher allowed him more access to authentic resources than a university-based instructor: “I also think we have more resources available, real resources in classrooms the kids are using...we have access to whatever is being used right now in the county” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Indeed, he often used these resources during his methods instruction. In addition, Dan had experience with the social studies strategies that were part of the course. This was evident

when he provided his methods students with student work samples from his elementary students, noting, “The RAFT strategy is one of my favorite reading response strategies...once you do it with your kids, it quickly becomes a favorite with kids...” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). When an unfamiliar or new strategy came to his attention, Dan tested the strategy on his own elementary students (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Moreover, when his methods students expressed doubts about the feasibility of a recommended strategy, Dan invited the students to his room to observe:

But by having them see that these are real kids, and it doesn't have to look like the ideal perfect lesson that you might see sometimes, in order to do a good job teaching social studies, I think that it helps the (methods) students see that what's in this book can happen in this room with these kids, believe it or not. (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06)

Themes and Summary of Findings for Dan Charles

On the whole, Dan voiced beliefs about teaching that centered on adapting instruction to meet the individual needs of elementary students, as well as the needs of his methods students. He discussed his beliefs in the value of social studies instruction for elementary students and the fact that his own personal definition of social studies had expanded to include such things as social skills. Dan believed his main job as an elementary social studies methods instructor was to “save” social studies from being eliminated from the elementary school curriculum.

Based on his beliefs about social studies and his students, Dan engaged in specific practices he felt were consistent with his beliefs. For example, since he believed in “saving” social studies, he instructed his methods students in how to negotiate for social studies instructional time. He also voiced strong support for the need to make social studies meaningful for elementary students by allowing them to think critically and to make choices about topics of study. Furthermore, because Dan believed his methods

students needed to know a variety of instructional examples, he engaged in the practice of surveying his students at the beginning of every class for examples of social studies instruction from their placements. His own experiences as a methods student led him to make personal connections with his methods students; thus, he started his first class with information about his educational and professional experiences. Also evident was his belief in the need to tailor his instruction to meet the needs of his students; thus, he surveyed his students at the beginning of the semester about their learning styles and planned his instructional methods based on this information.

Dan's dual roles as methods instructor and practicing teacher made him a well-informed professional and provided him with nuanced knowledge about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum in his school and in Dennis County. This knowledge was gained through long-term experience at the same school, enabling him to note the sharp decline in time allotted to social studies instruction at his school and at schools countywide. In addition, Dan's experiences instructing the methods course led him to believe that cooperating teachers felt direct pressure not to engage in any social studies instruction; by having an intern, they felt it was "safe" to teach social studies because the interns were required to do so. Dan described the current status of social studies in the elementary curriculum as 'awful' and expressed concerns about the future of elementary students who did not receive any social studies instruction.

Dan discussed a number of issues associated with his social studies methods instruction and noted two major issues related to his methods students. While reflecting on comments made by his methods students in response to the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Dan discussed the method students' conservative and critical interpretation of

the book's content. Moreover, he noted a number of issues related to the status of social studies; chief among these was the lack of instructional time afforded to social studies and the issues this presented for methods instruction. Finally, Dan discussed issues related to filling dual roles of methods instructor and inservice teacher. Dan believed his long-term, multifaceted relationship with the teacher education program and his visibility as an inservice teacher accorded him a high level of credibility with his methods students. He also noted that his presence on campus facilitated negotiations for instructional time for the interns placed at his school site.

CHAPTER 6 NORA IGLESIAS

Background Information

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings for Nora Iglesias, an experienced fourth grade teacher at Thebaut Elementary. In her early thirties, Nora attended a large state university for her first two years of college before finishing at a smaller regional state university closer to where she grew up. During her undergraduate teacher preparation program, she had one social studies methods course, which she described as “very poorly taught by a retired teacher” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). However, Nora’s teacher education program also included a general methods course in which she wrote a large unit on the state of Alaska that she used as a model during her methods instruction. Nora graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education. After two years of teaching, she enrolled in graduate studies at a small state school in the Northeast, where she earned a dual master’s degree in Educational Psychology and Special Education.

Professional Experiences

Nora’s first official classroom experience came during her student teaching internships. Her first two were at an under-resourced elementary school in a large urban area serving poor and minority students. Her final internship was at an elementary school close to where she grew up. She described it as “a great experience, and my cooperating teacher was absolutely great” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Nora’s first teaching job was in a small industrial town in the mid-South. Her two years of teaching there were followed by a year of teaching four- and five-year-olds in a preschool setting. Then Nora came to

the local area and began teaching at Thebaut Elementary, where she has been for the last four years.

Nora has participated in professional development experiences related to her role as a fourth grade teacher, including attending a workshop at a local museum to learn about Florida history. Nora also belongs to the Florida Reading Association, attends its conference every year and belongs to the International Reading Association, whose conference she attended twice. The semester during which the study was conducted was Nora's first experience teaching the social studies methods course. She planned to instruct the course again in the future.

Thebaut Elementary

Thebaut Elementary, located within walking distance of the university, is adjacent to a large park and is dotted with many mature trees, giving the campus a suburban feel. A large elementary school by district standards, Thebaut Elementary was rezoned recently, resulting in an increased number of students with a lower socioeconomic status. Thebaut Elementary is under the auspices of the Dennis County School Board and has experienced changes in the past few years related to time schedules, which limits the time spent on social studies instruction. In spite of these pressures, Nora reported social studies instruction was valued at her school and instructional time for social studies was a required part of each grade level's daily schedule. Nora's methods students came from Thebaut and Howe Elementary schools.

Howe Elementary

Howe Elementary is located on the outskirts of the town where the university is located. Howe offers a single curriculum up to third grade and two separate curricula for students in fourth and fifth grades, "Academy of Traditional Studies" and "Academy of

Math, Science, and Technology.” White students comprise 40 percent of the student population, African Americans 45 percent, and 15 percent represent other groups.

Howe’s AYP Status was listed as provisional, but the school had earned an “A” grade from the state the three previous years (Howe 2006). Despite this grade, the comments made by Nora and the methods students placed there indicated that Howe was a lower performing school than Thebaut.

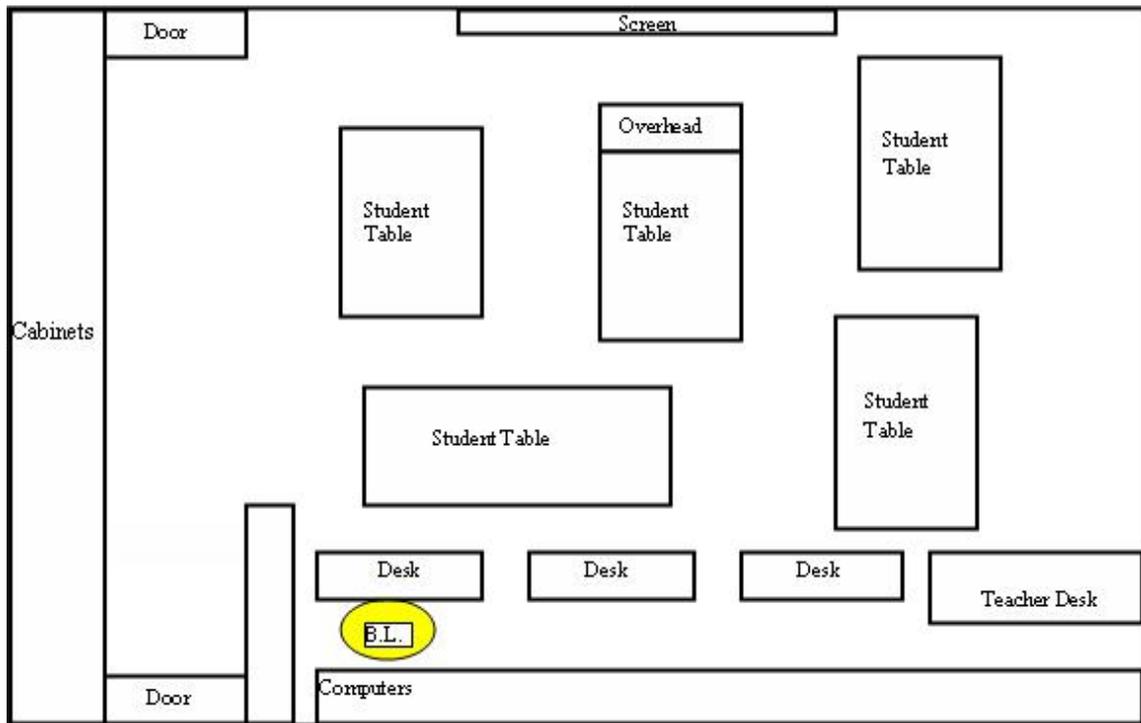


Figure 6-1. Nora’s Classroom

Nora’s Classroom and Instruction

Nora’s classroom was situated close to the entrance of Thebaut Elementary and across from garden plots cared for by each grade level. Visually organized, the room was typical of many fourth grade classrooms, filled with learning materials and with students’ desks formed into tables, with an overhead projector at the front of the room. One wall was all windows, allowing in natural light and framing in its view a large oak tree. With all of the methods students packed into all the available desks, two students and I had to

sit in the back at additional tables next to the well-worn collection of *Harry Potter* and *Chronicles of Narnia* books. Nora's focus on reading instruction and children's literature was evident from the posters adorning the walls. Social studies instruction was listed in the posted daily agenda, "10:30–11:30—Social Studies" (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). Nora's positive and matter-of-fact persona worked well with her methods students, and she often used humor to spice up discussions or provided amusing examples of fourth grade behavior. Overall, she was very engaging, personable and well liked by her students.

Typically, Nora started class by taking care of administrative and procedural concerns; then she used the provided course materials to organize and guide her instruction. Nora's instruction focused on "real world" applications of social studies, with class discussions highlighted by examples from Nora's experiences with the topic of interest. Nora stayed within the general structure of the provided materials, but also gave ample time to address individual students' concerns and always expanded the discussion to include students' interests. Overall, Nora's instruction was concise, applied, and interesting.

What Beliefs About Social Studies Education Do These Inservice Teachers Hold? Beliefs Concerning Teaching

Nora's beliefs about teaching focused on the value of creating meaningful learning experiences for students in a practical and efficient manner. Nora's "practicality ethic" (Doyle and Ponder 1977–78) served as the main theme for her course: "Make it cost effective" (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). Typically, a comment about the importance of being practical was followed by another about the importance of making learning experiences meaningful: "something meaningful, active and fun" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora also professed her belief in the importance of making elementary students critical thinkers:

“That’s our goal, to get them to think for themselves” (Nora Class 4/19/06). This belief aligned with the “informed social criticism” vision of the *Lies My Teacher Told Me* assignment and, as will be noted later, Nora’s methods students voiced similar beliefs during their presentations.

Based on insights gained during her teaching career, she believed in a balanced approach to teaching: “What happens is the pendulum swings too far to the extreme with, say, whole language and phonics, when really we need to be looking at a balanced approach” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). This belief extended to her thoughts about the prospect of having social studies included on standardized tests: “I just think we have taken this as far as the pendulum can swing, and we are officially stuck” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Beliefs Concerning Social Studies and Teaching Social Studies

Nora discussed her beliefs about what social studies is, the reasons it should be taught, what it teaches, and how it should be taught. She believed social studies “is anthropology, sociology, history, economics, and philosophy. And I think it is the field of study where people learn and examine and evaluate and apply our relationship to each other and to the world and communities” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Nora’s definition closely resembled the NCSS definition found in Brophy and Alleman (1996). Noting her lack of experience with social studies, Nora said her beliefs have changed because of her access to the course materials: “My beliefs have changed in five years. Really, probably my beliefs have changed in the last three months, from teaching this class and reading this stuff” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). This was one of the few occasions any of the participants directly attributed any of their beliefs to the provided materials.

Nora cited civic skills as the primary skill learned through social studies: “I think it’s really important to teach them what it’s about to be a citizen and what happens in the government” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). A similar sentiment was noted by Brophy and Alleman (1996) when they described one of their goals for social studies as “civic efficacy.” Nora noted other reasons social studies should be included in the curriculum: “Every child needs to learn about those topics—history, geography, all those subtopics under social studies” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). When asked what social studies did for elementary students, she responded that the most important would be to “expose them to other cultures and kind of a multicultural appreciation” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Asked what ideas elementary students should take away from the social studies units, Nora echoed the “Key Task” in the provided syllabus: “Everything is connected and there are similarities throughout many groups of people and lands” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). This belief was evident during instruction when Nora modeled how a good generalization could be applied to any context, not only the context in which it was learned (Nora, Class, 3/8/06).

Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies Methods

In discussing her beliefs about teaching social studies methods, Nora cited her main goal for methods instruction as “to hopefully inspire a group of future teachers to embrace social studies as a subject area that needs to be taught well. It does not need to be pushed to the wayside” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). She constantly verbalized and emphasized this belief in her course. Connected to this goal was the importance she assigned to her having her methods students leave her course “more aware and more able to teach social studies effectively” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). She also believed in the importance of coaching the students through writing and teaching the social studies units,

“starting from scratch and building—even though it’s just three lessons; building a unit, teaching a unit, and then evaluating their teaching of those lessons are important” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

How Do the Beliefs These Inservice Teachers Hold Inform Their Practice in Their Social Studies Methods Course?

Based on her belief that her main job as a methods instructor was to “perpetuate the value that is placed on social studies” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06), Nora constantly reminded her methods students of their job as future teachers: “You guys are going to have to work hard to integrate...and make sure they are having meaningful social studies experiences...because if you guys do not, it is not going to happen” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). Highlighting one of the requirements in the syllabus, Nora commented, “I think it’s very easy to integrate social studies content to other areas” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Based on this belief, she often used examples from her own teaching to provide real-life examples of social studies integration (e.g., Nora, Class, 3/22/06). She often reminded her students, “Remember, it is important to take every opportunity to use social studies content and integrate it into your instruction” (Nora, Class, 3/22/06). On one occasion Nora pulled out her laminated literature circle cards she used with her elementary students and used them to demonstrate how to integrate social studies content in to reading (Nora, Class, 3/22/06).

One of Nora’s beliefs that served as a theme for her methods course was the “practicality ethic” she often stressed: “I guess one thing I’ve stressed that I haven’t mentioned is the practical aspect to life in the real world of teaching” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). When discussing the effectiveness of including costumes and props in social studies instruction, she expressed her focus on being practical in different terms, “I have

established with my students that I'm not really into 'cute'" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Based on her belief in the practical, she often reminded her methods students to "make it cost-effective" (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). When asked what actions she took in the methods class to demonstrate being practical, Nora recounted: "I would start telling stories about my classroom or students I've had or lessons I've taught, strategies that have worked or haven't worked" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Buttressing Nora's belief in practicality was her desire to make social studies instruction meaningful. After noting she was not "into cute," Nora discussed the correct use of costumes and props for instruction, stating that they would be appropriate only if they "make the lesson meaningful" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). To demonstrate her belief in the importance of meaningful instruction, she arranged for all of the methods students to attend the Florida Folk Festival at Thebaut Elementary. After completing their study of Florida history, she had her fourth grade students get "in a group and make boards and dress up and teach about the Civil War in Florida, teach about the citrus industry" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Nora's concept of "meaningful" instruction was centered on creating instruction that was memorable for students, slightly different than Brophy and Alleman's notion of "meaningful" instruction, "The content selected for emphasis is worth learning because it promotes progress towards important social understanding and civic efficacy goals, and teaching methods help students see how the content relates to those goals" (1996, p. 44-45).

How Does Filling These Dual Roles Inform Their Beliefs About the Status of Social Studies in the Elementary Curriculum?

Information Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Channels of Communication

Like the other participants, Nora had a unique insight into the status of social studies at Thebaut Elementary and Howe Elementary. Noting the differences between the two, Nora commented on the frequency of social studies instruction at Thebaut: “In my classroom, in my grade level, we teach social studies every day” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). She said that while social studies was taught everyday at Thebaut, not all students received social studies instruction:

Unfortunately, it always happens with the lower performing students being taken out of social studies, and that does happen here. I will say social studies is taught when our Title I low readers go to Title I classes or other services... (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06)

Nora explained why she believed social studies was absent from Howe:

Because of the choices that the Howe faculty or principal make or...sometimes the county dictates stuff that you have no control over, but their reading program is called Success for All...so that requires many hours in the morning...so when you make choices like that as a blanket thing for an entire school, you're limited [in the ability to teach social studies], and it's not the teacher's fault. (Nora Interview, 5/2/06)

Nora noted that in the past it was possible to integrate social studies into other subjects: “I wish that we could integrate it like they used to into the reading and the math, but there's just so much accountability and we have to teach these skills and so on. . .” (Nora Interview, 3/16/06).

Nora also noted the different ways she received information about the status of social studies. Through her communications with other teachers, Nora noted the status of social studies at low performing schools: “I know it's really bad at some schools in this county and across the state. People I know that teach in other places [tell me that social

studies is] usually the first thing to go” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). As a teacher at Thebaut, Nora witnessed firsthand the declining status of social studies: “I think, unfortunately, that the purpose right now for social studies is the time that you can pull kids out to do re-teaching for reading skills for FCAT...” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). As a methods instructor, Nora could see how recent changes in the district timetable were followed differently at different schools: “Howe students said ‘we have just never seen social studies taught.’ Because they’re there until 11:30, and maybe it’s taught very infrequently in the afternoons” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Nora compared this knowledge gained as a methods instructor to her experiences at Thebaut, where social studies was taught every day, as evident in Nora’s posted daily agenda: “10:30–11:30—Social Studies” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). Nora gained additional insight from her methods students:

Some of them said, we see it once a week. Some of them said, it’s in the afternoon...Some of them said that their teacher, their team, or their grade level, or whatever, rotated like a month of science and then a month of social studies. (Nora Interview, 5/2/06)

This information clearly showed the differing status of social studies at the two schools.

Beliefs Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Testing

When asked what she thought about the status of elementary social studies in general, Nora noted: “Oh, it’s disgusting. Makes me want to cry. Both social studies and science, I believe, should be part of the curriculum” (Nora Interview 3/16/06). She made astute comments about the source of the pressure to reduce social studies instruction: “I think it’s like a political agenda, obviously not a purpose that I agree with. But I do think that’s why social studies has been cut so much and put on the back burner...” (Nora, Interview 3/16/06). While pondering the positives and negatives of the inclusion of social

studies in the testing programs, Nora summed up the dilemma: “I don’t think it will improve social studies instruction. But I think it will improve the daily schedules...Quality, I don’t know. You can do a lot of harm if you teach social studies inappropriately and ineffectively” (Nora Interview 3/16/06). During a class discussion, Nora hit a similar note: “I’m not excited about more testing...but I am happy it will get the subject area more attention” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). During the final interview, Nora reflected on her previous comments about elementary social studies and testing: “I don’t hate the FCAT test...The way the tests are used, the money that’s spent on it, that’s what bothers me, and frankly I don’t want to see any more FCAT tests, whether it’s social studies or home economics” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora’s comments highlight the complexity of the issue.

What Do These Inservice Teachers Believe are the Issues They Encountered While Teaching the Methods Course?

Issues Related to Methods Students

The issues discussed in this section are most closely related to the methods students themselves and how their experiences and beliefs influence elementary social studies methods instruction.

Liberal beliefs

Nora’s students’ openness to accepting new information could be related to the environment created by the class composition. Unlike the other sections of the methods course, Nora’s section had more than one or two non-White/European American females. While these females were the majority, Nora’s section also had three White males, two Hispanic females, and two African American females. The students’ liberal beliefs were evident in their comments during the group presentations of chapters from the book *Lies*

My Teacher Told Me: “We really found some common misconceptions that we were taught” (Nora, Class, 3/29/06). Nora responded, “That is why we need to keep being critical of our sources” (Nora, Class, 3/29/06). While presenting one group’s chapter, a student noted, “This book made me really think hard about why I was taught the version of history I was...because I was in a mostly White school” (Nora, Class, 4/12/06).

This section of students voiced significantly more liberal views than the other sections. Nora noted that she believed she was successful in overcoming many of the historical misconceptions held by her students (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Content vs. methods tension and students’ negative experiences

Nora partially attributed this lack of knowledge to the methods students’ previous negative experiences with social studies instruction: “I’d say over half of them had negative experiences that they shared” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Initially Nora was concerned about her own level of knowledge: “I wouldn’t have the facts to press everybody. But when I started teaching, I realized that they actually know a whole heck of a lot less than I do” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). This lack of content knowledge surfaced during the planning of their instructional units: “There were actually many instances. I didn’t correct them but I knew they needed to explore something further...So I had them further research it” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). During observations, I noted several occasions when students would make historically inaccurate statements. Nora then made a suggestion about how to address the lack of historical content knowledge: “But to me, I think it would be more meaningful to take out those weekly assignments and do some sort of content knowledge every week on a different part of history or a different topic” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Student behavior

Nora had an issue related to the behavior of one methods student. During the first few weeks of the methods course, the student failed to hand in assignments and often was late or absent from class. In my observation notes, I recorded four occasions when he was late, once by 43 minutes. Based on the student's behavior in the methods course, Nora knew she needed to take action: "Being a fourth grade teacher, I did my early identification and realized he was going to be a challenge, and that he needed some guidance and some pushing to realize that he needed to do his work and attend class" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). During instruction, the student would often make inflammatory remarks, such as, "Isn't it true that, in order to be the president you have to be a white male?" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). This comment was made in the company of two female African American students.

After an encouraging conference early in the semester, Nora had a second, more pointed conference with the student and told him to turn in his assignments. The second conference was also ineffective: "The next week he didn't even come to class—not only did he not have his assignments, but he didn't even attend class or e-mail me to tell me he wasn't coming, which is policy" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). At this point, Nora contacted university personnel about the situation. With this additional pressure, the student soon began turning in many of his assignments, prompting Nora to note, "I learned a lot, how to deal with a college student that is not behaving correctly. And it's a little different than dealing with fourth graders that aren't behaving correctly" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

While wrapping up the discussion about this situation, Nora made an insightful comment about the student and his motivations: "He realizes by being a little different and being vocal about being different, that he is kind of stirring the pot a little bit and he

receives attention for that” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). When asked if she believed the student’s poor performance in the class had anything to do with a lack of respect for her related to her position as a school-based (not university-based) instructor, she said she would be surprised if he was exemplary in other courses. However, she noted, “It could have been exacerbated, like maybe it was even worse because he thought I was a pushover” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Issues Related to the Status of Elementary Social Studies and the Field Placement

The following section is a discussion of the issues Nora encountered related to the status of elementary social studies and the schools where the methods students were placed.

Lack of respect for the elementary Social Studies methods course

Nora did not believe her methods students lacked respect for the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum. Interestingly, however, she felt her students did not approach the social studies methods course as seriously as other methods courses: “I’ve heard them talk about their reading methods classes that they’re also taking this semester. They do seem to have more...formal assessments, which may lend to them taking it more seriously” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Asked if she believed the students’ approach was related to the secondary status of social studies, Nora replied, “No, it is because of the different ways the students are going to be assessed” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). She went on to explain that the assessments in the social studies methods course were more project based, while the assessments in the reading methods course were “more formal” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). She believed this led students to take the reading course more seriously.

Lack of professional development in elementary Social Studies

One issue Nora attributed to the status of social studies was the lack of professional development opportunities with regard to elementary social studies: “There’s so few in-services and things like that focused on specifically teaching social studies” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). During a discussion about the possibility of adding elementary social studies to the FCAT, Nora noted: “The only good thing that I can see is that maybe there will be training—for example, in-services—because it’s going to be an FCAT test now, so all of a sudden we’ve got something it’s on” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06).

Lack of time for elementary Social Studies

There were stark contrasts between the two elementary school sites in terms of the amount of time devoted to social studies instruction. None of the methods students from Thebaut Elementary indicated that they lacked the opportunity to see social studies instruction. On the other hand, Nora noted that “some of my Howe (Elementary) students said, ‘we have just never seen social studies taught.’ Because they’re there until 11:30, and maybe it’s taught very infrequently in the afternoons or something” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Other methods students from Howe Elementary confirmed the situation: “Social studies is taught once per month” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). The lack of time for social studies instruction also extended to the time allotted for the methods students to teach their social studies units, prompting one student to comment during the unit presentation: “We wish we would have had more time” (Nora, Class, 4/26/06).

Other field placement issues

Nora discussed field placement issues not related to the status of elementary social studies. One such issue was when cooperating teachers mandated the topic and/or the methods of instruction for the social studies unit (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). This was

evident during the methods students' presentations of their teaching unit; students noted that: "It was our only option to do [it] because this is the only unit they do this semester" (Nora, Class, 4/19/06). In other situations, methods students elected to do content-driven units based on topics traditionally covered: "They were in fifth grade and they did fifth grade social studies topics," and "Maria did the Southeast region...it's something that we teach here in fourth grade in social studies so she picked up on that for her unit" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Nora noted issues with methods students in kindergarten placements, such as those having difficulties teaching kindergarten students larger concepts; as noted by one methods student, "We should have done baby steps" (Nora, Class, 4/26/06). Nora remarked that such difficulties were widespread among kindergarten placements: "I had four duos in kindergarten placements, and they all had a challenging time coming up with an appropriate social studies unit topic" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora associated this difficulty with two different issues related to lower elementary classrooms. First, the lower elementary grades do not have "classes and subjects," and second, "the report card focuses more on basic skills such as letter recognition" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Issues Related to Filling Dual Roles

Following is a description of the issues Nora encountered while serving in the dual roles of elementary school teacher and elementary social studies methods instructor.

Content and theoretical knowledge

As noted earlier, Nora was initially concerned about her level of content knowledge, only to discover her methods students knew less than she did (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora's content knowledge had benefited from her experiences as a fourth grade teacher and the focus of her grade level team on Florida history: "I went to a

workshop, and it was mostly our teachers...it was all fourth grade stuff” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). She was also concerned about her knowledge of elementary social studies theory and teaching methods, which she related to the poor instruction she received during her own teacher education program: “I only had that one social studies class and, no, it was not useful at all” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Based on these concerns, she said she intended to improve her knowledge before the next time she taught the course (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Limited time

Nora cited the lack of time as one of her biggest challenges, especially finding time to grade her methods students’ work: “It’s definitely hard, time management. I need to work on my grading” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Like the other participants, I asked Nora what she would do if she had to choose between time for elementary students and her methods students. Nora responded: “If I had to choose, it would be my elementary kids” (Nora Interview, 5/2/06). At no time did I feel that Nora was unprepared, but I did get a sense during the observations that she was occasionally harried.

Credibility

Nora was slightly concerned about her credibility with her methods students because she was not an alumnus of their teacher education program and did not have experience teaching university courses (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). When asked to explain her feelings, Nora responded:

I think that when the (methods) students know that you’re not on campus, and you’re a ‘teacher teacher,’ they use you differently. I think in general there’s probably a little less respect or maybe a little less like taking it seriously than if you were teaching on campus (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06).

Also, while Nora's lack of familiarity with the structure and personnel did not affect her credibility, it did challenge her logistical skills, such as entering grades and doing other computer-based administrative tasks.

Negotiations for instructional time and freedom

Interestingly, Nora did not see any need to negotiate on behalf of her methods students for instructional time or freedom (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Possibly, this was related to the status of social studies at Thebaut. Social studies was a required part of the daily schedule, although the social studies time block sometimes was interrupted to pull out students for other services, including FCAT remediation. Given this situation, cooperating teachers tended to have daily instructional time to provide the methods students with time to teach, but because the subject was seen as non-essential, there was less concern with the quality or consistency of the instruction.

Advantages of filling dual roles

Constantly evident during her methods instruction was Nora's ability to capitalize on her role as a practicing elementary teacher to facilitate her methods instruction. This was apparent when, in the middle of a class discussion about the use of literature circles (a reading strategy), Nora pulled out a class set of laminated handouts she used to conduct literature circles with her fourth grade students (Nora, Class, 3/22/06). Asked about the advantages of teaching her methods course in her elementary classroom, Nora responded, "I loved it. I can't imagine trying to teach somewhere else, like in a college class. Everything was very accessible to me..." (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora also benefited from her role as a cooperating teacher: "I think it is an advantage that I work with interns. So I think I understand where they're (methods students) coming from" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). The advantages of having an intern also were evident when

Nora provided examples of social studies lesson plans used by her previous interns (Nora, Class, 3/8/06).

As mentioned earlier, one of Nora's main successes during her methods instruction was conveying the importance of creating practical and meaningful social studies instruction. When asked why she thought this was such an important message for her methods students to hear, Nora said, "The students would...perk up. . .Now we're going to hear something that's useful, it just seemed...the students were more engaged" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora credited this philosophy to a retiring teacher who told her, "Nora, whatever lesson, whatever activity, whatever great idea you have, make sure that the student output equals or exceeds your input into preparing it" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). During the presentations of the units at the end of the semester, it was evident her methods students understood this philosophy. One group admitted to spending too much time preparing things for instruction that did not enhance student learning (Nora, Class, 4/26/06).

Themes and Summary of Findings for Nora Iglesias

Nora voiced practical beliefs about teaching in general and often advised her students to focus their efforts on meaningful activities for their students. She discussed the value of social studies instruction for elementary students, especially civics skills, as well as the ease and importance of using social studies content to practice non-fiction reading skills. Like all the other study participants, Nora discussed the depressed state of elementary social studies and connected the lack of social studies with the poor level of civic participation in the U.S. She stated that promoting social studies instruction was the number one goal of her social studies methods course.

Based on filling the roles of both methods instructor and practicing teacher, Nora was able to make a number of observations about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum. While her school had been able to keep its social studies program “alive,” the time set aside for social studies sometimes was interrupted to pull out low performing students for remedial reading, writing, and math skills. But based on her role as a methods instructor, Nora knew this situation was better than other schools where almost no social studies instruction took place.

Nora’s beliefs informed her practices in the social studies methods course. She believed that her main job as a methods instructor was to teach her students about the value of social studies instruction. Based on this, she taught her students instructional methods such as integrating social studies into reading instruction. Her commitment to practical and meaningful social studies instruction led Nora to offer her experiences as a classroom teacher as examples of such instruction. She also required her methods students to attend an event showcasing her elementary students’ social studies work that she felt was meaningful.

Nora encountered many issues during her methods instruction. Some of these issues were related to her methods students’ lack of content knowledge, which on occasion led to the inclusion of incorrect information in their unit plans. To overcome this challenge, Nora required students to do more research until they discovered the correct information. Chief among the issues Nora faced was the unprofessional and substandard performance of a particular student.

Nora discussed three major issues related to the status of elementary social studies. At the beginning of the methods course, she noted that her methods students did not seem

to approach the social studies methods course as seriously as they did methods courses in other subject areas. As the semester progressed, this perception lessened as the interns became more aware of the importance of social studies. Nora voiced serious concerns about the availability of social studies instructional examples for her students at Howe Elementary. She also suggested that if social studies were included on the FCAT, it would possibly create more professional development workshops for social studies. Finally, she discussed issues related to filling the dual roles of inservice teacher and elementary social studies methods instructor. She expressed a desire to improve her theoretical and content knowledge of elementary social studies. She also noted several occasions when she was able to capitalize on her experience as an elementary teacher by offering practical advice to her methods students, but acknowledged the limitations of relying solely on practical knowledge for someone filling these dual roles.

CHAPTER 7 CROSS CASE FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter one introduced the study and its purpose. Chapter two discussed the literature relevant to the research questions. Chapter three discussed the research methodology employed. Chapters four, five and six were the *within-case* findings for each of the research participants. This chapter compares and contrasts the research findings concerning the three participants. More specifically, it examines their beliefs about social studies, how these beliefs affected their methods instruction, how serving in these dual roles informed them about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum, and the issues they encountered. The four research questions organize the findings in this chapter. Findings for each of the participants were compared and contrasted with the relevant research literature when possible. This is followed by a discussion concerning reasons for the similarities and differences among the participants and in relation to the research literature.

What Beliefs About Social Studies Education Do These Inservice Teachers Hold? Beliefs Concerning Teaching

The three participants voiced similar beliefs about teaching in general and the importance of adapting their instruction to meet students' needs. Concerning the definition of teaching, Alexis said: "Teaching by definition, I think, is showing someone how to do something..." (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). She quickly added to the definition: "It is my job to always find a way to reach every child, no matter where they

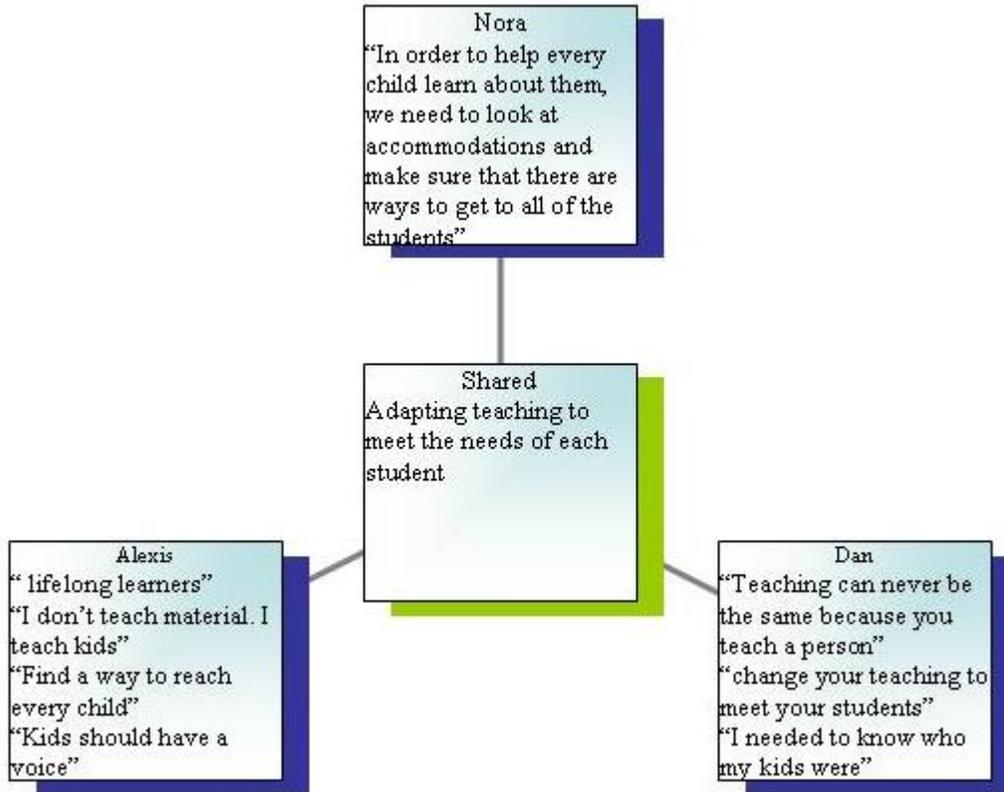


Figure 7-1 Beliefs Concerning Teaching

are, in whatever subject area that I happen to be teaching them” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). On a similar note, Dan stated: “Teaching is helping someone else gain an understanding of something new” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan’s belief in the importance of meeting students’ instructional needs was a major theme of his instruction: “Teaching can never be the same because you teach a person. You never teach a subject to a person” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan often shared this belief with his methods students: “You are going to have to change your teaching to meet your students’ needs” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). For Nora: “Teaching is helping someone to be able to do something they could not do before” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Nora also agreed about the importance of meeting students’ instructional needs: “In order to help every child learn about them, we need to look at accommodations and make sure that there are ways

to get to all of the students” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). While “Meeting the Needs of Students” was listed as an objective in the suggested syllabus, for all three participants this was a preexisting belief. These comments mirror the beliefs and practices of effective teachers: “Effective teachers have always considered their students' uniqueness (e.g., academic needs, talents, interests, learning styles) in planning, teaching, and evaluating lessons” (Edwards, Carr, & Siegel 2006, p. 587).

Beliefs Concerning Social Studies

There were slight differences in the participants' beliefs about social studies. Alexis described social studies as “everything that's happening around us all the time. It's our

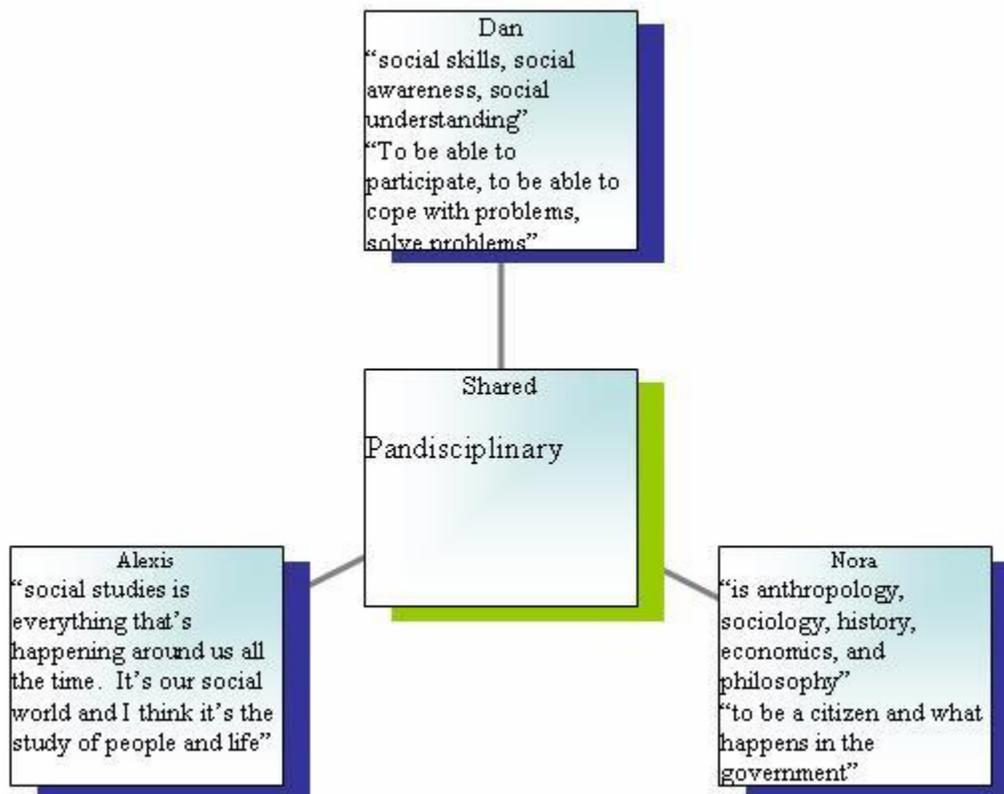


Figure 7-2 Beliefs Concerning Social Studies

social world and I think it's the study of people and life" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06).

Asked if her beliefs have changed in the last five years, Alexis replied: "I think that it hasn't changed as much because (her social studies methods instructor) is the one that really showed me that it's everything. So having that as an undergrad...really kind of shaped my thinking" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Dan reported a similar perspective:

"Social studies is basically a set of...information that you need in order to become part of a social society, and the society as a whole...To me social studies is almost life" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan's definition of social studies had changed from what he once believed: "In the past few years what I've kind of been developing is this definition [that] social studies happens all the time...It's social skills, social awareness, social

understanding. . ." (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Striking a slightly different note, Nora

reported social studies: "is anthropology, sociology, history, economics, and philosophy.

And I think it is the field of study where people learn and examine and evaluate and apply our relationship to each other and to the world and communities" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Due to her involvement with the course, Nora's definition had evolved: "My beliefs have changed in five years...probably my beliefs have changed in the last three months from teaching this class and reading this stuff" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Dan and

Alexis both expressed a more nuanced definition of social studies, while Nora's

comments closely reflected the NCSS (1992) definition of social studies (also quoted in

Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students): "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" (NCSS 1992). The

durability of Alexis’s beliefs stemming from her positive experiences as a social studies methods student attests to the power of good methods instruction.

Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies

While discussing their beliefs about teaching social studies, all participants noted the need to present elementary students with a balanced and somewhat critical version of social studies content. In the context of discussing the instruction of controversial issues, Dan and Alexis offered almost identical comments about presenting students with a balanced and honest depiction of historical figures: “We should be teaching all of the qualities that some people may have” (Dan, Class, 4/2/06); “When we talk to kids, we

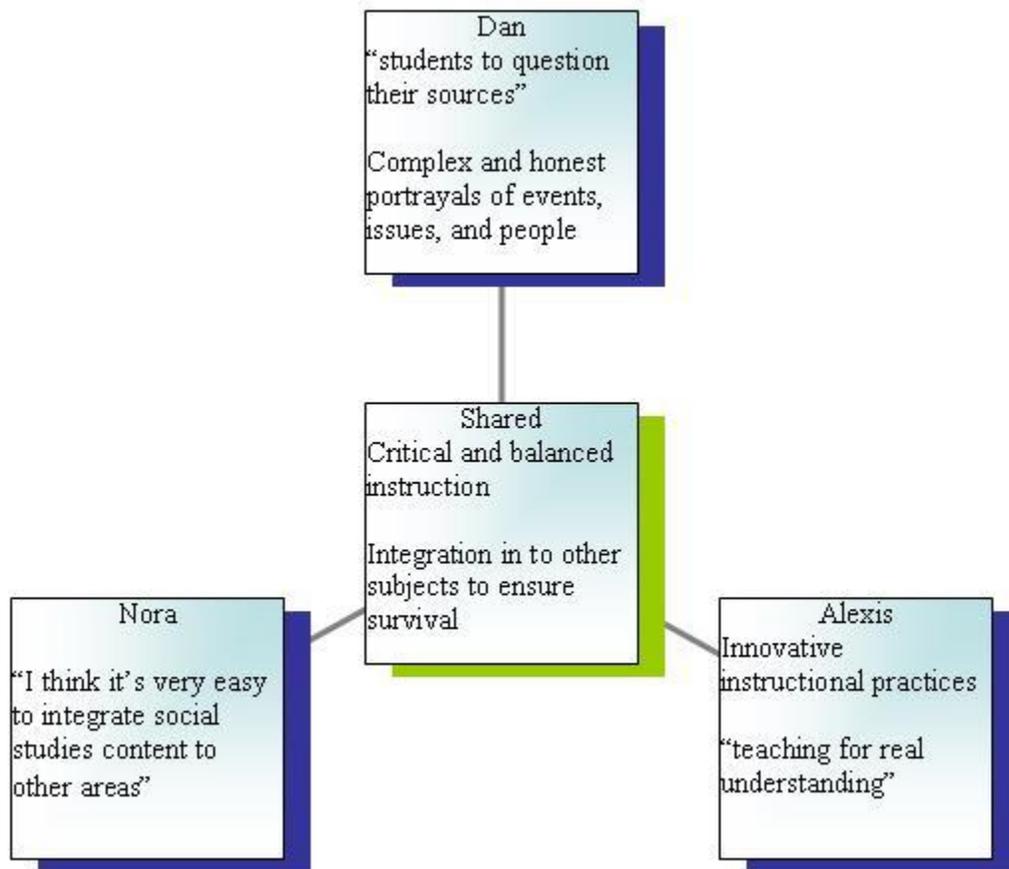


Figure 7-3 Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies

need to talk about the fact that all people have parts that are not good” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). Nora noted the desirability of creating independent thinkers: “That’s our goal, to get them to think for themselves” (Nora Class 4/19/06). This critical and balanced approach also aligned with the *Lies My Teacher Told Me* assignment.

Numerous scholars have noted the importance of providing students with a balanced, realistic view of contemporary society and history, arguing that if students are presented with a version of the world that is not open to interpretation, they will assume they are powerless to effect change and transform it (e.g., Shor 1992). Most often, teachers fear parental complaints about discussing controversial issues (McBee 1995). This fear was exemplified in a comment made by a methods student during *the Lies My Teacher Told Me* discussion: “A parent is going to be like, ‘Why is my kid learning this...?’” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). In addition to fears of parental retribution, elementary teachers often feel incapable of teaching controversial topics: “Lower grade teachers often do not feel properly trained or prepared and reluctant to engage controversial issues” (McBee 1995, p. 38). While participants noted many other beliefs about teaching social studies, their advocacy for presenting balanced and critical social studies instruction was significant. Given the methods students’ similar ethnic backgrounds, these comments might have been made to encourage the methods students to adopt a more balanced and critical social studies practice so they could work more effectively with diverse student populations.

Each of the participants discussed the necessity of integrating social studies into other subject areas. Nora described how social studies integration took place in her classroom:

We're working on our butterfly garden...at the same time we had a little lesson on the place in Mexico where the monarchs migrate every winter. And that's locations in the world and science, so I think it's very easy to integrate social studies content to other areas. (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06)

Likewise Alexis discussed the ease of integration: "Amazing things could be done because everything is integrated into social studies" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). During class, Dan offered a similar opinion to his methods students: "Use social studies to teach other things...you can if you try hard enough to make connections" (Dan, Class, 4/19/06).

The subject most often suggested for integration was reading. When discussing the attempt by the teachers at Owen Elementary to preserve social studies in their curriculum, Dan noted their success with reading integration: "Last year was pretty okay because we got away with it, so to speak. We taught reading through social studies" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). During a class discussion, Nora also promoted reading integration: "Remember, it is important to take every opportunity to use social studies content and integrate it into your (reading) instruction" (Nora, Class, 3/22/06). While discussing the heavy focus on reading strategies in the methods course, Alexis explained the benefit to the methods students: "So they have to apply a reading strategy to their own content area of reading. I think that shows them that these kinds of strategies in teaching kids how to be strategic readers is easily integrated into social studies content" (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). While the participants' belief in integration resembles chapter nine of *Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students*, all three spoke of experiences with integration even before their involvement with the course. Integration of social studies into other subject areas has long been advocated as a means of improving student learning: "A further characteristic of powerful social studies is integration" (Barton 2005, p. 26). When they

have integrated social studies into other subject areas, “teachers should not only expect them (students) to use reading and writing in social studies, but also help them become better readers and writers through their work in the subject” (Barton, 2005. p. 25). Also, social studies integration into reading at the elementary level has been suggested as a means to improve struggling readers’ skills by a number of researchers (e.g., Johnson & Janisch 1998; Jones & Lapham 2004). Reflecting the threatened status of social studies, integration into reading has most recently been promoted to ensure that social studies is taught. If teachers do not adopt integration, then “social studies, science, health and social skills are often put off to the side and forgotten” (NEA 2003, p. 292).

Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies Methods

All the participants voiced the need to “save” elementary social studies through methods instruction. Nora noted the need to promote social studies in the face of attempts to narrow the curriculum:

I think that one of my main jobs is to perpetuate the value that is placed on social studies, so that maybe future teachers will remember that this is a valued subject area and it shouldn’t just be cut when everything else seems more important. (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06)

Dan echoed this view: “I almost think like I’m trying to save social studies, keep it in the classroom...I want them to understand that social studies, like other subjects...should not be something that is removed” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Alexis shared the same concern: “I have to convince them how important social studies is, no matter how often they are told it isn’t” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). The participants’ concerns are echoed in much of the relevant literature, including Howard (2003), who noted: “As standards-based reform gains ground, social studies is getting squeezed in this era of standards-based education. What I consider the most important discipline, social

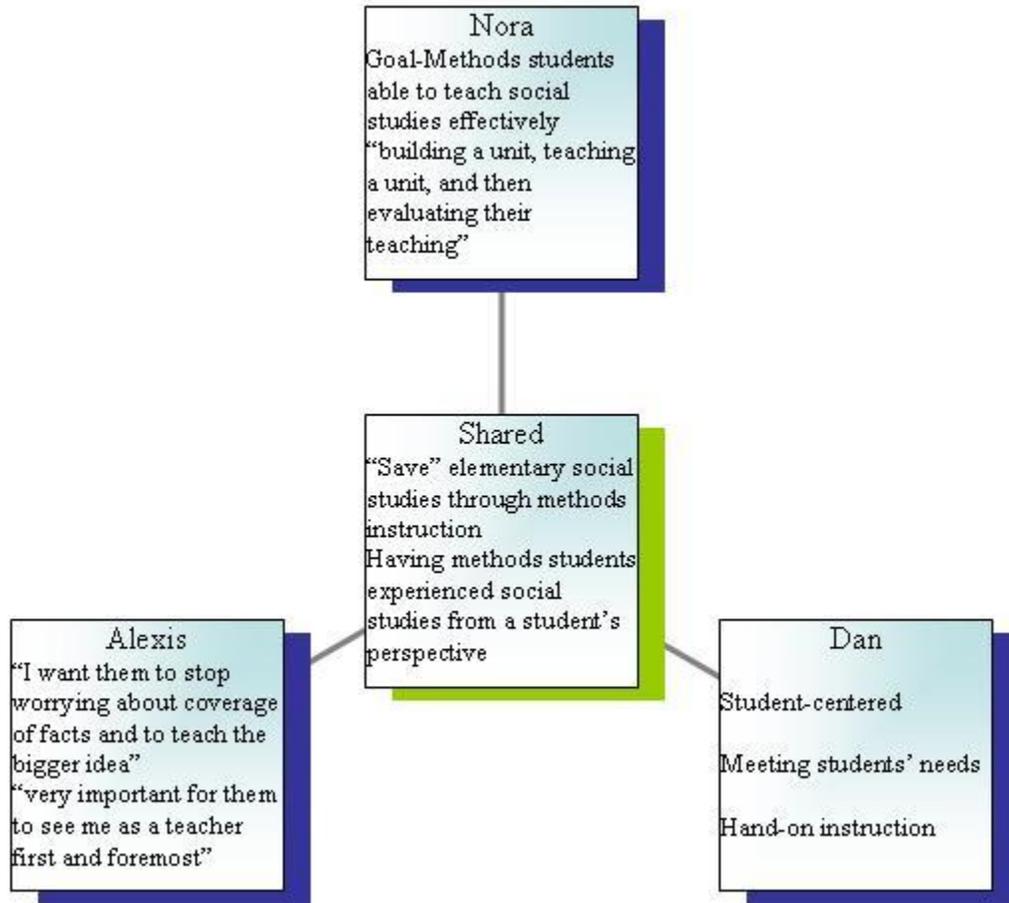


Figure 7-4 Beliefs Concerning Teaching Social Studies

studies, has been treated as a second-class subject” (p. 285). Similar to Leming (1989), Howard suggested that social studies professors are out of touch with the reality of social studies in schools and need to do more research on how to save social studies instead of simply how to teach social studies.

There was interesting unanimity in terms of the participants’ favorite social studies methods lesson. All three cited the “centers” lesson as their favorite. In this lesson the methods students experienced social studies from an elementary student’s perspective as they participated in activities such as working with primary sources and “doing” an archeology dig. Alexis noted the centers lesson was the methods students’ favorite

because “they’re actually engaging in different ways to use social studies strategies” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Nora thought the centers lesson was powerful because “in the end, from our discussion when we got back to class, it seemed like a lot of them got ideas that they were going to use in their units” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Dan believed the centers lesson should be expanded:

I just like it because it just seems...like if we could do this every class it would be ...much more meaningful...like take one of those centers every class and just build on it. It would make it more meaningful to the interns. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Given that the centers represented different instructional methods, Dan’s comment speaks directly to the “content versus methods” debate discussed later in this chapter.

Wade (2003) explored the benefits of social studies methods students engaging in the activities they will one day use with elementary students, especially with regard to advocating for social justice. Like Wade, each of the participants knew active participation often promotes understanding and retention: “...I just know...if my...elementary school kids do it, then they’re more likely to remember it and do it again” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Moreover, given the lack of experience that methods students often have with elementary social studies, these centers may be the first time they have been exposed to such learning experiences.

Summary

The participants concurred in their beliefs about social studies education. All held similar views about the importance of adapting instruction to meet students’ individual needs and having methods and elementary students actively participate in instruction. Through these two beliefs, participants demonstrated what Shulman (1987) referred to as the “wisdom of practice.” Shulman described seven categories of knowledge that form a teacher’s “wisdom of practice.” First, the participants’ belief in the importance of

meeting students' needs is what Shulman called "knowledge of learners and their characteristics" (p. 8). This knowledge is gained by asking questions about students such as: "What do they already know?" and "What do they need to know in order to be successful in this lesson?" The application of this knowledge is represented by Dan's comment that "no matter what happens, I'm never going to be doing it the same way twice" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Shulman also referred to "general pedagogical knowledge" (p. 8), which he described as "broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter" (p. 8). The application of this knowledge is exemplified by Nora's comment: "...I just know...if my...elementary school kids do it, then they're more likely to remember it and do it again" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). By having their methods students actively participate in instruction, the participants were transferring the knowledge they gained as elementary teachers and applying it to methods instruction.

The participants' definitions of social studies slightly differed. Alexis and Dan offered almost identical definitions that reflected a slightly more nuanced and applied description than Nora's, which closely reflected the NCSS definition. The difference in these comments possibly was related to Alexis's and Dan's slightly longer exposure to the social studies literature and experience teaching the course. All three participants also expressed a belief in the importance of a balanced and somewhat critical presentation of social studies content to elementary students. This belief is closely related to the goal of social studies articulated by NCSS (1979), which labeled the mission of social studies education: "to engage students in analyzing and attempting to resolve the social issues confronting them" (NCSS 1979, p. 267). This mission was echoed in Dan's statement

that social studies is a set of skills: “To be able to participate, to be able to cope with problems, solve problems...” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). NCSS (1989) described this goal as the development of “critical attitudes and analytical perspectives appropriate to analysis of the human condition” (p. 65). The participants’ comments all reflected a desire to prepare methods students to provide elementary students with social studies instruction aligned with these central goals.

The participants expressed some beliefs related to the endangered status of elementary social studies. The uniformity of the participants’ belief in integration, and their specific belief in reading as the subject to be integrated, may be due to the participants’ backgrounds. All had extensive backgrounds in reading; Dan previously served as a literacy methods instructor, Alexis focused on literacy during her doctoral studies, and Nora was involved in improving reading instruction at Thebaut. Given these experiences, they were most familiar with reading integration and thus more apt to suggest it to the methods students. While the integration of social studies and reading is supported in the research literature (e.g., Barton 2005), the participants’ selection of reading also was related to the untested status of social studies. Alexis made this connection for her students: “...you can tell from these units [that] integration is the key for getting it in (social studies)...these days” (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06). The participants’ belief in the importance of promoting social studies instruction through their methods instruction seems directly related to elementary social studies’ status as a “left behind” subject (NEA 2004).

How Do the Beliefs These Inservice Teachers Hold Inform Their Practice in Their Social Studies Methods Course?

Participants gave many examples of beliefs-to-practice connections. What follows is a discussion of the beliefs that had the greatest effect on their practices, both as a group and individually.

Shared Belief-to-Practice Connections

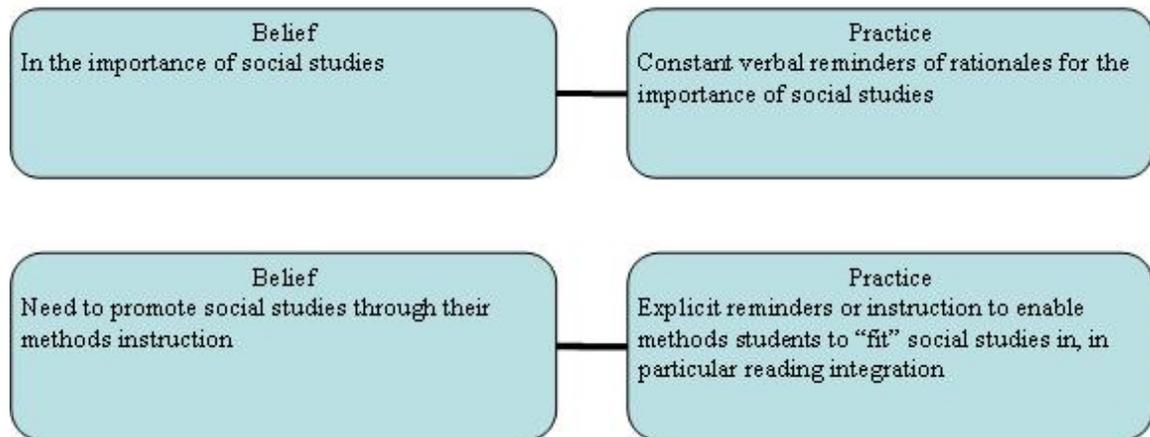


Figure 7-5 Belief-to-Practice Connections Shared

All the participants shared beliefs in the importance of social studies instruction and the need to promote social studies through their methods instruction. Alexis validated her belief in the importance of social studies as follows: “because everything we do is within a social world” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Dan struck a similar tone: “It has a role in everything that all of your students do all day. So if you ignore it, you’re really going to hurt your students in the long run” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Nora lamented the effects of the current situation: “I think it’s tragic that what is going to happen is we are...basically raising a generation of children who are going to grow up to be citizens who may or may not know how somebody gets to be president” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). All three also discussed the need to promote social studies through their methods instruction: “My main job is to perpetuate the value that is placed on social

studies” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06); “I have to convince them how important social studies is” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Based on these shared beliefs, each participant engaged in similar practices reflecting those beliefs. Dan urged his students: “Remember, you guys have to do this...social studies will allow you to get to know your students better, and it will be the only subject some of your students will like; you can’t leave it out” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). Nora cited the need for civic skills: “If you do not have social studies, you are going to have kids who can’t participate in society...” (Nora, Class, 3/22/06). Alexis appealed to the methods students’ sense of duty: “You need to work hard to include it (social studies); if you don’t, you are not doing your job to prepare them for real life” (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06).

Based on their shared belief in the need to promote social studies through their methods instruction, each participant included either reminders or instruction to enable their methods students to “fit” social studies into their curriculum. Alexis included reminders about the need for integration: “You need to know how to effectively integrate this stuff (social studies) into reading, or you will not have time to teach it” (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06). Dan included instruction about how to actually negotiate for instructional freedom and time to include social studies: “I have to teach them how to negotiate in addition to what social studies is and how to do it...” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Consistent with her belief in meaningful instruction, Nora reminded her students: “You guys are going to have to work hard to integrate...and make sure they are having meaningful social studies experiences...because if you guys do not do it (social studies), it is not going to happen” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06).

Individual Belief-to-Practice Connections

In addition to their shared beliefs and the resultant practices, each of the participants expressed individual beliefs connected to practices that served as a theme for their instruction.

Dan

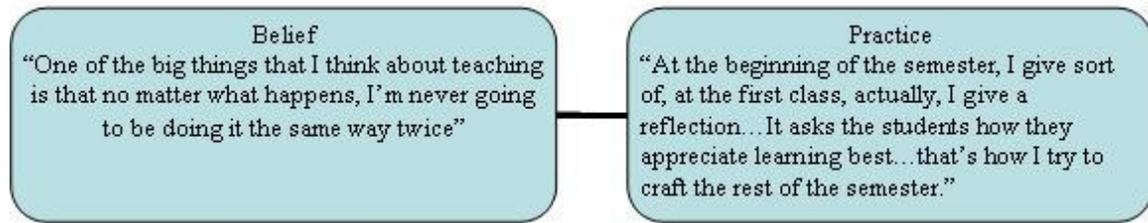


Figure 7-6 Belief-to-Practice Connection Dan

If any one belief characterized Dan’s methods instruction, it was the importance of meeting individual students’ needs. Explaining this belief, Dan stated: “One of the big things that I think about teaching is that no matter what happens, I’m never going to be doing it the same way twice” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This belief was directly connected to Dan’s practice of surveying his methods students about their learning styles:

At the beginning of the semester, I give sort of, at the first class, actually, I give a reflection. . . It asks the students how they appreciate learning best. What I think [I understand] their learning style. . . that’s how I try to craft the rest of the semester. . . . So I. . . kind of tailor it to where part of the class would be one way, part of the class would be [an]other and some classes would be. . . different, but I figured for them to make the most meaning out of the content I had to help meet their learning styles just like any other kid. (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06)

The other participants also believed in the importance of meeting students’ needs, but for Dan this belief was the central theme of his methods instruction. Dan’s actions reflect those of effective teachers as described by Tomlinson (1999). Tomlinson explained that effective teachers use techniques that allow them to meet their students’ needs, such as the engagement of students through different learning modalities, multiple

approaches to all aspects of lessons, student-centered lessons, a combination of whole class, group, and individual instruction, and a proactive rather than reactive attitude.

These techniques closely resemble Dan’s efforts to meet the needs of his students.

Nora

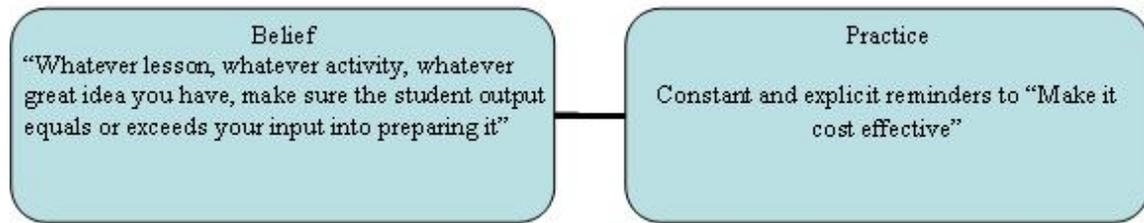


Figure 7-7 Belief-to-Practice Connection Nora

Nora’s belief in the importance of practical and meaningful instruction served as the main theme for her methods instruction. Nora verbalized this belief: “...one thing I’ve stressed that I haven’t mentioned is the practical aspect to life in the real world of teaching” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). This belief surfaced in Nora’s methods instruction, with comments such as: “Make it cost effective” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). This belief was buttressed by Nora’s belief in the importance of meaningful instruction: “If it is meaningful, they’re going to remember it more” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). To provide her methods students with examples of meaningful instruction, Nora had them all attend the “Florida Folk Festival” at Thebaut Elementary, where her fourth-grade elementary students “make boards and dress up and teach about the Civil War in Florida, teach about the citrus industry” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06).

Nora’s focus on practical concerns strongly resembles Doyle and Ponder’s (1977–78) practicality ethic. While discussing the adoption of changes in practice, Doyle and Ponder stated that changes in schools also must pass teachers’ test of the practicality ethic, which is based on three criteria: instrumentality, congruence, and cost.

Instrumentality relates to how well the innovation is explained to teachers. Congruence is how well the innovation fits the teacher's existing beliefs and practices. Cost measures the ratio of effort to results for the innovation. Cuban (1986) applied this 'practicality ethic' to the adoption of technology, explaining that teachers adopt new technology "when a technological innovation helped them do a better job of what they already decided had to be done and matched their view of daily classroom realities" (p. 66). Nora's practicality ethic most closely resembles Doyle and Ponder's notion of "cost." She attributed the origin of her practicality ethic to the wisdom offered to her by a retiring teacher; during the final interview, Nora recalled a story she shared with her methods students in which the teacher offered this advice: "Whatever lesson, whatever activity, whatever great idea you have, make sure the student output equals or exceeds your input into preparing it...I think that has helped me survive in this job" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Alexis

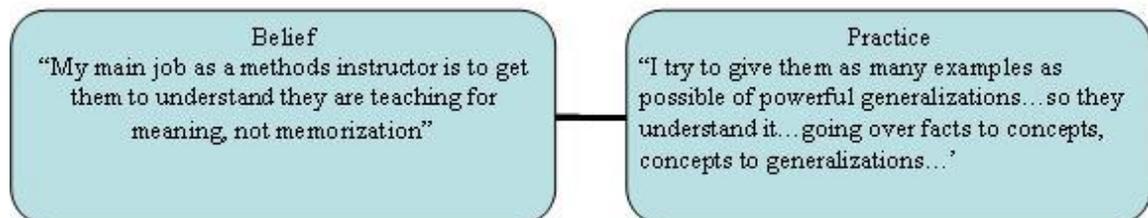


Figure 7-8 Belief-to-Practice Connection Alexis

Alexis demonstrated strong beliefs about the need to teach for enduring understanding through generalizations. "My main job as a methods instructor is to get them to understand they are teaching for meaning, not memorization" (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Based on this belief, Alexis provided her students with multiple examples of teaching for understanding through the use of generalizations. "When I teach them about

generalizations, I try to give them as many examples as possible of powerful generalizations...so they understand it...going over facts to concepts, concepts to generalizations...I modeled the lesson by giving them definitions of facts, concepts, and generalizations. I stressed that facts can be seen as the lowest form of knowledge, that concepts grow from facts, and that generalizations are drawn from concepts” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). With this instruction, Alexis hoped to ensure that her methods students understood an approach that is reflected in the research on teaching for generalizations (Benson 2003).

Influence of Course Materials on Beliefs

While determining the exact source of the participants’ beliefs was not the focus of this study, the data indicated as much when one of the explicitly stated beliefs aligned with the suggested course material. As discussed in Chapter 3, a need exists to have structured course materials provided to instructors with limited backgrounds in social studies; undoubtedly, these course materials influenced the participants to varying degrees. However, they did not determine the main themes common to all participants or even specific to each individual participant. Wolk (1998) identified a similar experience while working with sixth grade teachers:

What was taught in each of those classrooms was very different versions of the same official curriculum. On paper we were teaching the same content, but in reality there were differences, many of which were *profound* (emphasis in original), differences in what was being taught in those five classrooms. (p. 51–52)

In terms of “saving social studies” with their methods instruction, the provided course materials did not heavily reflect this theme, but the participants’ firsthand knowledge and experiences concerning the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum did. In addition, the common theme of integrating social studies into other

subject areas aligned with the provided materials, yet all three participants discussed preexisting beliefs and experiences with integration. The provided materials affirmed the participants' beliefs in integration, giving them the tools to promote integration with their methods students. Moreover, the themes particular to each participant—meeting students' needs, practical and meaningful instruction, and teaching for generalization—were all preexisting beliefs. While these findings support a relationship between the participants' beliefs and the provided materials, there was no clear “cause and effect” in terms of the materials.

Summary

Evidence suggests a strong belief-to-practice connection for all participants. All participants shared a belief in the importance of social studies instruction and the need to promote social studies through their methods instruction, and each engaged in similar practices reflecting these beliefs. In addition, each voiced individual beliefs connected to practices serving as a theme for their instruction. According to Stern and Shavelson (1983), teachers are professionals who make judgments based on the uncertain and complex school and classroom contexts they inhabit; forming their beliefs and these judgments are the basis of their classroom behavior and instructional practices. Stern and Shavelson's (1983) findings echo those of a number of other researchers (see Brownell, Yeager, Rennels & Riley 1997; Clark & Peterson 1986; Cuban 1984; Fang 1996; Leming 1989; Onosko 1989; Pajares 1992; Richardson 1996; Sarason 1996; Shulman 1987; Thornton 1991; Wilson 2000).

How Does Filling These Dual Roles Inform Their Beliefs About the Status of Social Studies in the Elementary Curriculum?

Information Concerning the Status of Elementary Social Studies and Channels of Communication

Due to the pervasive influence of accountability systems on elementary social studies understanding how the participants received information about the status of elementary social studies and what beliefs they have based on this information is important to understand. While serving in these dual roles, participants were privy to unique information about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum and this information came to them through various channels. Dan recognized that, in the past, the district allowed more time for social studies instruction: "...a couple years ago they had a different schedule...but everyone in Owen Elementary and More Cooperative School had social studies time blocks" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). However, according to Dan, "If you follow all the procedures perfectly, there is no time for social studies...I think 20 minutes or 15 minutes, some amount of time that's impossible to do anything" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Dan also recognized how the mandated schedule negatively affected the ability of methods students to observe social studies:

Last year when I taught the social studies course, everyone at our school actually was in classrooms where there was time to get into social studies. This year, the interns are having to rework their schedules so they can see social studies even if it is happening, much less participate in it and do their units. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Alexis asserted that social studies instruction varied greatly in quality even at Petty, a school somewhat sheltered from testing pressures (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Meanwhile, both Dan and Nora reported information that alarmed them about the status of social studies: Due to pressure and the increasing level of oversight, teachers

were losing their freedom to integrate social studies into other subjects. According to

Dan:

We taught reading through social studies. So we would do units on something and we would do...comprehension strategies and things [like] that...But this year we were unable to do that because of—I don't know if the guidelines are stricter or the monitoring is tighter or what...we were told before that we were not allowed to do that because if we have a different group of students that we teach for reading or for social studies, we were unable to overlap them... (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Nora reported a similar situation: “I wish that we could integrate it (social studies) like they used to into the reading and the math, but there's just so much accountability and we have to teach these skills, and so on...” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Nora also had firsthand information about decisions made concerning which students have access to social studies instruction:

Unfortunately, it always happens with the lower performing students being taken out of social studies, and that does happen here. I will say social studies is taught when our Title I low readers go to Title I classes or other services... (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Testing pressure also influenced the cooperating teachers' ability to teach social studies. According to Dan, “most of the mentor teachers that I know who love teaching social studies...think it's really valuable, think it's very important. But they feel like they can't teach it because of the other things...” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan realized that hosting a methods student could actually create space for the cooperating teacher, thus enabling social studies instruction in the face of pressure not to teach it. He illustrated how a cooperating teacher could negotiate such space: “I have to do this because I told the university that I would let [the methods students] fulfill their requirements” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). He added that some cooperating teachers allow the methods students to teach their units “regardless of whatever pressure they might have from their CRT or principal...” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Finally, Nora also noted that filling these dual roles helped her to identify the differences in the status of social studies at Thebaut and Howe Elementary:

Because of the choices that the Howe faculty or principal make or...sometimes the county dictates stuff that you have no control over, but their reading program is called Success for All...so that requires many hours in the morning...so when you make choices like that as a blanket thing for an entire school, you're limited [in the ability to teach social studies], and it's not the teacher's fault. (Nora Interview, 5/2/06)

This insight highlights the importance that contextual factors play in both obstructing and promoting elementary social studies practice.

Serving in these dual roles opened many channels for the participants, granting them access to information concerning the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum. As teachers, these participants worked “in the trenches” and were aware of how actual social studies instruction occurred. Often, Dan received mandates that squarely focused all reading instruction on skills needed for the FCAT test: “We have people who are constantly reminding us: you have to be doing reading. And reading is not this. Reading is not that. Reading is not the other” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Dan also knew of mandates prescribing instructional time that, if followed, would leave little time for social studies instruction: “We received little nasty letters lately saying that we are to teach 90 minutes of direct reading instruction...I don't know where it comes from...I'm sure it's from the county office, but I don't know that for a fact” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

Meanwhile, as a teacher Nora has learned about school-specific curricular decisions made about social studies; “I think, unfortunately, that the purpose right now for social studies is the time that you can pull kids out to do re-teaching for reading skills for FCAT...” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Her discussions with other teachers at “low

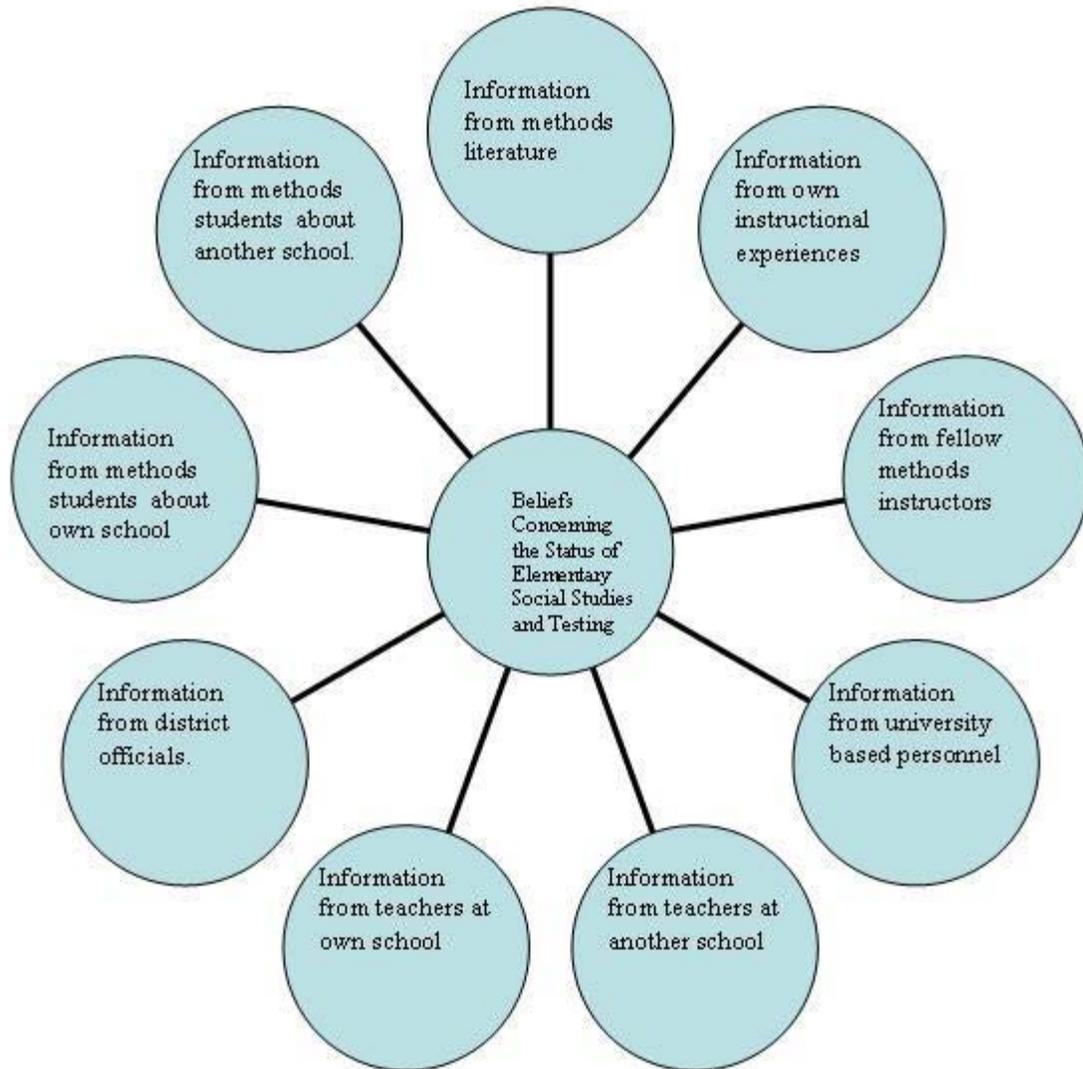


Figure 7-9 Channels of Communication

performing” schools led her to understand that “it’s really bad at some schools in that social studies is] usually the first thing to go” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06).

As methods instructors, the participants had access to information about how social studies was being taught at the schools where their methods students were placed. Based on information gained from her methods students, Alexis stated: “I think teaching social studies ‘traditionally’ happens more at Elise” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). She also had a window into her colleagues’ classrooms at Petty (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). In her role

as a methods instructor, she became uniquely aware of how social studies was taught there:

A teacher here at Petty whose students I had was constantly asking me, “What is it you’re really expecting of them?” She did not really understand what the students were doing, which gave me an idea of what she really [was] doing in her classroom...(Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06)

Nora also learned about the amount of social studies taught at Howe from her methods students:

Some of them said “we see it once a week.” Some of them said “it’s in the afternoon.”...Some of them said that their teacher, their team, or their grade level or whatever rotated, like a month of science and then a month of social studies. (Nora Interview, 5/2/06)

Meanwhile, Dan discussed a more longitudinal view of the situation as a result of his long-term experience in Dennis County and his work as a methods instructor:

Being the methods instructor and by experiencing and by looking at all the trends over time, over other places...I can see what’s happening. I think other teachers right now don’t see what’s happening with social studies...They don’t realize that it’s really being swept under the rug. (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Through these channels of communication, the participants became aware of unique information about social studies, which led to their beliefs about the status of social studies.

Beliefs About the Status of Social Studies in the Elementary Curriculum

Based on this information the participants held particular beliefs about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum. Dan effectively summarized the participants’ beliefs about the status of social studies: “It’s almost like, shhhh, we’re doing social studies – don’t look!” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). This attitude reflected the reality that, in certain schools, testing pressure has driven social studies instruction “underground.”

Alexis expressed concern about her ability as a methods instructor to effect change: “...it

makes me wonder what we can really do” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Nora echoed this sentiment as well: “Oh, it’s disgusting. Makes me want to cry. Both social studies and science, I believe, should be part of the curriculum...” (Nora, Interview 3/16/06).

The participants’ experiences allowed them to understand how little social studies instruction actually occurred: “I think that it has definitely made me see how important it is and how much it isn’t happening” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). This knowledge was difficult for Dan: “Pretty much the biggest struggle...is knowing that there’s less and less of it happening...” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). According to Nora, the source of the pressure to reduce social studies instruction was “like a political agenda, obviously not a purpose that I agree with. But I do think that’s why social studies has been cut so much and put on the back burner...” (Nora, Interview 3/16/06). Dan also expressed similar beliefs, but applied them to his school setting: “Because of these bureaucratic issues, we’re having to change the way we’re teaching” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06).

The participants’ comments reflected and confirmed much of the current research about the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum. With the recent push for more accountability, NCLB has been the worst thing that has ever happened to social studies. Unfortunately, NCLB accelerated a preexisting downturn in social studies education, noted by Houser in 1995 when he documented how elementary social studies was losing ground to other subjects in the curriculum even then. In addition, it is evident that social studies enjoyed a more prominent status in the curriculum in 1995.

The participants’ remarks about how testing pressure was reducing the amount of social studies instruction confirm previous research in similar contexts (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). Nora’s comments about how

political influence has accelerated the decline of social studies have been corroborated by such social studies experts as Jesus Garcia, former president of the NCSS:

What has happened with No Child Left Behind is that someone has made a political decision that reading, writing, and arithmetic are the core subjects that we need to spend a considerable amount of time and money on in grades three through eight. And it put social studies on the back burner. (Pascopella, 2005, p. 30)

Indeed, this created a situation in which methods students have difficulty teaching a subject they have never even seen taught.

Given that the absence of social studies from accountability measures will continue to obstruct elementary social studies teaching, the participants commented on the issue of adding social studies to accountability programs. All three participants agreed that this would increase the amount of actual instruction and overall focus on the subject, but they also voiced a uniform concern about the effect this would have on the nature of social studies instruction and the ability of a standardized test to capture true understanding:

If social studies is going to be taken seriously as a subject that needs to be taught...that is going to be the thing (FCAT) that springs it off...but I don't really think that true understanding of generalizations and true understanding of people in social studies can really be assessed a whole lot on a written test. (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06)

In addition, Dan commented on the need to have prescribed time for social studies:

I think if it was put on the FCAT, it would be sort of a doubled-edged sword, because it would be taught more in classrooms, it would be more of a priority in classrooms, it would be something that would be on your prescribed curriculum schedule, but at that same time it might be cheapened...because it will probably just assess standards which will be facts/concepts. It probably won't be able to assess the generalizations the kids take away because how can you assess that with a standardized test? You can't. (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06)

Nora concurred: "I don't think it will improve social studies instruction. But I think it will improve the daily schedules...Quality, I don't know. You can do a lot of harm if you teach social studies inappropriately and ineffectively" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06).

Nora responded in a similar manner when her methods students asked the same question: “I’m not excited about more testing...but I am happy it will get the subject area more attention” (Nora, Class, 3/8/06). Alexis also framed the dilemma similarly: “What is it going to take? . . .It’s going to have to be tested on the FCAT, and I think that’s the most horrible thing they could do...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Summary

While fears concerning a narrowly conceived assessment are valid, some recent research also contends that no strict correlation exists between high-stakes testing and poor instruction. Barton, for example, has argued that, “There is no necessary connection between content standards and high-stakes tests on the one hand, and low-level, rote instruction on the other” (2005, p. 29). Moreover, some research has suggested that assessment mandates can, in certain cases, stimulate and possibly improve instruction. One such example was provided by Libresco: “I found evidence to illustrate how an exceptional teacher has been able to move in significantly new directions, and...turn the test mandates into stimuli for new and expanded wise practices in social studies” (2005, p. 33). While the evidence suggesting that testing social studies narrows the curriculum and limits teaching practice is persuasive and abundant, educators and decision makers should consider possible alternatives, given the current absence of social studies instruction from a majority of elementary classrooms.

What Do These Inservice Teachers Believe are the Issues They Encountered While Teaching the Methods Course?

Issues Related to Methods Students

The following section discusses some of these issues and their effects on methods instruction.

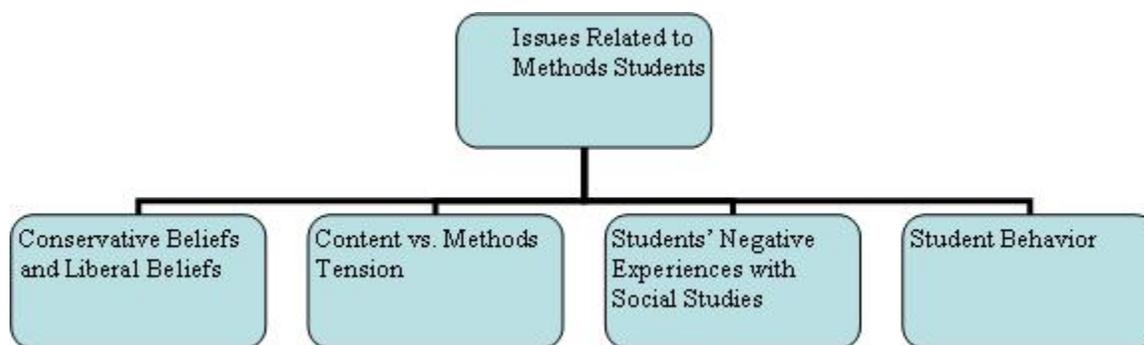


Figure 7-10 Issues Related to Methods Students

Conservative social beliefs and liberal social beliefs

One stark contrast among the three methods classes was the nature of the comments in reference to the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. The methods students in Dan’s and Alexis’s classes voiced quite conservative beliefs, while students in Nora’s class expressed more liberal beliefs. Typical of the comments made by Dan and Alexis’s methods students were: “Kids will end up fighting over history...” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06); “Do you really think she would teach her kids this stuff, like all the Indians die. . .now go home and have a feast?” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06).

Only twice did I ever step out of my role as silent observer to participate. Following the above comment in Alexis’s class, I prompted the student to ask Alexis what she teaches about Thanksgiving. Obliging me, the student asked Alexis: “How do you teach this...with all the bad stuff?” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06). Alexis responded: “I do not teach Thanksgiving. . .I teach a unit about immigration” (Alexis, Class, 3/07/06), and

she proceeded to explain how and why she did this unit. Reflecting on these comments during their final interviews, Alexis and Dan made similar observations: “They held their experiences as stronger, so they thought that this guy (Loewen) was the one who was lying, not their classroom teachers” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06); “it just shows how ingrained those beliefs are and how difficult it is to change beliefs...” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). Paradoxically, many of the students in Alexis’s class began the semester wanting to know “how to not teach ‘white man’s history’” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06). In contrast, the students in Nora’s class expressed liberal beliefs when discussing the book and agreed with its perspective; for example: “This book made me really think hard about why I was taught the version of history I was...because I was in a mostly White school” (Nora, Class, 4/12/06).

The conservative social beliefs voiced by Dan’s and Alexis’s students reflected the conservative and traditional nature of teachers in general (e.g., Cuban 1984; Cuban 1993; Goodlad 1990; Lortie 1975; Owens 1997; Sarason 1996). The disconnect between Alexis’s methods students’ comments about the book and their professed desire to not teach “white man’s history” also is supported in the literature (e.g., Hinchey 2004). Moreover, teaching the traditional narrative of history supports a status quo that thus far had served these mostly middle-class white students well, as was represented in this comment: “You want kids to question things, but not everything” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). These beliefs make it difficult for methods students to accept one of the main goals of social studies education: “to prepare young people to identify, understand, and work to solve problems facing our diverse nation in an increasingly interdependent world” (NCSS 1994, p. 159). The inability of some methods students to accept information contrary to

their particular world view makes teaching for this goal difficult, and may explain “the tendency among teachers to function as professional ideologists, apologists for, or at least preservers of the status quo” (Ginsburg & Newman 1985, p. 49). Also, conservative social beliefs often interfere with the methods students’ ability to reconcile their teaching practices with the goals of social studies. Dan recalled a student who needed to be “in charge” during instruction, and the fact that “her whole philosophy of teaching interfered with the idea of what social studies is” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

The contrasting nature of the public comments made by students in the three different classes cannot be attributed to the instructors’ ethnicities or public dispositions on related issues, though those were similar. The decisive factor was a subtle difference in the students themselves. Nora’s class had a majority of female, middle-class, White students, but there also were two female African American and two female Hispanic students. While the simple presence of minority students did not change the tone of the conversation in other classes, the outspoken nature of these four particular students could have been an important factor in Nora’s class. During the presentation of the *Lies My Teacher Told Me* chapter concerning the invisibility of racism in American textbooks, an African American student’s voice cracked with emotion as she stated: “Some of the things in this book made me mad; these are things I should have known as a child” (Nora, Class, 4/19/06). It is impossible to know whether the shift in the class’s opinion could be attributed to this or any other incident, but this student’s comments had a noticeable impact on her classmates.

Content vs. methods tension

All the participants noted a lack of knowledge concerning the content of the disciplines that make up social studies. This compromised the participants’ abilities to

instruct the methods students in how to teach social studies. While there is content knowledge specific to all the social studies disciplines, lack of historical content was most conspicuous. As Nora noted, “They actually know a whole...lot less than I do” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Dan noted a similar situation: “They have had a real, real weak, limited background in the social studies we’ve taught. And they’ve had to do a lot of work to figure things out” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Due to this lack of content knowledge, the participants often had to correct historical inaccuracies in lesson plans before they could be taught.

How best to address the situation was broached during the interviews. Alexis made an astute observation as she highlighted the two major issues creating the problem: “I don’t know how much more we can add onto the (teacher education) program. I don’t know that one class in anything is sufficient knowledge to prepare teachers” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Alexis’s concerns about overload in the teacher education program was confirmed by a student’s comment: “All these classes run together for me...” (Dan, Class, 4/19/06). Nora offered an interesting solution to the problem, based on feedback she received from her methods students:

[O]ver half said they felt...they have already done [these strategies] in other methods classes...I think it would be more meaningful to take out those weekly assignments and do some sort of content knowledge every week on a different part of history or different topic. (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06)

Thornton (2001) addressed this issue effectively: “What, in particular, do they need to study in the subject matters of the social sciences?...and what should they learn about its effective direction to desired results, that is, method?” (p. 72). The problem begins before the students get to the methods course because of the wide variety of disciplines associated with social science: “What teachers study of the social sciences in their liberal

arts courses may be only loosely coupled with the school social studies courses they are expected to teach” (p. 74). Like Alexis, Thornton is concerned that methods courses are overburdened, and: “frequently the very idea of preparation in method is regarded as intellectually lightweight” (p. 75). Thornton comes down in favor of a focus on method over content: “There is simply no alternative to the thorough education of teachers in the subject matters of the curriculum, methods, and their interrelationships” (p. 78). This particular issue needs more examination and will continue to challenge teacher educators for the foreseeable future.

Students’ negative experiences with Social Studies

Like Owens (1997), the methods students’ negative experiences when they were school children challenged the participants’ methods instruction. Most often, these negative experiences stemmed from poor instruction and dampened their enthusiasm to teach the subject. While recalling an activity during the first class, Nora commented: “I’d say over half of them had negative experiences that they shared” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). These negative experiences included reading a textbook and answering questions listed in the back, or memorization activities. As Dan explained: “It was all segmented. There were no connections. It was...I had to know the states and capitals” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Many of the methods professors featured in Chapter Two noted that such negative experiences created difficulty for elementary social studies methods instruction (Benson 1998; McArthur 2004; Owens 1997; Slekar 2006).

Student behavior

One case of student behavior offered a challenge for one of the participants. Nora had a methods student who often showed up late for class and often failed to hand in assignments. Nora recognized this problem behavior early in the semester: “So, being a

fourth-grade teacher, I did my early identification and realized he was going to be a challenge” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Nora kept him after class and explained: “These are the things you’re missing, and you really need to get these things turned in” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Unfortunately, her efforts were to no avail; the student was absent the next class and did not hand in any work. At this point, Nora realized that she “needed to talk to (the subject area coordinator)” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). After administrative action, the student handed in the work, and Nora learned an important lesson: “I learned a lot [about] how to deal with a college student that is not behaving correctly. And it’s a little different than dealing with fourth graders that aren’t behaving correctly” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). None of the other instructors had similar problems; fortunately, Nora’s difficulty with this student was an isolated event.

Issues Related to the Status of Elementary Social Studies and the Field Placement

The status of social studies in the elementary curriculum and its effects on methods students’ field placements are discussed in this section, as are issues solely related to the field placement.

Lack of professional development for elementary Social Studies

The lack of professional development presented a challenge to participants’ social studies practices in their roles as teachers and as methods instructors. All participants noted the lack of professional development for social studies. Alexis could not remember ever attending a teacher in-service for social studies: “Nothing district-sponsored, for sure” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Nora made a similar complaint: “There’s so few in-services and things like that focused on specifically teaching social studies” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). While Dan remembered attending in-services in the past, he wished

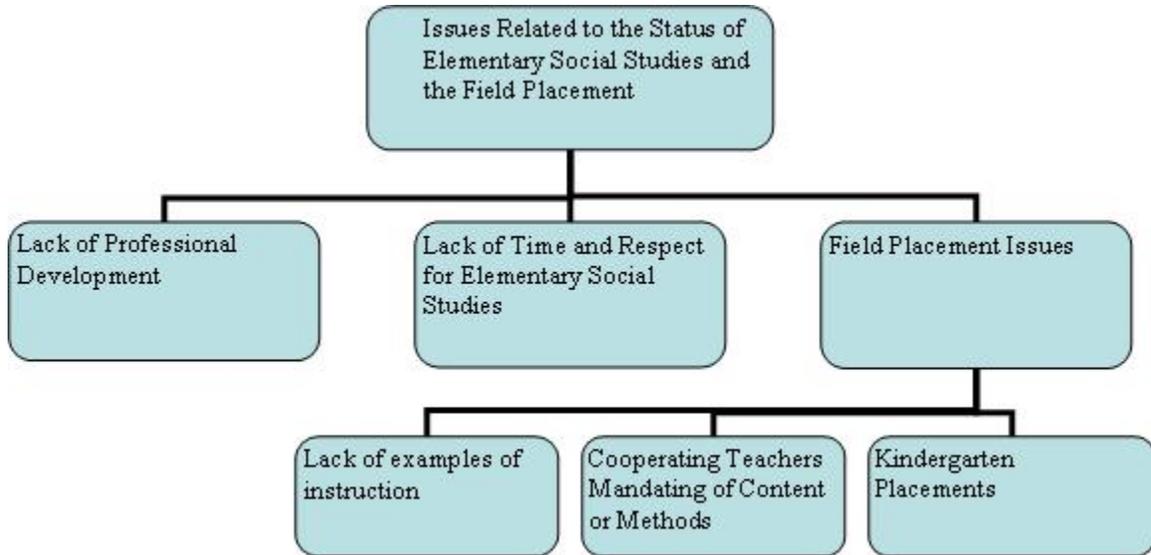


Figure 7-11 Issues Related to the Status of Elementary Social Studies and the Field Placement

that there were more provided by the district (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Asked why she believed there were so few in-services for social studies, Alexis stated: “My first response is that I think it is because it’s not tested on FCAT; nobody cares about it” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Clearly, the participants believed that this lack of professional development opportunity limited their ability to expand and grow as instructors of social studies, and also limited the ability of their elementary colleagues who served as cooperating teachers to do the same.

The lack of professional development for social studies instruction has been noted in the literature. This creates a problem for teachers who wish to improve their social studies skills. These teachers must either study social studies literature or seek out and pay for professional development on their own (Knighton 2003; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). The similarity of the participants’ remarks and the reflection of those remarks in the research literature underscore the pervasiveness of the problem.

Lack of time and respect for elementary Social Studies

A major challenge to the participants' methods instruction was the lack of instructional time given to the methods students by cooperating teachers. This issue surfaced during the students' presentations of their units: "We only had thirty minutes" (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06); "we wish we would have had more time" (Nora, Class, 4/26/06); "we have to focus down due to time constraints" (Dan, Class, 4/26/06). This situation severely limited the methods students' ability to teach in an in-depth manner.

The three participants also reported a subtle, but noticeable, lack of respect for social studies related to the fact that the subject was not included on the FCAT test. Dan and Alexis both recalled situations in which students would state their concerns about investing instructional time in social studies for fear of losing time that could be devoted to FCAT preparation. One such incident occurred in Alexis's class: "One of them was concerned that taking time to do extended projects would detract from 'real learning' that they needed to show on the FCAT" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Dan recalled many incidents "where a lot of people would bring up the FCAT, and 'we can't do that because of the FCAT'" (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). Nora also believed that this lack of respect was related to the untested status: "Until it's tested and used for accountability purposes, I do not think that it will have the respect. I do not think it will get the attention" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06).

Both issues are directly related to the imperiled status of elementary social studies (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004). The lack of instructional time has been attributed to testing pressure: "Members of visiting accreditation teams have heard administrators and faculty proudly announce that they do not teach any social studies or science in elementary school because they focus all their attention and energy on reading and math"

(Fritzer & Kumar 2002, p. 51). Moreover, this situation is more prevalent in schools with poor test scores “where nearly half of the principals report moderate or large decreases in social studies instruction” (NEA 2004, p. 27). Indeed, Pascopella was correct when she stated: “It’s a crisis. Social studies, particularly in the elementary grades, has been pushed to the back burner in schools” (2005, p. 30).

Other field placement issues

The lack of examples of social studies instruction was an issue for all the participants during the entire course, as evidenced by the comments of methods students in class discussions. During the presentations of the units at the end of the semester, the issue became more troubling when some students revealed that their social studies unit was the only social studies teaching that occurred in their field placement the entire semester: “They never had social studies, except what we did...” (Alexis, Class, 4/11/06); “we never saw any social studies” (Nora, Class, 4/26/06). Also, the complete absence of social studies was more prevalent in the lower grades: “We are in first grade and they do not ever have social studies” (Dan, Class, 4/26/06).

Again, the participants’ comments are reflected in the literature. The lack of instructional examples could also be related to cooperating teachers’ simple lack of desire to teach the subject. Owens (1997) reported: “A third of the participants (33.3 percent) reported their directing teachers were either “uninterested” or “very uninterested” in teaching social studies” (p. 117). Also the total absence of social studies from classrooms has also been reported: “In many cases, social studies was granted thirty minutes a week or was not part of the weekly schedule at all” (Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004, p. 22). This situation also impacted the connection to what was studied in the methods course: “This made connecting what they were learning in methods coursework difficult”

(Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford, 2004, p. 22), and “counterproductive” (Owens, 1997, p. 117).

A field placement issue not directly related to the status of social studies was the practice of cooperating teachers mandating either the content or instructional methods of the interns’ social studies units: “It was our only option to do [it] because this is the only unit they do this semester” (Nora, Class, 4/19/06). In some cases, the cooperating teachers required the methods students to stick to the textbook for content and instructional methods: “She just wants us to teach about what the book taught” (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06). In other cases, the cooperating teacher mandated the content, instructional method, and amount of instructional time. As one methods student explained: “We had to stay within the constraints we were given” (Dan, Class, 4/26/06).

This is not limited to social studies at the elementary level. In their 1997 study, Yeager and Wilson noted a similar situation at the secondary level: “Cooperating teachers actively discouraged the use of inquiry-based teaching methods and considered them to be too impractical or inefficient” (p. 124). Owens (1997) illustrates how the current situation may be more troubling than in the past: “Over 30 percent of the participants were placed with directing teachers whom they described as having a ‘traditional’ teaching style” (Owens 1997, p. 117).

An unexpected issue that surfaced during the semester related to lower elementary placements, especially kindergarten. Methods students in these placements had difficulty assessing the developmental level of their students, and thus with choosing a developmentally appropriate topic and lessons for their unit. The problem was commented on by methods students in a kindergarten placement as they discussed their

unit: “We should have done baby steps” (Nora, Class, 4/26/06). Alexis was able to address the situation with some of the methods students who sought extra help. During the final interview, Alexis described the difference between the units of the methods students who approached her for help and others who did not:

If you looked at the two units side by side, one was 40,000 times better than the other because they really had a grasp of where K students’ development is...where the other ones started a lesson, had absolutely no idea, could not understand why the kindergarten students did not understand what a community was, and had to really regroup. (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06)

The selection of the unit topic was particularly difficult for the methods students. Nora stated: “So it’s definitely difficult. And I know some of my students had a tough time coming up with...the appropriate curriculum topic” (Interview, 5/2/06). Some methods students underestimated the abilities of their students: “They don’t seem like their kids can do it. They almost feel like...we have to teach them to read first or they just play” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06).

The inability of elementary social studies methods students to effectively assess and deliver developmentally appropriate instruction has not been fully explored in the social studies literature. However, the planning and delivery of appropriate instruction to kindergarten students has been addressed for a variety of topics, such as map skills (Bohan 2001) and the workings of the post office (Maple 2005). Indeed, this unexpected issue was accentuated by the disproportionate number of kindergarten placements in relation to other grade levels.

Issues Related to Filling Dual Roles

The issues discussed in this section relate to filling the dual roles of in-service elementary teacher and elementary social studies methods instructor.

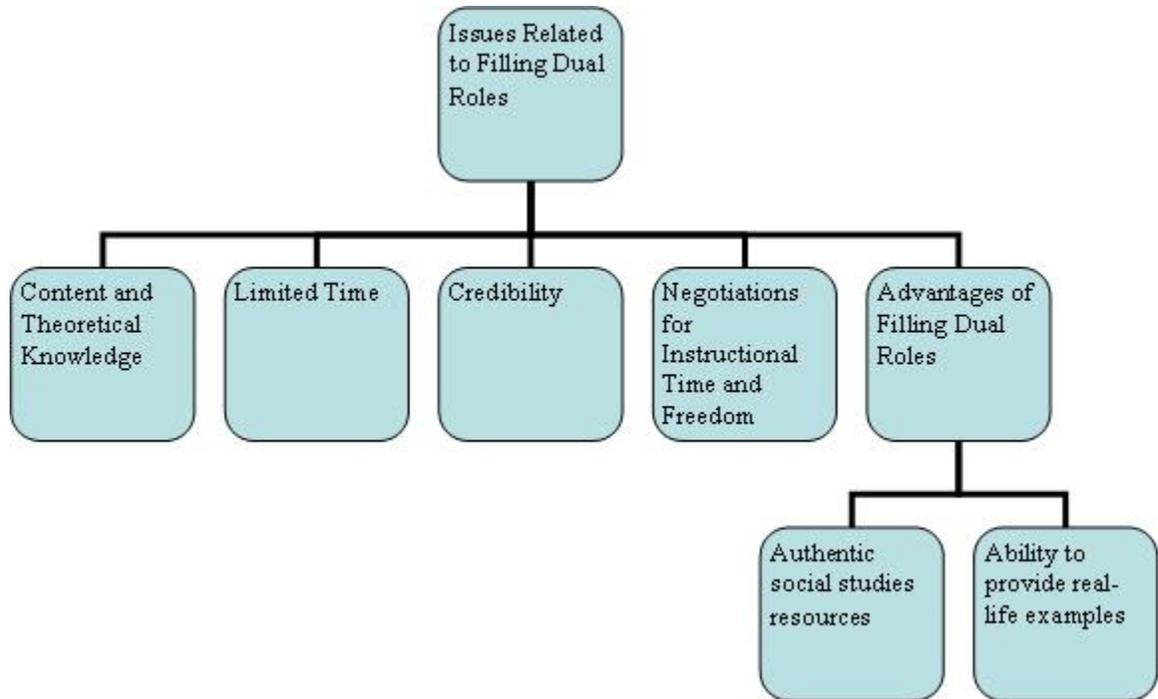


Figure 7-12 Issues Related to Filling Dual Roles

Content and theoretical knowledge

Like the methods students, the participants felt that they lacked a deep understanding of all the disciplines associated with social studies. This perceived lack of knowledge extended to the theoretical foundations of elementary social studies. When the topic of theoretical knowledge arose, the participants expressed similar concerns. Asked if she felt a need to expand her theoretical knowledge, Nora replied: “Definitely” (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). To the same question, Dan noted that he often understood the theoretical material and how it connected to his practice as an elementary teacher, but he was not familiar with “all the names (of the theorists) and such” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06). This issue also affected Alexis’s methods practice: “Sometimes I feel like I am talking about things I do not have a lot of depth of knowledge about” (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Elementary social studies methods instructors' theoretical and content knowledge has not been discussed in the literature. Participants' difficulties were surely related to those of the methods students as discussed by Thornton (2005). In addition, this issue also relates to the participants' individual backgrounds. As noted earlier, both Dan and Nora had methods instruction that they described as "poorly taught" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06) and "not real thrilled with" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). This situation contributed to their lack of theoretical knowledge. However, Alexis had methods instruction she described as "inspiring" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Interestingly, when the participants did note strength in a particular content area, it was related to specific aspects of their personal or professional background. When discussing their content knowledge, both Nora and Dan noted strength in their knowledge of Florida history, which is covered in 4th grade. Moreover, Alexis noted strength related to her experiences in high school. Asked if the content knowledge she gained in high school affected her social studies instruction, Alexis replied: "Definitely" (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Limited time

Time to devote to methods instruction presented a challenge to all the participants. Both Alexis and Nora cited time as their greatest challenge: "Time is my biggest disadvantage" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06); "time would be the biggest thing" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Dan noted a similar challenge: "Time is really tough" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). The time issue was most often associated with grading the methods students' work. Nora noted difficulty with the issue on more than one occasion: "Time management and I need to work on my grading" (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). In the context of a stressful day, Alexis commented: "Thinking about getting all these units graded next week...just sends me over the edge...for my stress level..." (Alexis, Class, 4/4/06). Dan

noted that the time crunch required him to take work home on the weekend: “Yeah, time is really tough...Saturday, I’ll check their papers” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). When asked if they had to choose between their methods instruction and elementary instruction, all participants made the same decision: “I always made my kids the first priority” (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06); “if I had to choose, it would be my elementary kids” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06,); “my priority is my original students, not necessarily my master’s students” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). The similarities of the participants’ comments only underscore the rigorous requirements of filling these dual roles. The time challenges of inservice teachers also serving as methods instructors has not been explored in the literature. Moreover, while this issue did present a legitimate concern, I concluded that the participants’ concerns were related mostly to their own high expectations for both their elementary and methods practice.

Credibility

Instead of negatively affecting their credibility with the methods students, the participants’ status as inservice teachers for the most part seemed to enhance their credibility. Asked about this issue, Alexis reported: “It’s amazing. I think that they listen more to what I say because I am actually doing this work every day than they would to somebody who was a professor and was at the university” (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). Nora reported that using her own classroom for methods instruction even helped her credibility: “I loved it. I can’t imagine trying to teach somewhere else, like in a college class” (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06). Dan noted that his shared priority with the methods students enhanced his credibility and the ability of the methods students to relate to him: “My most important priority is getting it (social studies) into my kids, and a lot of the interns; that’s where they are right now...it’s harder for them to connect to what

somebody's study said or...somebody's theory" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). Dan also noted a decisive factor regarding credibility:

In their (methods students) mind, because you're two feet away from a classroom or one year away, they don't consider you in the same area or the same field as someone who has been in there this morning or five minutes ago or right there... (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06)

Thus, their proximity to the classroom seemed to be the greatest source of credibility for the participants.

Another decisive factor for the credibility issue was the participants' status as alumni of their methods students' teacher education program. Dan noted that his alumni status helped, as did Alexis, who said: "I told them that I went through (the program), so I think that's part of it. I mean, knowing that I graduated from the same, well, a similar program that they're in..." (Alexis, Interview, 3/17/06). Interestingly, Nora's lack of alumni status did not seem to negatively affect her credibility with her methods students. This issue, like the others associated with inservice teachers serving as methods instructors, has not been fully investigated.

Negotiations for instructional time and freedom

The participants' roles in negotiations for instructional time and freedom stimulated the most diverse comments. Asked about helping methods students talk to their cooperating teachers, Alexis noted: "Another disadvantage for me, especially being on site, is fielding other teachers who may not see social studies in the same light as I do..." (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). During the final interview, Alexis strengthened her position while discussing a teacher at another school who was mandating the content of a methods student's unit: "There would have been an attempt to negotiate, using the university supervisor; that's their job...I would not approach the teacher" (Alexis, Interview,

5/10/06). Conversely, Dan felt that his ability to negotiate with teachers at his school was an advantage and an opportunity to teach the methods students to do the same: “I am able to negotiate more because I know the conditions. I know most of the teachers...” (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). In addition, Dan advertised his services during methods class: “If you are ever having trouble where I can help you, let me know” (Dan, Class, 3/22/06). In contrast to the other participants, Nora did not do any negotiating for her methods students; she did not see the need.

The disparities in the participants’ comments possibly related to their professional backgrounds and differences in the schools in which they worked. While Alexis was a teacher with seven years of experience, she had only been at Petty for two years. This might account for her hesitation in approaching her fellow teachers. On the other hand, Dan was an equally experienced teacher, but his entire career had been at Owen Elementary. Dan’s length of tenure and familiarity with the other teachers at Owen might allow him to comfortably approach his colleagues and ask for concessions for his methods students. Nora was equally as experienced as the other two, and she had been at her school for four years. However, she did not see the need to negotiate for her methods students. Possibly, this was related to the status of social studies at her school. Social studies was included in the daily schedule at Thebaut, although of secondary importance because of the practice of removing at-risk students for FCAT remediation and other pull-out services. This could possibly have created situations in which social studies teaching took place, but the cooperating teachers were less concerned with the substance of social studies instruction, since it was “filler” in the schedule.

Advantages of filling dual roles

There were other distinct advantages to filling these dual roles that all the participants enjoyed. The first was access to authentic social studies resources currently in use with elementary students. This advantage was evident during a discussion in Nora's class concerning use of "literature circles" for social studies instruction. During this discussion, Nora pulled out the laminated literature circle cards she used with her elementary students to facilitate her instruction (Nora, Class, 3/22/06). Dan discussed his access to the most recent resources provided by the district: "...we have access to whatever is being used right now in the county" (Dan, Interview, 3/17/06). While she did not have access to the county resources, Alexis more than made up for it with her own personal collection of resources, such as her Jackdaws kit (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Another advantage was the ability of the participants to provide real-life examples of social studies instruction and student work. Through the use of video, Alexis provided her methods students with examples of teaching her first-grade students: "I've shown them a lesson, of me teaching or of me working with a group of students on how to represent sounds using musical instruments that a Chinese dragon would make" (Alexis, Interview, 3/14/06). The use of examples from the participants' elementary practice was evident in almost every methods class I observed, as Nora also noted: "All the time I'm talking or showing them something that happens in my fourth-grade room" (Nora, Interview, 3/16/06). Dan was particularly adept at using student work from his fourth-grade class. On one particular occasion, Dan provided his methods students with examples of the "RAFT" strategy from his students (Dan, Class, 3/22/06).

The advantages of filling these dual roles has not been chronicled in the literature, but these do represent a possible means of bridging the gap between the realities of social

studies instruction in schools and the social studies practices encouraged by university-based social studies professionals. This gap was described by Leming (1989) as the “two cultures” of social studies. During the final interviews, I introduced Leming’s work to the participants, and then we discussed the ability of someone serving in these dual roles to bridge the gap. Dan explained the possibilities for someone serving in these dual roles:

I think I can do it a lot more than maybe people in other situations can because one of the things I’m going to try to do more of is use my video in my classroom. But by having them see that these are real kids, and it doesn’t have to look like the ideal perfect lesson that you might see sometimes, in order to do a good job teaching social studies, I think that it helps the (methods) students see that what’s in this book can happen in this room with these kids, believe it or not. (Dan, Interview, 5/4/06)

When discussing the same topic, Nora connected filling the “two cultures” gap to her practicality focus and suggested:

I feel like I was successful in that role as an instructor. That was one of the things I really enjoyed, and I could sense [it]...when I would start telling stories about my classroom or students I’ve had, or lessons I’ve taught, or just strategies that have worked or haven’t worked. (Nora, Interview, 5/2/06)

Alexis confirmed the other participants’ viewpoints, but cited the ability of the methods students to see her as a teacher who actually does “in-depth stuff” as the key to bridging the gap between what is presented in the methods textbooks and what happens in a real classroom (Alexis, Interview, 5/10/06).

Summary

The participants’ comments reflected the realities of teaching an elementary social studies methods course. The ubiquitous “elephant in the living room” in the participants’ comments was the detrimental effect of high-stakes testing on elementary social studies instruction in general. Accordingly, a majority of the issues the participants encountered related to the effects of high-stakes testing. These effects were felt most acutely in the

field placements, where methods students saw little social studies instruction and for the most part were severely restricted in the amount of social studies they were allowed to teach. This lack of instructional time for social studies was very similar to situations described by several researchers (e.g., Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Fritzer & Kumar 2002; Guisbond & Schaeffer 2004, 2003; Neill & Guisbond 2005; Knighton 2003). The participants experienced all of the six issues described by Owens (1997), most notably the cooperating teachers' lack of desire to teach social studies. While this lack of desire certainly must have existed in 1997, it has no doubt been exacerbated by the current focus on accountability. The participants did report issues not noted by Owens that have been discussed elsewhere – for example, the content vs. methods tension discussed by Thornton (2001), and the lack of professional development for elementary social studies noted by Yendol-Hoppey and Tilford (2004). One challenge not previously noted in the literature was the difficulty experienced by the methods students in kindergarten placements.

Conversely, the majority of the participants' successes related to serving in the dual roles of inservice elementary teacher and elementary social studies methods instructor. Being an inservice teacher allowed the participants to relate well to the methods students and provide real-life connections and examples of elementary social studies instruction. These advantages symbolize a possible way of bridging the gap described by Leming (1989) as the "two cultures" of social studies. Leming noted: "There exists in social studies a persistent abyss which separates the teaching lives of practicing classroom teachers from the research interests and methods class preparation of future social studies teachers" (1989, p. 404). Leming argued that these two distinct cultures within the social

studies profession are separated by their purposes; that is, the university-based social studies “intelligentsia” is more focused on creating social change, whereas real teachers are less concerned with social change and more focused on traditional practices that have been “proved” to work. Leming concluded: “The head has lost touch with the body” (p. 406). To create positive changes in social studies practices, Leming cited the need for “a common meeting ground where meaningful dialogue between the two cultures can take place” (p. 408). The participants in this study may represent a common meeting ground because of their access to, and their ability to participate in, both cultures. As yet, the advantages and disadvantages of filling the dual roles I have described have not been fully explored in the literature.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings of the Study

Overall, filling the dual roles served to enhance the participants' methods instruction and give them unique insights into the status of social studies. The ability of the participants to relate and react to the experiences and concerns of the methods students proved to be invaluable. The lack of university-level experience, and theoretical and content knowledge related to elementary social studies, did not prove to be insurmountable barriers to the participants' methods instruction. These deficiencies were mitigated by the structured nature of the provided course materials, the participants' professional experiences as elementary teachers, and their hard work and professionalism as methods instructors. The long-term retention of inservice elementary teachers to serve as methods instructors would further mitigate, if not eliminate, these deficiencies. By and large, while serving as methods instructors, the participants performed admirably while filling this critical need.

While the participants served well as methods instructors, it would be unwise not to include a discussion of what is lost when instructors without advanced preparation teach an elementary social studies methods course. Indeed, the participants felt were able to communicate a solid understanding of social studies teaching and learning to their methods students. However, they did not focus on some of the more advanced concepts in social studies education, such as historical inquiry, participatory citizenship, and social justice. This contrast was noticeable when comparing the participants' statements to those

of the methods professors found in chapter 2. This is, of course, an unfair comparison, because elementary social studies is not the exclusive focus of the participants as it is with the featured professors. But it does reveal what is lost.

Recommendations for Supporting and Improving Social Studies Methods Instruction by Inservice Teachers

To further support individuals serving in these dual roles, and to fulfill the requirements of a Doctor of Education dissertation, I will discuss “implications for practice” (University of Florida 1983). These suggestions are organized by the level to which they apply. All are based on data I collected on the three instructors during one semester and by no means definitively represent any deficiencies related to the course. Moreover, all of these suggestions are based on creating an ideal situation for supporting and improving social studies methods instruction by inservice teachers, and may not be applicable to the realities of public schools and a large teacher education program.

Field Placement

To support and improve social studies methods instruction by inservice teachers, I recommend two changes that could take place at the field placement level. The university field supervisors could become more involved to ensure that methods students have sufficient time and instructional freedom to teach their social studies units. This would ensure better application of methods instruction and relieve pressure on the methods instructors and students to negotiate. Also, at the field placement sites, there could be increased support for social studies instruction to improve its quality and frequency for interns to observe. This support could take the form of on-site inservice activities provided by university-based personnel. The inservice activities could mitigate the lack

of district social studies inservice and align the methods and purpose of social studies instruction at the field placement with the methods and purpose advanced by the course.

Methods Course

At the course level, four suggestions could improve social studies methods by inservice instructors. First, teachers serving in the district who have shown exemplary social studies instructional effectiveness could be observed by methods students and new methods instructors. Efforts should continue to recruit exemplary elementary social studies teachers to instruct the methods course, especially teachers who also are advanced graduate students, teachers working in high poverty schools, teachers with academic training in one of the social studies disciplines, and secondary social studies teachers with middle school experience. Also, efforts should continue to retain instructors; the learning curve for this course is steep, and experience in teaching the course proved to be invaluable.

As a form of professional development, methods instructors could observe each other teaching the methods class, as well as observe university-based personnel teaching a methods class, to share practices and provide examples for new instructors. The information I gained through observing others in this course was invaluable for my own instruction, as well as my understanding of the issues of elementary social studies methods instruction.

Moreover, a social studies methods reading packet could be provided to new instructors to build theoretical knowledge and understanding of critical issues. I suggest the following five readings as a start:

1. Barton K. & Levstik L. (2004). *Teaching History for the Common Good*. This book provides an organized and extensive discussion of the current research on history education, while acknowledging the subjective nature of the endeavor.

2. Owens W. (1997). "The Challenges of Teaching Social Studies Methods to Preservice Elementary Teachers." *The Social Studies*, 88, 113-120. Owens presents six challenges endemic to elementary social studies methods instruction; although dated, all six still are relevant.

3. Benson J. (1998). "Using an Inquiry Approach with Preservice Teachers to Explain the process of Facts, Concept, and Generalization." *The Social Studies*, 89, 227–31. Benson provides an excellent outline of teaching this unfamiliar but important instructional strategy. More in-depth explanations of this process exist (e.g., Banks, 1990), but this article is a concise, easily understood road map.

4. Thornton S. (2001). "Educating the Educators: Rethinking Subject Matter and Methods." *Theory Into Practice*, 2001, Vol. 40, No. 1, 72-78. Thornton clearly outlines the "content versus methods" tension and explains why methods should be of utmost importance.

5. Yeager EA & Davis OL, Eds. (2005). *Wise Social Studies Teaching in an Age of High-Stakes Testing: Essays on Classroom Practices and Possibilities*. The chapters featuring elementary teachers provide examples of how powerful instruction can take place in a high-stakes environment.

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At this level, two particular issues could be addressed. First, there could be a greater effort to adapt the class schedule of the methods students so that they can see social studies instruction within the time constraints of the district's mandated schedule.

This would allow methods students to make the theory-to-practice connections promised by a concurrent field placement. Finally, in order to address the content vs. methods issue, the alignment of the social science requirements for preservice teachers could be considered to better fit the needs of future teachers. A reasonable place to begin would seem to be requiring that all preservice elementary teachers take at least one U.S. history course and one U.S. government course so that they will be able to address the content covered in the state curriculum standards.

Future Research

Research on Inservice Teachers Serving as Methods Instructors

While there are many avenues for future research concerning inservice teachers serving as methods instructors, I believe four deserve particular attention. First and foremost, research needs to further explore the advantages of individuals serving in dual roles. While not the aim of this study, the advantages of this situation were evident, especially in regard to closing the “theory to practice gap” and connecting the “two cultures” of social studies education described by Leming (1989, 1992).

Further research into addressing the theoretical knowledge of individuals filling these dual roles needs to be explored. As evidenced in the findings, a lack of theoretical knowledge was not the deciding factor in the success of these instructors. However, a review of the elementary social studies and elementary social studies methods literature could identify “key readings” that would assist generalist, inservice elementary teachers in developing a working knowledge of the theoretical literature in order to enhance methods practice.

The perceptions of methods students with regard to inservice teachers who instruct methods courses also warrant investigation. Understanding how preservice teachers view

these instructors likely could mitigate the possible drawbacks and further improve the ability of these instructors to connect with the preservice teachers and deliver effective methods instruction in all subject areas.

Finally, there should be further exploration of the effects of a suggested syllabus and course materials on instructors' beliefs about social studies teaching and learning, especially when the instructors have little previous experience with the material. I observed a strong relationship between the participants' beliefs and the provided materials, and in the case of Nora, the relationship seemed particularly powerful. This begs two important and unanswered questions: What is the role of the supervising professor in determining the nature of the course? And what happens when an instructor has conflicting views? Moreover, because these questions are not unique to social studies methods instruction, they could extend to similar situations in teacher education programs and could be addressed by teacher education researchers from a variety of subject areas.

Research on Elementary Social Studies Methods Instruction

Elementary social studies methods instruction must address more forcefully the current high-stakes testing environment, because instruction is only powerful if delivered. The skills and knowledge necessary to "fit it in" should be identified and added to the methods literature. The participants' focus on "fitting it in" and their heavy emphasis on "saving" social studies speak to the severity of the situation from the perspective of those doing the instruction.

The difficulties encountered by methods students in kindergarten placements also warrant further investigation. While this challenge surfaced in relation to teaching social studies methods, there are larger difficulties among preservice teachers with planning and delivering developmentally appropriate instruction in other subjects. Social studies

researchers could contribute to and benefit from an integrated approach to studying this issue with other subject area researchers.

Furthermore, research is needed to understand how to enlist better support among cooperating teachers for methods instruction and how to address the differing purposes and methods typically encountered in the field placement. When cooperating teachers do not share a common purpose and do not know much about the methods their interns are supposed to utilize, the ability of methods students to observe and practice what they have been taught is limited. Any progress made toward enlisting cooperating teacher support would improve the situation, because currently some cooperating teachers are unknowingly acting as a barrier to implementing what is taught in methods courses.

Research Elementary Social Studies

Several areas of elementary social studies are in need of attention. First, the field needs an expansive literature review on the status of elementary social studies in the curriculum and an analysis of the current research. Those involved with elementary social studies at all levels could then use the findings to create a plan of action for addressing the most immediate issues. In my view, if the current situation is allowed to continue, the subject will eventually exist only on paper.

We also need more discussion and analysis of the possible benefits and drawbacks of placing elementary social studies content on standardized tests and including it in accountability systems. I believe the research community needs to address this issue if it wants “a place at the table” in designing the assessments. Perhaps the time will come when lawmakers in this state will mandate the inclusion of social studies assessment in accountability systems, or when social studies researchers will conclude that testing

social studies is the only means of preserving the subject. In either case, testing social studies knowledge is tricky, and perhaps that is why we continue to avoid it.

Further research into contextual support for social studies is also warranted to uncover the factors at the district, school, and classroom levels that facilitate elementary social studies instruction. While factors at the school level have been documented to some extent, more research at all three levels is needed. Overall, the academic community that conducts research on elementary social studies could direct more effort toward ensuring that social studies instruction takes place in more classrooms. Research on elementary social studies practice is invaluable to ensure the quality of practice, but these efforts are in vain if social studies instruction occurs only in a few classrooms.

Conclusion about the Status of Elementary Social Studies

Elementary social studies is caught in a “downward spiral.” While social studies has never had the status of reading, writing, and mathematics in the elementary curriculum, it was once considered an integral part of education. This is no longer the case. The pressure of high-stakes testing has eviscerated elementary social studies instruction. If I was concerned about the status of elementary social studies before conducting this study, now I am distressed. The findings in this study show that quality social studies instruction is taking place in only a few classrooms in these schools on a regular basis.

For a moment, consider the long term implications of this situation. Due to the lack of quality social studies instruction, future elementary teachers will never learn what social studies actually is during their “apprenticeship of observation.” When these future elementary teachers get to their social studies methods course, the instructors will not only be required to teach them how to teach social studies, they will have to teach what

social studies is. During the course, these preservice teachers will encounter field placements where little social studies instruction takes place, as well as directing teachers who resist the application of knowledge from the methods course and who resist giving up instructional time. Then, with an improved but unpracticed conception of how to teach social studies, they will complete the methods course and eventually make it to their own classrooms, where, most often, they will experience tremendous pressure to disregard any substantive social studies instruction that does not directly relate to a major holiday or cultural celebration.

There hope for the future. This study is only one lens through which to view the situation; others exist. The experiences of these inservice teachers serving as methods instructors provide examples of how the downward spiral is progressing—and how it can be stopped. Consider the examples of Dan and Nora. Both had poor elementary social studies methods instruction as university students, but because of their belief in the importance of social studies instruction, they were able to maintain some form of social studies practice.

Also consider the example of Alexis, whose methods course acted as a vehicle for preserving social studies instruction. She described her own excellent social studies methods instructor, who helped her develop a strong commitment to social studies instruction and a belief in the importance of the subject. These cases provide hope that all is not lost. When preservice teachers have strong social studies methods instruction, they are more likely to see the value of social studies education and then are more likely to teach social studies to their elementary students when they become teachers. The solid

understanding and motivation that a good methods course affords can ensure that social studies instruction takes place. This should be our ultimate goal.

APPENDIX A PROTOCOLS

1. General Background and Instructional Questions
2. Why did you become a teacher?
3. Define the word 'teaching'.
4. How would you describe your philosophical approach to teaching?
5. Describe your educational background from high school to graduate school including institution, location, degrees and major(s).
6. If you did not study Elementary Education as your main focus what else did you study?
7. How much of your teacher education was directly related to Social Studies instruction?
8. Describe your occupational history including schools, location, population, subjects, grade levels, years teaching.
9. How much experience have you had as a university level instructor? Courses? Frequency?

Education and Professional Experiences

10. What professional development activities have you participated in related to the social studies, either district provided or those you sought out on your own?
11. What professional organizations do you belong to?
12. Have you ever held any positions in these organizations? Please describe.
13. Describe any professional conferences/meetings you have attended and/or presented at.
14. Describe any other professional activities you have been or are involved with.

Social Studies Questions

15. Define 'Social Studies'.

16. Tell me about your previous experiences with social studies as a student ...
17. If needed: Tell me about a positive personal experience with social studies?
18. If needed: Tell me about a positive professional experience with social studies?
19. Have these experiences influence what you teach during your methods instruction? If so, how? If not, why not?
20. How has your definition of 'social studies' changed over the last 5 years? If so, how? Probe: Why has your definition changed?
21. Can you tell me how you feel about the status of social studies in the state of Florida in general?
22. Can you tell me how you feel about the status of social studies in the PROTEACH program?
23. What purpose do you believe social studies serves in the elementary curriculum?

Social Studies Methods Questions

24. Tell me about a social studies methods lesson you really enjoyed teaching....
25. How would you describe your philosophical approach to social studies methods instruction?
26. What do you see as your main job as a methods instructor?
27. What is your overall goal for your methods students? What do you want them to be able to do after taking your course?
28. What values or ideas do you stress in your social studies methods instruction?
29. If a preservice teacher asked why they should include social studies in their instruction what reasons would you give them?
30. How do you convey to your methods students the importance of social studies?
31. Do you feel that your students approach your social studies methods course as seriously as they approach the methods courses in the assessed areas?
32. Can you give me an example from your methods instruction when you felt a student did not perceive social studies as important?
33. What preparations did you receive as a preservice teacher that prepared you to teach social studies in the elementary classroom?

34. How do you model integration of others subject in to your social studies methods instruction?
35. What considerations for a high stakes environment do you require your methods students to make in their unit plans?
36. What advantages do you feel you possess as a methods instructors as an inservice teacher?
37. What disadvantages do you feel you have experienced as an inservice teacher who teaches a methods course?
38. What successes have you experience during your methods instruction?
39. What particular challenges have you experienced during your methods instruction?
40. Have you brought any examples of a lesson plan and/or student work from your own classroom in to your methods instruction?
41. How does working in these dual roles influence your methods instruction?

Elementary Social Studies Instruction

42. What is your overall goal for your elementary social studies instruction?
43. Tell me about a social studies lesson you really enjoyed teaching....
44. How does filling the dual rolls of elementary classroom teacher and methods instructor effect your elementary social studies instruction?
45. Since you have started teaching the methods course have you been teaching more social studies in your elementary classroom?
46. Do you believe that teaching the methods course has improved your social studies instruction?
47. Has filling these dual rolls changed your perspective/opinion about the place of social studies in the elementary curriculum?

Second Interview- General Protocol

48. Explain Leming's two cultures theory. Q-Do you believe that you are able to bridge this gap because of the dual roles you inhabit?
49. Do you feel that using your own classroom facilitates your methods instruction and adds to your credibility?
50. Often during unit presentations the methods students seemed to really value how "cute" students looked while they were participating in the instruction or they

highlighted students work when a student wrote something that was “cute” or “sweet”? Did you notice this?

51. What do you see as your main job as a methods instructor now that the course is over?
52. What do you believe needs to happen to raise the status of social studies in the elementary curriculum?
53. Did you ever feel that you lacked any theoretical knowledge about elementary social studies that would have helped you?
54. Did you ever feel that you lacked any content knowledge that would have helped to instruct the course?
55. How does filling these dual roles inform your beliefs about the place of social studies in the elementary curriculum? What have you seen and heard?
56. “Nothing district sponsored for sure. Even when there was an adoption of a Social Studies textbook in Ted County while I was there. There was no professional development tied to that. Um, and I I can’t think of any professional development experience I’ve had in Social Studies ever.” Q-How do you think the lack of professional development for social studies at the inservice level effects methods instruction for preservice teachers?
57. “We’re teaching for real understanding. I think that that is um, that is my job, is to plant that seed so that hopefully when they go out, they go, hmmm, what am I really teaching here? Am I teaching kids to memorize the states and capitals? Or am I teaching kids to understand that land is divided up different ways?” I noted during my observations of unit presentations many students had “content driven units. Q-Why do you think it is so difficult to overcome the need methods students feel to “cover” particular content?
58. What kind of experiences did your methods students have as elementary students? (First Class Activity)? What kinds of instruction do they remember receiving?
59. What was the general level of interest of your methods students concerning teaching social studies? That is do you think they are excited about teaching social studies?
60. “My job is to perpetuate the value that is placed on Social Studies so that maybe future teachers will remember that this is a valued subject area and it shouldn’t just be cut when everything else seems more important” Q- What do you believe needs to happen to raise the status of social studies in the minds of preservice elementary teachers?
61. “Um, I would say a particular example was in probably the second class. We were talking about the democratic community, Democratic Classrooms, the book. Um,

one of them was concerned that taking time to do extended projects would detract from real learning that they needed to show on the FCAT. So we had a pretty serious discussion about what real learning is.” Q-Were there any other similar incidents?

62. How has the pressures brought on by high stakes testing effected your social studies methods instruction?
63. Did any methods students mention the effects of testing pressure on their ability to teach their social studies unit?
64. “I said that maybe it will put more focus on it but I didn’t think you know, that it’s unfortunate that you have to make it an FCAT test to bring back the focus on a subject area that’s so important in my opinion. I don’t think it will improve Social Studies instruction. But I think it will improve the daily schedules. So I don’t know if that would be a good thing, but that’s the only good thing that I can see is that maybe there will be training for example, you know? In-services because it’s gonna be an FCAT test now all of a sudden we’ve got something it’s on.” Q- Any more thoughts about social studies testing now that the course is over? Should we be trying to get on the test?
65. If I was to ask one of your methods students “what is social studies” what do you think they would have said before the course? What do you think they would say now?
66. “..because the kids in my Methods class haven’t seen Social Studies at the elementary level and maybe they have but no one ever told them and they don’t really know what it looks like and they kind of come with the attitude of like, what am I really gonna do?” Q-Do you feel like sometimes you are not only teaching your methods students how to teach social studies but what social studies is?
67. Did you ever have a student openly question the value/importance of social studies during class or in a reflection/paper?
68. Given the predominately European American middle class female student population did you feel it difficult to have conversations about diversity issues?
69. Do you believe that you hold more conservative or more liberal social beliefs than your methods students?
70. Did any of your methods students ever voice extremely conservative or liberal beliefs? If so did their beliefs ever affect how they received your methods instruction?
71. Was there ever a time that you felt you had a philosophical/political conflict where they held very different beliefs on an issue then you did?

72. “Who says this guy is like the bible of history....Kids will end up fighting over history...” “ A parent is going to be like ‘Why is my kid learning this...’....”This is a very hateful book”.... “We have a shared history, that what textbooks do” ...“You want kids to question things, but not everything.” “Do you really think she (teacher) would really teacher her kids this stuff, like all the Indians die...go home and have a feast?” Q-What do think about these comments?
73. “..obviously I’m speaking about older elementary school kids but I think it’s really important to teach them what it’s about to be a citizen and you know, all the things that go along with it”. Q-How do you think we could better address the instruction of civic skills in this course?
74. Were there any “special” activities that you added or changes you made to the course? If so why did you think it was important to include the activity?
75. This course has been developed over a number of years and it has a lot of structure and components. Did you ever have trouble fitting all the ‘pieces’ in?
76. Do you feel like the structure of the course limited your freedom as an instructor? For example, were there times when you wanted to include activities and projects that either did not fit or were too time consuming?
77. As the course progressed did you rely more or less on the provided materials?
78. If you had more instructional time to teach the course what would you add? That is if you had more class sessions what would you add?
79. What kinds of challenges related to a lack of content knowledge on the part of the preservice teachers did you experience?
80. What do you think is the best way to address the content knowledge issue?
81. What do you think is the purpose the field placement serves during this course?
82. What did you hear back from your methods students about the status of social studies at their school sites?Once in class Dan used the term “Social Studies Sightings” to describe the situation. Do you feel that this represents the situation among your preservice teachers?
83. Do you feel like your methods students faced particular challenges based on their placements, for example K placements?
84. What do you feel your methods students gained from the field placement?
85. One time I over heard to methods students discussing their unit and one said, “She (co-op teacher) just wants us to teach about what the book taught”. Q-Do you feel that your methods students were ever restrained by the teacher in their placement? Is this a reoccurring theme?

86. How do you deal with the fact that these interns do not have the opportunity teach social studies? Do you consider the difference in placements when you graded their units?
87. Did any students note that the social studies instruction they provided was the only social studies instruction the students received that was not textbook/worksheet based?
88. At anytime during the semester did you feel overextended, that is you had too much to do and not enough time to do it? Do you feel that teaching the methods course added to this feeling?
89. Was there a time when you felt like either your methods instruction or your elementary instruction was effected by keeping up with all your responsibilities?
90. No need to be specific, but did you have any stressful personal events that took place during the semester that effected your methods instruction.
91. I know you plan to teach this course again. What will you do the same next time?what will you do different?
92. If you had the opportunity to talk to an inservice elementary teacher who was going to teach next fall what would be your advice?
93. What kind of training do you believe would help similar instructors teach this course?

Alexis Protocol

94. “Thinking about getting all these units graded next week.....just sends me over the edges....for my stress level..”. Q-How did it all go in the end?
95. Did the ‘Centers’ activity come from you?
96. What did this course look like when you got it?
97. “Um, that it is my job to always find a way to reach every child no matter where they are in whatever subject area that I happen to be teaching them in or instructing them in”. Q-What does this look like with a methods student?
98. How do you think your methods instruction has improved this semester over last semester?
99. “Um, I always enjoyed Social Studies. I’ve always enjoyed things like History. Um, not so much Geography or Economics, but parts of Social Studies I do enjoy very much. I had excellent ah, Social Studies teachers in high school, excellent in my view that they hooked me”. Q-Do you feel that your interest in history gives you better content knowledge than an average elementary teacher?

100. “Um, but I do think that the way that we are able to integrate our social studies teaching, again combining it with some reading strategies which we’re doing because in a lot of schools Social Studies is integrated into the reading block. Well, ah, one of the ways we do it is with the reading strategies. So they have to apply a reading strategy to their own content area of reading. Um, I think that that shows them that these kinds of strategies in teaching kids how to be strategic readers is easily integrated into Social Studies content”. Q- Is there a connection in between the heavy reading strategies focus and integration in your mind? Did you put all the reading strategies in the course?
101. “I think it’s very important for them to see me as a teacher first and foremost. I am a teacher of students and this is what I do every day and I want them, want them to believe what I say”. Q-How do you make sure they see you as a teacher besides the videos?
102. “Because, you know, in in my class I have Petty interns but also Elise interns. And the Elise interns have a very different setting than the Petty interns do. And it becomes very difficult for me to espouse something that they don’t actually get to see in practice very much”. Q-Do you feel like the Elise interns suffered because of their lack of exposure to examples of SS instruction? Was it evident in their units?

Dan Protocol

103. “For Edgar and Jose ..who do not speak English ...” Q-Do you think having such a diverse elementary class helps your methods instruction?
104. You let the methods students do a lot of the teaching? Why?
105. How do you include your experiences with the St. Augustine field trip in your methods instruction? Why?
106. “The purpose of social studies is to teach kids to see history from multiple perspectives....I do this all the time with kids..”. Q-How do you think we could do this better during the course?
107. “In social studies we have more placements where social studies is more direct instruction...of course you are changing that...” Q-How does this effect the methods course?
108. “So what does this mean for teachers..” Q-You are constantly referring back to classroom instruction. Why do you think that is important?

Nora Protocol

109. “Any other Howe people who are concerned with the technology issue...I can help you after class...” Q-Was this a problem given that you required your students to integrate technology in to their units?

110. "Worse than nine year olds". Q-Did you find the level of maturity of your methods students challenging?
111. Is making copies a challenge? Are you limited?
112. You mentioned the value of being 'Practical' often in the first interview and in class. Do you feel parts of your teacher education were not practical? Why do you think this is so important?
113. "...for example, some of my Howe students said, we're never, we just never seen Social Studies taught". Q-Do you think your Howe students saw less real SS instruction? If so why?
114. "I hate to say it, but I can say the impression I've gotten hearing them talk about their Reading Methods classes that they're also taking this semester, um, they do seem to have more maybe like formal assessments which may lend to them taking it more seriously". Q-Now that the course is over do you still feel this way?
115. "I think that um, when they know, when the students know that you're like not on campus and you're a teacher teacher they use you differently... Yeah, I think, I don't think all of them, but I think in general there's probably a little less respect or maybe a little less like taking it seriously than if you were teaching on campus and you were, you know? An instructor at the university". Q-Now that the course is over do you still feel this way?

APPENDIX B
SYLLABUS



Social Studies for Diverse Learners

SSE 4312 Spring, 2006

Instructor: Alexis Johnson Email: Alexis@Johnson.com Phone: 352-392-9191	Office: Rm. 111 Petty D.R.S. Office Hours: By appointment
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COURSE FOCUS

Throughout the social studies methods course you will learn how to use the tools of inquiry as a teacher in a social studies classroom. Inquiry is a "questioning" stance that good teachers assume as professionals who plan for, carry out, and study the impact of their instruction. This course is designed to move you beyond thinking like a college student to help you begin thinking like an elementary teacher. Thinking like a teacher requires asking the questions that professionals ask about their teaching practice. We will explore the following teacher inquiry themes: *Inquiry into the context*, *Inquiry into content*, *Inquiry into student learning*, *Inquiry into the acts of teaching* as well as *Inquiry into professional self*.

READINGS

Wolk, S. (1998). *A Democratic Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Alleman, & Brophy, J (1996) *Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students*. Ft. Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Loewen, J. (1995). *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: Touchstone.

Obenchain, K. & R. Morris (2003). *50 Social Studies Strategies for the K-8 Classroom*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

ARTICLES

Articles can be found on-line in the course reserves section of the library website. This can be accessed from home using your Gatorlink account.

UAS Key Tasks

Key Tasks assess your mastery of knowledge, skills and dispositions that the State of Florida requires of all entry-level educators. In this course, we will cover several Accomplished Practices. Your mastery of each indicator will be measured by your work on a Key Task. ***To pass this course you must successfully complete all Key Tasks and receive a rating of "Met with Weakness" or higher. No exceptions will be made to this rule, even if you do not plan to teach after graduation. Students who receive a "Not Met" rating will be offered a chance to redo the Key Task or, in some cases, to complete a comparable task assigned by the instructor. Students who do not complete their makeup work satisfactorily (with a "Met-with-Weakness" or higher rating) will receive either "an incomplete" or "a failing grade" in the appropriate fill-in at the instructor's discretion. Students who fail the course must repeat it later.

8.1/8.4 Students will demonstrate subject matter expertise by synthesizing social science content and developing an enduring understanding for an assigned social studies topic to a named grade. The content exploration should result in the prospective teacher presenting the following: an enduring understanding (generalization) supported by a synthesis of content from a variety of resources, and identification of related standards.

<p>MET Enduring understanding (generalization): The proposed understanding is a big idea or core process at the heart of the discipline. Enduring understanding is framed as a generalization specific enough to guide teaching and assessing but overarching enough to enable transfer. Synthesis of content: An organized, comprehensive narrative summary of the content tied to the generalization. Provides the background teacher knowledge needed for a teacher to understand, develop, and teach the enduring understanding. Variety of resources: An extensive list of resources have been used and multiple types of resources are used: Encyclopedia Non-fiction books Social Science textbooks Social Studies Methods textbooks Internet Journal articles Children's social studies textbooks Appropriate citations included. Identification of related standards: Explicit connection made to NCSS and Sunshine State Standards.</p>
<p>MET WITH WEAKNESS Enduring understanding (generalization) The understanding is important but not of the highest priority; or it may be more accurately described as important knowledge and skill (i.e., understand how to use a primary document for research). Synthesis of content Narrative of the content matter is extensive but not clearly tied to enduring understanding. Narrative tied to enduring understanding but a comprehensive review of the subject matter isn't present. Variety of resources Multiple types of resources included but lacks depth of resources Or Depth of resources present but multiple types of resources not included. Appropriate citations included. Identification of related standards Missing either NCSS standards or Sunshine State Standards. And/or Mismatched standards.</p>
<p>NOT MET Enduring understanding (generalization) The understanding as stated is a straightforward fact, skill, or attitude, not a big idea or core process at the heart of the discipline (worth being familiar with, but not the highest priority of importance for an entire course of study). Synthesis of content Narrative is lacking in comprehensive review of the subject matter and subject matter of review disconnected from enduring understanding. Variety of resources Multiple types of resources included but lacks depth of resources And Depth of resources present but multiple types of resources not included. Citations not included. Identification of related standards Missing NCSS and Sunshine State Standards.</p>

ESOL Standards- *There are several ESOL standards associated with this course.*

Standard 2: Recognize the major differences and similarities among the different cultural groups in the United States.

Standard 14: Plan and evaluate instructional outcomes, recognizing the effects of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion on the results.

Standard 15: Evaluate, select, and employ appropriate instructional materials, media, and technology for ESOL at elementary, middle and high school levels.

Standard 16: Design and implement effective unit plans and daily lesson plans which meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom.

Standard 18: Create a positive classroom environment to accommodate the various learning styles and cultural backgrounds of students.

Standard 21: Use formal and alternative methods of assessment/evaluation of LEP students, including measurement of language, literacy and academic content meta-cognition.

Social Studies for Diverse Learners Tentative Calendar

Class Meets: 12:50-3:50 at P.K. Yonge Room G-131

Date	Topic	Reading Due And Strategy	Assignment Due
Class 1: January 10 th	What is Social Studies? What is the purpose of Social Studies?		
January 17 th	No Class		
Class 2: January 24 th	Creating a Democratic Classroom What does it mean to teach for democracy?	Democratic Classroom Chapters 1-4 Obenchain & Morris, #2, 4 <u>Strategy:</u> Sticky Notes	
Date	Topic	Reading Due And Strategy	Assignment Due
Class 3: January 30 th **Note Change to Monday!* *	Creating A Learning Community/Curriculum Planning	Democratic Classroom Chapters 5-8 <u>Strategy:</u> 6 Thinking Hats	Learning Community Project/ Unit Topic Due
Class 4: February 7 th	Curriculum Planning	Alleman & Brophy Chapter 3,7	*Begin Book Commercial

		Obenchain & Morris #17, 33 <u>Strategy:</u> 3,2,1	Is
Class 5: February 14 th	Assessment/Curriculum Planning *Create Generalizations in Class	Alleman & Brophy, Chapter 10 Assessment Article— Choose in class <u>Strategy:</u> Jigsaw	*Content Info Due *Download Sunshine standards and Bring to class http://sunshinestatestandards.net/ (in pairs)
Class 6: February 21 st	Pedagogy to Support Social Studies	Articles: Barton, K. <i>Analyzing Historical Photographs in the Elementary Grades.</i> McCormick, T. <i>Letters from Trenton, 1776: Teaching with Primary Sources</i> Morris, R. <i>Using Artifacts As A Springboard to Literacy</i> Wade, R. <i>Beyond Charity: Service Learning for Social Justice</i> Obenchain & Morris, #7, 8, 10, 14, 27, 28, 34, 40, 41, 42, 48 <u>Strategy:</u> RAFT	*Evidence of Prior Knowledge Due
Class 7: February 28 th	Culturally Responsive Social Studies Pedagogy *Meeting the Needs of Students	Short, D. & Echevarria, J. <i>Teacher Skills to Support English Language Learners</i> Fitzgerald, J. & Graves, M. <i>Reading Supports for All</i>	*Critical Autobiography Due*

		<p>Ferguson, J. & Abrams, J. <i>Teaching Students from Many Nations</i></p> <p>Singer, J & Singer, A. <i>Creating a Museum of Family Artifacts</i></p> <p>Strategy: Concept Map</p>	
Class 8: March 7 th	<p>Making Content Meaningful—Successful Integration</p> <p>*Lesson Plan Workshop</p>	<p>Alleman & Brophy Chapter 6,9</p> <p>Roush, N. <i>Colonial Williamsburg Electronic Field Trips</i> Or Molebash, P. & Dodge, B. <i>Kickstarting Inquiry with Web Quests and Web Inquiry Projects</i></p> <p>Obenchain & Morris, #31 Strategy: Summarizing</p>	
March 14 th	No Class-Spring Break		
Class 9: March 21 st	Teaching Content from Multiple Perspectives	<p>Lies My Teacher Told Me Ch.1-4</p> <p><u>Strategy:</u> Literature Circles</p>	
Class 10: March 28 th	Teaching Content from Multiple Perspectives	<p>Lies My Teacher Told Me</p> <p>Assigned Chapter Chapters 11,12</p>	<p>Presentati on on <i>Lies My Teacher Told Me</i> Chapter</p>

April 4 th	No Class - PKY Spring Break		
Class 11: April	Sensitive Issues (Holocaust, Terrorism, War in Iraq, Religion)	<p>McBee, R. <i>Can Controversial Topics be Taught in the Elementary Grades?</i></p> <p>Article on sensitive issue (to be chosen in class)</p> <p><u>Strategy</u>: Opinion-Proof</p>	
Class 12: April 18 th	Public Issues and Current Events	<p>Articles: Larson, B. <i>Current Events and the Internet: Connecting "Headline News" to Perennial.</i></p> <p>Hicks & Ewing <i>Bringing the World Into the Classroom with Online Global Newspapers</i></p> <p><u>Strategy</u>: ABC Brainstorming</p>	<p>*Bring a current event to class</p> <p>*Lesson Plans and Reflection on Student Learning Due 1st half of Lesson Presentations</p>
Class 13: April 25 th	<p>Project Presentations</p> <p>*Sharing Philosophies</p> <p>* Class Evaluations</p>		<p>Finish Presentation of Lessons</p> <p>* KWL & Teaching Philosophy Due</p>

Tasks	Percent	Points
Participation in class discussions and group projects.	10%	30
Reading Strategies: Assigned Each Week	15%	45
Critical Autobiography	5%	15
Learning Community Project	10%	30
Lies My Teacher Told Me Presentation	10%	30
Personal KWL	10%	30
Social Studies Teaching Project	40%	120
Part A		
<i>Evidence of Content Preparation</i> *Bibliography of Varied Resources *Organized Content (using web, essay, bullets)		15
<i>Evidence of Student prior knowledge</i> *Interview/survey students about your topic. *Summarize results and use in planning		15
<i>Create Overall Generalization</i> *related to Sunshine State Standards *Evidence of content Knowledge		15
Part B		
<i>Three Pathwise Lesson Plans that Support the Learning of the Generalization</i>		10
*Each lesson plan contains objectives that support the generalization		5
*Use of a Social Studies Strategy introduced in class or readings (Simulation, primary source, service learning, current events, discussion/deliberation, character education)		15
*Evidence of Meaningful Integration (At least language arts component)		10
*Well Developed Accommodations-individual to students		10
*Authentic Assessment Strategy-beyond questioning or observation		10

Part C		
<i>Reflection on Student Learning (separate)</i>		10
<i>Presentation</i>		10
TOTAL	100%	300

****Late Assignments will be penalized 2 points per day. Absences in excess of 1 class or 3 hours will also negatively impact grades. Three tardies to class equals one absence. If you miss a class, please contact the instructor to find out what you missed. Make-up work will be due at the beginning of the next class.**

Grading

Grading Criteria and Scale

A	270-300
B+	255-269
B	240-254
C+	225-239
C	210-224
D+	195-209
D	180-194

Explanation of Assignments

Weekly Readings and Strategies

Each week you will have assigned readings and accompanying reading strategies that will help to facilitate your comprehension of the readings and promote in-class discussion. The reading strategy will be collected during each class.

Critical Autobiography

This assignment is meant to force you to look at your background critically and understand what you bring to your students and your teaching. You will

be asked to map out your life's history and write a reflection summarizing how your background will impact your teaching.

Learning Community Project

In order to build a classroom community and a democratic environment for students to learn, a teacher needs to inquire into their context and the students she/he teaches. This assignment will ask each partnership to devise a way to gather information from students, organize that information in a user-friendly way, and then reflect on how you will use this information throughout the semester.

Accomplished Practice #1 Assessment

Accomplished Practice #4 Critical Thinking

Accomplished Practice #5 Diversity

Accomplished Practice #9 Learning Environments

Accomplished Practice #10 Planning

Lies My Teacher Told Me Presentation

You will work with a group of students to present one chapter from *Lies My Teacher Told Me* to the class. Since they have not read this chapter you will need to present them with the "big" ideas from this chapter and perhaps sell them on wanting to read it themselves. Projects may take any form, last 10-15 minutes each, and must include a connection to how this information could be used in the classroom.

Accomplished Practice #4 Critical Thinking

Accomplished Practice #5 Diversity

Personal KWL

A KWL is a chart for organizing information that you **K**now, **W**ant to Know, and have **L**earned. You will need to consistently add information to the **K** and **W** sections of this chart before you read and to the **L** column at the end of each class. You should organize the KWL by the topics for each class day. This chart will be a work in progress over the course of the semester.

Social Studies Philosophy

At the end of the semester, you will reflect over your KWL to create your own social studies teaching platform.

Accomplished Practice #8 Knowledge of Subject Matter

Social Studies Integrated Teaching Project

Each partnership will be required to complete a mini-unit integrating social studies and another content area. This mini-unit will be a culmination of all that we learned this semester and consist of three Pathwise lessons. Start talking to your mentor teacher about a topic.

Accomplished Practice #1 Assessment

Accomplished Practice #2 Communication

Accomplished Practice #4 Critical Thinking

Accomplished Practice #5 Diversity

Accomplished Practice #8 Knowledge of Subject Matter

Accomplished Practice #10 Planning

Quality of Writing

All students must demonstrate competence in writing. Ability to write will be a part of the social studies assessment and can affect final grade.

Instructional Modifications

Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete tasks successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible and to identify and plan specific accommodations. Student will be asked to supply a letter from the Office for Students with Disabilities to assist in planning modifications.

Student Conduct Code

The University of Florida has a student conduct code that states that all work that you submit is your own work. In collaborative tasks you must participate equally with other

members of the group. By signing up for this course and reading this syllabus you agree to the University of Florida Student Code. You promise not to cheat or plagiarize and to inform the instructor if you become aware of dishonest behavior on the part of other students in the class. Failure to comply with the academic honesty guidelines 6C1-4.017, F.A.C. is a violation of the University of Florida Student Conduct Code and may result in expulsion or any lesser sanction. In this class be especially careful that you do not plagiarize by copying work from the Internet without properly crediting its source.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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