

BEGINNING TEACHER BELIEFS AND WISE PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGH
SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

By

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To Wayne and Max-my foundation, my strength, my heart

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By

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This dissertation investigated the beliefs and practices of a novice high school social studies teacher through her first and second years as a classroom teacher. Results of the study indicate that while her beliefs and goals changed little over time, her classroom practices changed and adapted to the school climate and to student needs. In addition, results of the study indicate that she was able to engage her students in powerful and effective social studies instruction, even in a high-stakes testing environment. Also, because of current standardized testing requirements that focus on student achievement in reading and writing, As such, this teacher incorporated literacy skills, such as reading comprehension and writing, into her classroom to help meet school goals in these areas. Qualitative methods, including interviews, observations, and archival data, were used to understand how this social studies teacher's beliefs influenced her decision-making and classroom practice. Overall, this study suggests that, despite the challenges that she encountered, this teacher practiced in ways that were consistent with her beliefs and that aligned with powerful and effective social studies practice.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Purpose of the Study

Many educational researchers have examined the connection between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices (e.g., Brownell, Yeager, Rennels & Riley, 1997; Cuban, 1984, 1986; Fang, 1996; Goodlad, 1984; Leming, 1989; Onosko, 1989; Pajares, 1992; Sarason, 1996; Shulman, 1987; Thornton, 1991; Wilson, 2000; Wilson, Konopak & Readance, 1994). Such information can help researchers better understand teacher practice. Indeed, "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).

Social studies research on teachers' beliefs and practices tends to focus on the disciplinary background of the teacher or the contextual factors of the school and classroom (see Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Wineburg & Wilson, 1988). Despite the fact that national curriculum standards are lacking in history, guidelines established by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (1994) "provide an essential framework for uniting theory and practice" (Wegner, 2004, p. 1). Specifically, NCSS has recommended specific "powerful" and "effective" social studies teaching practices that can be taught in k-12 classrooms. However, few studies specifically in the field of social studies education research have examined teachers' beliefs in relation to effective teaching practices.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how a beginning teacher's beliefs and practices are influenced by the challenges she encounters in the classroom. Nespor (1987) noted that, "To understand teaching from teachers' perspectives, we have to understand the beliefs with which they define their work" (p. 323). Teacher beliefs can be defined as the attitudes,

perspectives, and experiences, both personal and professional, that teachers bring with them into the classroom (Sturtevant, 1996). Understanding the teacher's beliefs can provide insight into their decision making related to classroom practice, as beliefs often drive instructional decisions. In trying to capture the beliefs-to-practices connection that today's teachers face, Hargreaves (1995) stated that the teacher's beliefs help in "distinguishing between better and worse courses of action, rather than right and wrong ones" (p.15). The beliefs-to-practices connection will be further discussed in this chapter.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

In an era of standardized testing, teachers often feel trapped and overwhelmed, believing that they must use traditional, lecture-based methods to cover as much material as possible in a short amount of time (Sleeter, 2005; Yeager & Davis, 2005). Moreover, teachers also may use instruction as a classroom management technique, shying away from student-centered learning for fear of losing control (Van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Indeed, teachers' beliefs are inextricably linked to their classroom practices, as preservice teachers enter education programs convinced that good teaching is textbook- and teacher-centered (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Such a perspective on good teaching contrasts with the powerful and effective social studies teaching outlined by NCSS. According to Wineburg and Wilson (1988), examples of exemplary teaching once were often hard to find in the professional literature; rather, case studies tended to focus on "typical" or "representative" rather than exceptional or exemplary teachers. Consequently, case studies of powerful and effective practices in social studies education have become more common, revealing what successful teachers are doing not only to enrich social studies curricula, but also to reach students in meaningful ways. Nonetheless, few studies have specifically made the beliefs-practices connection. Thus, the current study examines the beliefs of a novice high school social studies teacher who is committed to powerful and effective social

studies teaching practices, as well as how her beliefs and the contextual factors of her school influence her classroom practices. In light of this goal, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What beliefs does a beginning teacher hold about teaching and social studies education?
2. How do the teacher's beliefs connect to her classroom practice?
3. What challenges does this teacher encounter in her classroom? How do these challenges influence her classroom practice?

Review of the Literature

In order to highlight how an individual's background and understanding of teaching and learning influence how he or she implements classroom practice, it is essential to review the current literature in three specific areas: social studies teaching, including wise practices, beliefs and practices, and contextual factors. Reviewing the connection between beliefs and practice will provide insight into why the participant of the current study teaches in a particular way. Meanwhile, understanding novice teachers' beliefs can provide insight into the participating teacher's classroom choices that go beyond the methods used to instruct. Indeed, by reviewing the literature on pedagogical decision making, this study seeks to better understand how teacher beliefs influence all aspects of the classroom.

In addition, contextual factors—such as school demographics, school climate, and student needs—can also affect classroom practices. As such, literature relevant to the connection between context and teaching will be explored. Moreover, as the current study takes place in a social studies classroom and involves a trained social studies teacher, it is important to understand the literature on social studies teaching and current literature on wise social studies practices. These four areas of literature serve as the foundation of this study and provide a framework for understanding the research questions.

Wise Practice in Social Studies Teaching

Wisdom in Social Studies

In their 1988 comparative case study of a beginning and an experienced high school history teacher, Wineburg and Wilson first proposed the idea of a wise practitioner. According to Wineburg and Wilson (1988), the two teachers were each able to alternate between different teaching modes, thereby earning both the distinction of “wise practitioner” as each adapted content and pedagogical knowledge according to students’ needs to create meaningful classroom experiences. Wineburg and Wilson (1988) noted that, although epistemological differences may have existed between the teachers, they shared key characteristics that help define wisdom of practice. Their classrooms were organized, and students were explicitly aware of a system of organization that enabled them to focus on the instruction. In addition, each teacher was a content expert; both held a great deal of knowledge about history and were able to draw upon this knowledge to answer students’ questions. The teachers also possessed a broad general knowledge that enabled them to apply their knowledge of history to more contemporary issues that students found interesting and relatable; as such, both teachers were able to use their knowledge to develop students’ historical understanding, building bridges between content and application. Both teachers viewed history as a human construct rather than an absolute truth or a judgment, which led them to encourage students to view history as a collection of puzzle pieces put together rather than a simple narrative. In terms of materials, the teachers were each able to draw upon multiple sources (textbook, primary documents, etc.) and did not rely exclusively on the textbook. They often introduced materials that countered points in the main text to encourage student inquiry. Finally, both teachers were able to utilize instructional methods that demonstrated their understanding of students’ needs, motivations, and abilities. Consequently,

students were engaged and learned both skills and content. These ideas on wisdom of practice influenced the NCSS (1994) characteristics for powerful and effective social studies teaching.

Powerful and Effective Social Studies Teaching

In 1993, NCSS released a statement¹ to reaffirm the mission of social studies teaching and learning in relation to the social studies goals of building social understanding and civic efficacy. This statement outlined five key features that are indicative of powerful social studies teaching and integrated the ideas that—as schools were facing unprecedented change—social studies needed to restate its purpose and goals to help guide curricular and instructional decisions (NCSS statement, 1993). According to NCSS (1993), these five key features—namely, that social studies teaching is powerful when it is meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active—are of equal importance; no single feature should be considered more important than any other.

The first feature is that social studies instruction must be meaningful to both teachers and students. Content should be chosen with regard to social understanding and civic efficacy; the methods of instruction should help students understand how the content relates to these goals. The content should be meaningful to students in terms of family, community, and culture. Depth of coverage, with appropriate attention to breadth of topic coverage as related to standards, should be emphasized while teaching should focus on important ideas of understanding, appreciation, and life application. No facts or content should be taught in isolation; rather, all content should be embedded into, “[n]etworks of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes that are structured around important ideas and taught emphasizing their connection and potential

¹ National Council for the Social Studies, *A vision of powerful teaching and learning in the social studies: Building social understanding and civic efficacy*, retrieved September 15, 2007, from www.ncss.org.

applications” (NCSS statement, 1993, p. 7). Teachers should be reflective in their planning and teaching to ensure that these social and civic goals are being met.

The second feature is that social studies instruction is powerful when it is integrative. Integration may take many forms—within the content, across the curriculum, and within the use of available resources and technologies. As an educational discipline, social studies draws on the themes and ideas of the arts, humanities, literature, science, and math. Social studies is a construct of the human condition, incorporating current events and the lived experiences of the teacher and students. Powerful social studies helps students understand and appreciate how the aspects of their world function in relation to their community and the United States as well as how history has influenced these spheres. In addition, powerful social studies is integrated across the curriculum, providing opportunities for students to understand how art and literature, communication, observations and measurements, displays of data, and methods for conducting inquiry come together in school.

The third feature is that social studies instruction is powerful when it is value-based. Social studies is ripe with topics that address moral, ethical, and controversial issues, which provide for reflective concern for the common good and the application of social values. The effective teacher is aware of his or her own values and how those values affect decision-making in terms of content, materials, questions, and assessments. The effective teacher creates a classroom environment in which students are able to a) become aware of the values, complexities, and dilemmas involved in an issue; b) consider the costs and benefits to the stakeholders embedded within a course of action; and c) develop well-reasoned positions consistent with democratic and social values. Essential to this feature is that the teacher must cultivate an understanding of opposing views and show respect to well-supported ideas.

The fourth feature is that social studies instruction is powerful when it is challenging. This does not mean simply setting high goals and expectations and then leaving students to work towards them. Rather, students should be challenged to come to grips with controversial issues, participate assertively but respectfully in discussions, and work productively with peers. The effective teacher uses methods of instruction that encourage thoughtfulness and seriousness of purpose in relation to the content and the goals of social understanding and civic efficacy. Teachers not only respect student views, but also challenge students to fully articulate and support their ideas through well-reasoned arguments—not just opinions expressed without thought.

The fifth feature is that social studies instruction is powerful when it is active. An effective social studies teacher is reflective in planning and teaching, actively making curricular decisions that reflect students' needs. Active social studies teachers are partners in learning, not distributors of knowledge. They are able to respond to teachable moments as they arise in the class and in the community. Learning is active in this classroom, and the teacher is constantly monitoring students' progress and adjusting the lesson as needed. The nature of social studies demands that powerful social studies teaching and learning are both social and active, as civic efficacy requires that students and teachers work together and use what is learned in an authentic way.

The NCSS statement also supported social studies teachers, noting that—to meet students' needs in learning to become active citizens—social studies teachers needed time, support, and resources to teach social studies effectively in every grade (NCSS statement, 1993). Moreover, NCSS stated that social studies teachers must be given the freedom and respect to

incorporate real-world, controversial topics as related to the goals of social understanding and civic efficacy (NCSS statement, 1993).

Drawing from these five features of powerful social studies instruction as well as Wineburg and Wilson's (1988) assertions on wisdom of practice, Yeager (2000, 2005) and Davis (2005) developed a conceptual framework for thinking about wise social studies practice. This framework draws upon previous research while taking into consideration the changing climate of education and—more specifically—social studies education.

Wise Practice in the Teaching of Social Studies

In October 2000, the *Journal of Social Education* dedicated almost an entire issue to “wise practice in challenging classrooms.” Edited by Elizabeth Yeager, the articles documented the wise practices of teachers in challenging settings in relation to the 1993 NCSS statement and Shulman's (1987) statement on wisdom of practice. In a more recent work, Yeager and O. L. Davis (2005) extended this work on wise practice in their book *Wise social studies teaching in an age of high-stakes testing: Essays on classroom practice and possibilities*. Drawing from the 2000 and 2005 works, Yeager and Davis proposed several characteristics of wise practice.

Teachers who demonstrate wise practice show a good grasp of both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and are able to translate this in effective and interesting ways for students. For example, Barton (2005) describes a third-grade teacher who was aware of her students' backgrounds and was able to integrate this information into lessons and activities in her classroom with thematic units such as “change” or “roots” (p. 23). Noting the difficulties many students have in relating to geography, Black (2000) reported how two high school geography teachers connected music, art, and language familiar to her students to larger, global constructs, thereby enabling students to process difficult spatial and cultural topics in a meaningful way while broadening their global perspectives (Black, 2000).

In addition, teachers who demonstrate wise practice show enthusiasm for their content, model intellectual curiosity, and interact with their students regardless of the form of instruction being used. Black (2000) noted how one of the teachers with whom she worked used a teaching technique called “Advice from Amanda,” during which students were encouraged to ask questions about the content and then follow up with a research project to answer the students’ questions. Webeck, Salinas, and Field (2005) described how a middle school teacher used a variety of interactive teaching methods that consistently centered on her understanding that students are members of a classroom and a community—both of which should be supported by instruction. The practice of recognizing and interacting with the children in class as both students and people is wise.

Teachers whose demonstrate wise practice also promote critical thinking and/or problem solving appropriate to the discipline they are teaching. Libresco (2005) described how a fourth grade teacher encouraged her students to do the work of “historian/citizens” by asking them to “read, interpret, and think critically about primary and secondary sources in hopes that they will be able to make informed judgments on personal, community, national, and global issues as citizens in a deliberative and participatory democracy” (p. 40). These skills move well beyond the lower-level rote memorization skills that have come to typify many elementary grades social studies instruction in a time of high stakes testing. Moreover, despite the notion that inner-city, high-poverty schools are lacking due to limited resources, Riley, Wilson, and Fogg (2000) describe one high school teacher who capitalized on being in the city by taking students to the local archives museum to engage in historical and law research using primary sources from their community. This level of critical thinking and connection to the community exemplifies wise

practice in a challenging setting. As Riley et al. (2000) indicated, wise practitioners are able to use meaningful materials that go beyond the textbook.

Furthermore, teachers whose practice is wise are able to use a variety of instructional methods as well as determine which method is most appropriate for the content being taught and students' needs. Skelar (2000) recognized how two teachers in Baltimore were able to integrate technology in an eighth grade social studies class. Recognizing students' feelings of apathy and isolation, the teachers developed a collaborative learning activity that used the Internet to help students connect with their communities and understand that they had the potential to become "agents of social change." The teachers recognized students' needs and developed an appropriate and meaningful method of instruction that promoted content and citizenship. Teachers in Libresco's (2005) and Black's (2000) work also demonstrated the importance of pedagogical knowledge in teaching social studies effectively, choosing methods of instruction that met the content and students' needs.

Finally, teachers demonstrating wise practice ensure that students are learning important skills in addition to content, including reading, writing, and basic research methodologies. Libresco (2005) illustrates this by describing the breadth of skills learned by fourth graders. Meanwhile, Skelar (2000) described how the effective use of the Internet in a social studies class taught students an important skill and opened them up to possibilities for activity in their communities that were previously unknown or misunderstood. These skills go beyond social studies content and help prepare students for their role as citizens.

These characteristics of wise practice clearly illustrate how pedagogical content knowledge and powerful social studies teaching are possible in elementary, middle, and high schools. Content knowledge, understanding of students' needs, and the ability to use methods

that engage students and make learning relevant should characterize each teacher. In addition, each teacher should possess an understanding that schooling and social studies have a greater purpose beyond simply memorizing facts. Rather, teachers should aim to prepare students for local, national, and global citizenship—a goal that should guide instructional decision making.

Social Studies Teaching

NCSS² states that the goal of social studies educators is to promote the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary to participate as an active citizen in a participatory democracy. Although this goal is generally agreed upon, some debate has emerged regarding what constitutes a good citizen or whether social studies alone should be responsible for all aspects of this goal (Grant & VanSledright, 1996). According to Grant (2003), these competing visions affect social studies teachers' pedagogical choices in several ways:

- *Knowledgeable about the past*—focuses on deep knowledge and application of the past, especially American accomplishments, heroes, and struggles
- *Able to analyze current situations using social studies methods*—focuses on the power of social studies concepts and methods as ways to organize and extend one's understanding of social situations
- *A reflective thinker*—focuses on inquiry into and assessment of cultural beliefs, actions, values, and policies with an eye toward consequences, implications, and alternatives
- *Committed to social action*—focuses the extension of one's beliefs and values into actions

A teacher's beliefs about one or more of these ideas on citizenship may determine the extent to which it is expressed in the classroom through content decisions and methods of instruction (Grant, 2003)—a situation that further highlights how teachers' beliefs affect their role as instructional gatekeepers in the classroom (Fickel, 2000; Grant, 2003; Hess, 2004; Merryfield, 1993). For example, a teacher who believes that citizenship equates to knowledge of the past

² National Council for the Social Studies, *Mission statement*, retrieved June 18, 2008, from www.socialstudies.org

might focus on American events and heroes by using lectures and tests to check for knowledge; meanwhile, a teacher equates it to activism might focus on community and policy by using current events, class discussions, and student-centered learning with a goal of change (Grant, 2003). The goal of both teachers remains the same—good citizenship—but their beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge mediate how that shared goal becomes classroom practice.

Adapting Preservice Training

According to Barton and Levstik (2004), teacher beliefs will not change simply through transmission; rather, teachers must be provided opportunities to discover the power of a more transformative classroom experience in social studies so as to reach such conclusions themselves. Accordingly, many teacher education programs have begun to focus less on technical issues related to teaching and more on helping teachers evaluate social studies education, consider alternative perspectives on the subject, and being part of a community that takes such actions seriously, thereby minimizing the feeling of isolation that limits such practices.

To help teacher educators evaluate their programs of study, NCSS (1994) identified four key characteristics necessary for a successful, transformative preservice program grounded in the notion that—if the theory-to-practice gap can be closed—classroom practice can change (Sevier, 2005; Wegner, 2004). First, exemplary social studies teacher programs develop skills, concepts, and generalizations necessary to understand the sweep of human affairs. The focus on skills and concepts rather than content allows for preservice teachers to become connected with content in a meaningful way—not just focusing on a particular method of instruction.

Second, exemplary social studies teacher programs appreciate the benefits of diversity and community, the value of widespread economic opportunity, and the contributions that people of both genders and the full range of ethnic, racial, and religions groups have made to society.

This characteristic of a successful social studies program is important for two reasons. It addressed the cultural disconnect that may occur between teacher and student, as previously discussed. Moreover, Loewen (1995) notes that, “African American, Native American, and Latino students view history with a special dislike...Students don’t even know they are alienated, only that they ‘don’t *like* Social Studies’ or ‘aren’t any good at history’...And in college, most students of color give history departments a wide berth” (p. 11).

However, in his study on culturally relevant pedagogy in a college history classroom, Branch (2005) observed Dr. Johnson—a professor known on campus for his practice—who developed his lessons around a culturally relevant framework and construct them to specifically incorporate the diverse backgrounds of his students. Minority enrollment was higher in these particular courses, and students were responsive and engaged (Branch, 2005). This opportunity to be engaged in history allowed preservice teachers to think about teaching social studies in a way that was powerful and effective with a diverse group of students. Such an experience has the potential to change beliefs and, ultimately, classroom practice.

According to the third characteristics identified by NCSS, exemplary social studies teacher programs help teachers become ready and willing to contribute to public policy formation. This characteristic specifically addresses social studies education’s goal of preparing students to be active members in a democratic society (Barber, 1998; Parker, 2003). By preparing teachers to become active citizens, they will—in turn—be prepared to teach in a manner that enables students to develop these same skills.

Finally, exemplary social studies teacher programs help preservice teachers acquire ways of managing conflict that are consistent with democratic procedure. This characteristic specifically addresses Pajares’ (1992) research, which notes that teacher beliefs influence all

areas of the classroom—not just the content taught. By integrating classroom management ideas with effective social studies teaching in this fourth characteristic, NCSS addresses the development of pedagogical decision-making skills that a teacher needs in order to be successful. Content does not stand alone in the classroom; rather, school is an integrated experience that combines social, political, and content factors into a unique classroom experience. By explicitly connecting social studies core values with classroom management, preservice teachers have the opportunity to think about both facets of the classroom in a more holistic way.

Shulman’s Model of Pedagogical Reasoning

Shulman (1986) developed his Model of Pedagogical Reasoning to help explain teachers’ development process by comparing the skills and knowledge between expert (long-term classroom experience) and novice (beginning or preservice) teachers. Shulman (1986) suggested that certain sources of knowledge exist from which teachers draw while preparing for and teaching a lesson, which he identified as content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curricular knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of aims and purposes, and knowledge of educational context. Of these, pedagogical content knowledge is perhaps the most important in helping understand the transition from novice to expert teacher, as pedagogical content knowledge is “[b]oth built with and builds upon content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of the learners” (Shulman, 1987, p. 60).

According to Shulman (1987), pedagogical content knowledge differentiates the teacher from the content expert; as such, it is the most essential element of teacher knowledge. Using Shulman’s model, researchers in the field of social studies have examined practicing teachers’ development of pedagogical content knowledge. Some studies have focused on the transformation of subject knowledge to pedagogical content knowledge (see Lee, 2000; van Hover & Yeager, 2003, 2004, 2007; Wineburg & Wilson, 1988), while other studies have

examined how teacher beliefs influence the development of pedagogical content knowledge (see Hartzler-Miller, 2002; Thornton, 2001).

Some have criticized Shulman's work, calling his proposed model and the definition of pedagogical content knowledge too cognitive and rational to fully capture the essence of teaching (see Smyth, 1992; Sockett, 1987). Shulman (1992) responded by adding two new dimensions to his work on teaching—namely, morality and responsibility—which he subsequently termed the “missing paradigm.” Shulman (1992) noted that the moral choices that teachers make on *what* to teach is as important as how they decide to teach. In addition, he asserted that recognizing the responsibility for effective decision-making is the hallmark of a good teacher (Shulman, 1992).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge and the Teaching of History

Within the field of social studies, the teaching of history has been more closely examined than any other subject—often with much debate. Barton and Levstik (2004) note that, “[e]ducators, politicians, and everyday citizens throughout the world worry about how history supports or subverts national and ethnic identity, how it increases hatred or promotes reconciliation, and how it props up repressive regimes or mobilizes reform” (p. 1). Meanwhile, history teachers are left to navigate this potential minefield by making classroom decisions about what to teach and how. As a result, history is often taught as a linear group of facts—devoid of inquiry or debate—to ensure the pretense of neutrality in the classroom (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Loewen, 1995).

However, in schools of education, history teachers are encouraged to stretch the boundaries of traditional classroom practice (i.e., lectures, notes, textbook readings) and use methods that engage students in historical inquiry, historical empathy, and perspective taking (see Barton & Levstik, 2004; Kobrin, 1996; van Hover & Yeager, 2003; VanSledright, 2002).

The use of these less traditional approaches relies on the beginning history teacher's pedagogical content knowledge. In other words, teachers must utilize their content knowledge and understanding of history to learn effective methods for teaching such knowledge in ways that are consistent with making history meaningful for students (Shulman, 1996; van Hover & Yeager, 2003; VanSledright, 1996).

Beginning History Teachers

One of the challenges in helping beginning history teachers develop pedagogical content knowledge involves getting them to think about history in a different way. Rather than thinking about content knowledge as something learned, beginning teachers have to think about history in terms of appropriate pedagogy. According to Gudmundsdottir (1991), this shift is the primary difference between expert teachers and novice teachers; expert teachers are better able to think about the curricular "big picture" rather than individual pieces of content. The challenge in social studies teacher education lies in "[g]etting students to think about the subject matter they have to teach in terms of their pedagogical content, not subject content" (p. 69). VanSledright (1996) referred to this challenge as an inability to make an "ontological switch" from subject matter knowledge to the teaching of history to students—or the teacher's inability to reconsider what history might be.

The limited time spent in teacher education programs may inhibit beginning teachers' ability to make such a switch, as most teacher training program's methods courses last for a single semester. Teachers enter such classes trained as historians, not teachers; their lack of pedagogical knowledge makes such a switch difficult until they acquire more classroom (or pedagogical) experience (Gudmundsdottir, 1991; VanSledright, 1996). As such, the content knowledge required of social studies teachers should perhaps be rethought, as teachers receive a liberal arts education that does not always align with the goals of effective social studies teaching

(Thornton, 2001). Thornton (2001) suggests that teacher education move toward a more integrated methods-content program to promote pedagogical content knowledge in beginning teachers, reducing teachers' stress associated with making the ontological switch from history student to history teacher.

Teacher Beliefs and Practices

Shaping Teacher Beliefs

Beliefs about what constitutes good teaching are often formed early in teachers' lives—when they themselves are students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lortie, 1975). People who choose to become teachers were often successful students themselves, which has resulted in the persistence of traditional instructional methods (Barton & Levstik, 2002; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005; Skelar, 1998). In describing what has been termed the apprenticeship of observation, Lortie (1975) noted that,

Students do not receive invitations to watch the teacher's performance through the wings; they are not privy to the teacher's private intentions and personal reflections on classroom events. Students rarely participate in selecting goals, making preparations or postmortem analysis. Thus they are not pressed to place the teacher's actions in a pedagogically oriented framework (p. 62).

Consequently, much attention is paid to teachers' qualities—namely, caring, supportive natures—with little reflection on the role of social context, subject matter, or pedagogical knowledge in influencing teaching (Paine, 1990; Sugrue, 1996). Yet teacher beliefs tend to influence all aspects of the classroom, including discipline, management, and curriculum selection (Pajares, 1992; van Hover & Yeager, 2004).

Indeed, Barton and Levstik (2004) note that much educational research over the last 20 years has focused on “[g]etting inside of teacher's heads to explain how they make the decisions that determine classroom practice” (pp. 245-246). The authors' work is grounded in the

assumption that teachers are the ones ultimately responsible for what goes on in the classroom and what information is taught or not taught. Thornton (1998) refers to this as classroom “gatekeeping,” where teachers serve as brokers of knowledge and experiences for the students in their classrooms.

In an effort to understand what American teachers believe, Slater (2008) analyzed surveys gathered by the National Opinion Research Center, housed at the University of California, and noted the conservative views held by most American teachers. For example, compared to the general population, teachers tended to be more conservative on social issues (e.g., abortion, religion, free speech). Slater (2008) suggested that perhaps teacher demographics helped explain this phenomenon, as a majority of elementary and secondary teachers are middle class females, creating a rather homogeneous teacher population in terms of gender, race, and socioeconomic status. The homogeneity of the teaching force is drastically different than the increasingly diverse student population, which often result in a gender, cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic chasm between the classrooms that most teachers experience during their K-12 education as well as the classrooms in which they will teach (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Howard, 2005; Meyer & Patton, 1998; Nieto, 2005). The homogeneity of the teaching force as well as teachers’ backgrounds helps shed light on why little has changed in classroom practice despite changes in student needs. Having come from similar backgrounds, these teachers had similar K-12 schooling, which, regardless of teacher preparation programs, translate into classroom practices that mirror the traditional teaching methods which they experienced as students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Howard, 2005; Meyer & Patton, 1998; Nieto, 2005). In the context of social studies teaching, the impact of the resulting limited instructional methods may be significant, as traditional social studies teaching tends to focus on a limited,

linear view of history and world events that excludes women and minorities, discourages alternative viewpoints, and shies away from controversial topics (Loewen, 1995; Nash, 1994; Skelar, 1998; Soley, 1996).

Although the type of school attended, cultural views of education, and parental influence also play key roles in shaping teacher beliefs (Wilson, Readence, & Konopak, 2002), an educator's experiences and beliefs are central to the classroom choices he or she makes. According to Fang (1996), "[e]ducators 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" (p. 51). Preservice programs have begun to address beginning teachers' ideas specifically. However, teachers' concept of good teaching is often so ingrained that, even after successfully completing a teacher education program that focuses on a variety of classroom practices, teachers often revert to more comfortable and teacher-centered methods of instruction (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Teacher Decision-Making

In a study on learning to teach writing, Grossman, Valencia, Evans, Thompson, Martin, and Place (2000) followed a group of 10 teachers for a 3-year period, beginning with their preservice experience and ending after their second year as classroom teachers. As the current study examines the beliefs and practices of a novice teacher over this same three-year period of development, Grossman et al.'s (2000) study may provide insights during the data analysis. Grossman et al. (2000) discussed the tension between theory and practice, teacher preparation, and the day-to-day classroom experience, focusing in particular on what remained with teachers once they had left their programs and entered the classroom. The study found that teachers were more likely to use conceptual tools that were given a practical application in a classroom;

moreover, full integration of any change in beliefs into classroom practice takes three years to become evident—from preservice through the first two years in the classroom. Shulman (1986, 1987) refers to this transformative period of development in a novice teacher as the development of pedagogical content knowledge.

Goals and Decision-Making

In *Teaching History for the Common Good*, Barton and Levstik (2004) explored a number of possibilities—namely, context, peer pressure, and training—that might explain why teachers often teach in ways that are inconsistent with their preservice program teachings. In trying to understand why certain practices continue to persist in classrooms, the authors suggested that a teacher’s goals are perhaps more important than contextual factors and pedagogical content knowledge (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Citing the works of VanSledright (1996), McDiarmid (1994), and van Hover and Yeager (2003), Barton and Levstik (2004) argued that—even when strong pedagogical content knowledge is present—teachers continue to teach in ways that are inconsistent with best practice (e.g., collaborative learning) if their classroom goals (e.g., quiet and orderly) differ.

For example, Fickel (2000) found that a high school history teacher’s beliefs regarding the purpose of teaching (i.e., his goals for teaching) had a greater influence on his pedagogical decisions in the classroom than his content knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. For instance, one of the teacher’s goals was to develop a sense of citizenship in his students, which was reflected in his teaching by his decision to incorporate community issues and choice in the classroom in order to empower students to become more involved (Fickel, 2000). Although in this case the teacher’s goals were consistent with the pedagogy taught in social studies teacher

training programs, distinguishing between goals and pedagogical content knowledge may help explain why teachers make the choices they do regardless of their preservice education.

Van Hover and Yeager's (2007) recent study on a high school history teacher found evidence that goals do indeed drive teachers' decision-making practices. The teacher in their study was "a vivacious, popular second-year high school history teacher" who was "the strongest student in her class" in an intensive masters/certification program (van Hover & Yeager, 2007, p. 671). The teacher was able to clearly articulate historical inquiry and historical thinking approaches learned in her program; however, her teaching was based on lecture activities that "allowed her to present her own interpretations of history and to control the conclusions she thought her students should draw from the material" (p. 671). Most notably, the teacher's main goal in teaching did not align with the goals taught in her teacher education program (i.e., citizenship, democracy); rather, it reflected her own personal beliefs regarding her life, the content, and the students. The teacher was more concerned covering the material and controlling the classroom than with developing the skills deemed important by her teacher education program that signify a growth in pedagogical content knowledge.

Decision-Making and Teacher Beliefs

Shulman (1992) noted that teachers are ultimately responsible for the decisions made in their classrooms. Indeed, the literature on teacher education consistently connects teacher beliefs and classroom practice, highlighting one way in which beliefs influence how classroom decisions are made (see Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Fang, 1996; Lortie, 1975). In relation to social studies teaching, Hartzler-Miller (2001) found that teachers often enter social studies teacher education programs with a narrative of history constructed and based on their personal life experiences. This belief of what history is subsequently guides the teachers' choice in regards to what to teach in history (Hartzler-Miller, 2001).

For example, van Hover and Yeager (2003) found that, although a beginning history teacher completed a methods course that encouraged historical inquiry and the use of primary sources, once in the classroom, this teacher relied on lecture and textbook outlines to teach history. The participant was able to discuss the methods taught in her teacher preparation course; however, these methods did not operationalize in the classroom (van Hover & Yeager, 2003). Furthermore, the participant tended to draw conclusions for her students and positively reward students who agreed with her.

When asked about her teaching, the participant stated that she taught in ways that were consistent with her teacher training—despite the fact that this was not observed (van Hover & Yeager, 2003). However, the participant did teach in ways that were consistent with her beliefs about the purpose of teaching history—namely, instill a sense of pride and reveal the truth (van Hover & Yeager, 2003). In terms of Shulman’s (1986) pedagogical content knowledge, this teacher did not access the pedagogical choices available or perhaps the needs of the students. Van Hover and Yeager replicated their 2003 study in 2004 with three second-year high school teachers. In each case, the teacher’s beliefs—not the knowledge of best practices in social studies—drove the decision-making in the classroom.

The interplay among teacher beliefs, content knowledge, and personal biography is intriguing—how do beginning teachers develop pedagogical content knowledge when their beliefs about the purpose of school do not necessarily align with their experiences and their program? Here again, the teacher relies on personal experience and beliefs rather than a teacher education program to make classroom decisions on content and pedagogy (Hartzler-Miller, 2001). This situation underscores Shulman’s (1992) research on the morality associated with teaching and decisions teachers make based on their morals.

Beliefs about Students

In duplicating their 2003 results in their 2004 study, Van Hover and Yeager found that participants—in addition to individual beliefs about teaching and the purpose of history—stated that beliefs about students and students’ abilities drove pedagogical decision-making (van Hover & Yeager, 2004). However, the researchers interpreted this connection negatively as the teachers discussed choices based on students’ behavior and inabilities rather than potential abilities in the learning of history (van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Indeed, teachers’ beliefs about student ability and engagement influence instructional choices (Grant, 2003; Hess, 2005; Johnson & Birkeland, 2004; van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Even when confronted with statistics on student achievement before entering the classroom, beginning teachers are often surprised by students’ low skill level (Johnson & Birkeland, 2004). Once this low skill level is assessed, teachers often continue to teach low-level skills and rote memorization instead of engaging students in higher-level thinking skills, believing students incapable of learning such skills.

Van Hover and Yeager (2004) noted that beginning history teachers shied away from historical inquiry and critical-thinking skills in the classroom, believing that students could not learn from these approaches. More specifically, the teachers in the study mentioned student academic levels, backgrounds, and maturity levels as reasons for using more traditional, lectured-based instruction rather than the student-centered methods advocated by their preservice programs (van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Hess (2005) found that perceived student ability and perceived student effort often deterred history teachers from engaging in class discussions—again leading to lecture-based classroom methods in which the teacher draws historical conclusions for students instead of students being asked to draw conclusions for themselves (Hess, 2005). Grant (2003) found that history teachers may misinterpret the lack of students’

content knowledge as a lack of teachers' own ability, consequently choosing methods that focus on content (e.g., lecture, note-taking) rather than skills.

The First Year

Research suggests that a teacher's first year in the classroom can have a profound effect on his or her beliefs (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Hargreaves, 1995; van Hover & Yeager, 2007). Although most novice teachers believe they understand the goings-on in a classroom, once the realities of the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching set in, teachers can feel overwhelmed. As a result, teachers come to resist the methods of instruction learned in their preservice programs and revert to previously held beliefs and practices that feel safe and familiar (Featherstone, 1992; Hargreaves, 1995). Thornton (1998) noted that, once teachers fall into a routine as "instructional gatekeepers," little change in beliefs or practices will occur. Educational reforms and pressures related to the accountability movement reinforce beliefs about the effectiveness of more teacher-centered practices, aiding in the persistence of these practices (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Burroughs, 2000). Moreover, as teachers are often left out of discussions on reform and accountability, they come to resent these changes and, in an attempt to remain in control of their classrooms, reject reform (Cuban, 1986). Consequently, reform often has little effect on teachers' day-to-day practice (Cuban, 1986). This tension may provide insight into the beliefs and practices of a beginning social studies teacher in an age of standardized testing.

Contextual Factors

According to Barton and Levstik (2004), "[to] understand why teachers engage in the practices they do, perhaps we need to turn to the socially situated purposes that drive their actions" (p. 244). As previously discussed, professional acceptance affects how novice teachers teach, as it is more likely that they will follow a more traditional pedagogy in order to gain the approval of their peers (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). In addition, novice

teachers tend to shy away from less traditional pedagogy while school administrators and teachers are less likely to support teachers who choose less traditional teaching methods (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Sleeter, 2005). Such social issues may influence a novice teacher's willingness to use the less traditional methods learned in preservice programs.

In addition to the social issues novice teachers face, they often must contend with heavy workloads, multiple preparations, and limited instructional resources—all of which may interfere with their classroom practice (Van Hover & Yeager, 2004). In today's era of standardized testing, teachers often feel trapped and overwhelmed, believing that they must use traditional, lecture-based methods to cover as much material as possible in a short amount of time (Sleeter, 2005; Yeager & Davis, 2005). Moreover, teachers also use instruction as a classroom management technique, shying away from student-centered learning for fear of losing control (Van Hover & Yeager, 2004).

Organizational and School Context

Schools' structure and functions have changed dramatically over the last few decades. Today's schools serve multiple roles—which previous generations did not have to address—to an increasingly diverse group of students (Grant, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2004). Legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and No Child Left Behind has exponentially increased teachers' responsibilities and paperwork (Johnson & Birkeland, 2004), influencing organizational aspects of schools and districts, which have been forced to choose curriculum materials and professional development opportunities that may or may not support a teacher's beliefs or pedagogical choices (Grossman et al., 2000).

Meanwhile, teachers face organizational norms that put additional constraints on their autonomy, such as choice of textbook and grading requirements (Grant, 2003). This lack of autonomy often results in fewer collegial conversations related to teaching and learning, which

can lead to feelings of isolation, stagnation, and alienation (Grant, 2003). In Van Hover and Yeager's (2004) study of novice history teachers, each participating teacher commented on the overall lack of support from administration and other social studies teachers in the department. One participant noted that the structure of the department and the school—in which beginning teachers had a mentor teacher for support—actually led to new teachers being shunned or met with hostility if they were using methods of instruction that differed from those of their colleagues (van Hover & Yeager, 2004). In some instances, the teachers in this study reported changing their practices in ways that were inconsistent with their beliefs in order to fit in with their peers (van Hover & Yeager, 2004).

However, a study by Lawrence (2005) found that, when schools were organized in ways that encouraged collegial collaboration and focused on student learning, school administrators encouraged teachers to use more innovative teaching methods (i.e., advancing antiracist, multicultural pedagogy and curriculum) to meet student needs. Consequently, teachers reported feeling empowered and able to teach in ways that were consistent with their beliefs and goals (Lawrence, 2005). Thus, school structure and a lack of autonomy can have significant impacts on the methods teachers use in the classroom.

Testing and School Context

In addition, changes in the educational landscape over the last decade have greatly impacted the school context. The No Child Left Behind legislation enacted in 2001 required every state to move toward a high stakes, standardized test-based accountability system to monitor student progress and grade school performance (Johnson & Birkeland, 2004). Scripted curricula and lower-level learning skills are being emphasized in the classroom, as teachers are either encouraged or feel pressured into teaching to the test, thus perpetuating what Apple (1986) termed the deprofessionalization of teachers. As such, “The test is the curriculum, and instruction

is controlled by the imperative to raise test scores,” (Neill & Guisbond, 2005, p. 31). Ultimately, today’s teachers are grappling with pressures unforeseen by previous generations of teachers—often without the support and materials necessary to successfully teach (Johnson & Birkeland, 2004). As a result, teachers are leaving their careers in droves, with over 50 percent leaving after just 5 years in the classroom (Johnson & Birkeland, 2004). High teacher turnover makes it difficult to forge successful learning communities in schools, which further undermines teacher morale and efficacy (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Johnson & Birkeland, 2004).

The original No Child Left Behind legislation did not incorporate measures of accountability in social studies; moreover, although more than half of the states do test social studies, Florida is not one of them. As a result, many schools in Florida are de-emphasizing social studies (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey, 2004; Neill & Guisbond, 2005; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford, 2004). Indeed, in many of Florida’s elementary schools, social studies has all but disappeared from the curriculum, as teachers are encouraged to focus on math and reading to increase test scores (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey, 2004; Yendol-Hoppey, Jacobs, & Tilford, 2005; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford, 2004).

Despite this disappearance of social studies in elementary schools, Florida high school students are still required to complete three credits in social studies—world history, American history, and American government and economics³. However, the nature and the quality of social studies instruction has changed, as secondary social studies teachers are often implicitly and explicitly encouraged to use their classrooms to help prepare students for standardized tests in other subjects by testing in a way that mimics standardized testing and integrating literacy skills into social studies instruction (Knighton, 2003; Neill & Guisbond, 2005). This situation has

³ The south Department of Education (www.fldoe.org)

created a climate in which powerful social studies instruction is difficult—if not impossible (Yeager, 2005).

Factors Inhibiting the Use of a Variety of Practices

In trying to understand this phenomenon of reverting to these ingrained beliefs, researchers have turned to the field experience aspect of the preservice program (see Armento, 1996; Henning & Yendol-Hoppey, 2004; Owens, 1997). Preservice teachers are frequently placed in classrooms that mirror their own schooling experiences, creating a theory-to-practice disconnect that may undermine potential gains made in a preservice program (Armento, 1996; Leming, 1992; Owens, 1997). This pattern often continues into teachers' first years of teaching; once out of the college environment, the desire to belong to the school community begins to overpower the notion of more progressive classroom practice (Malette & Readence, 1999; Wilson, 2000).

Indeed, the need for professional acceptance makes it more likely that teachers will follow a more traditional pedagogy in order to gain the approval of their peers (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). Novice teachers tend to shy away from less traditional pedagogy while school administrators and teachers are less likely to support teachers who choose less traditional teaching methods (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Sleeter, 2005). Such social issues may influence a novice teacher's willingness to apply the less traditional methods learned in preservice programs in their classrooms. As such, educational stakeholders—teachers, parents, politicians—often advocate for neutral or bias-free teaching, which can discourage student and teacher inquiry in the classroom; however, a growing body of research notes that such teaching is simply not possible (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Fang, 1996; Grauerholz, 2007; Skelar, 2006; Slater, 2008). In addition to these social issues, teachers must often contend with

heavy workloads, multiple preparations, and limited instructional resources—all of which may interfere with their classroom practice (Van Hover & Yeager, 2004).

Summary

Current research suggests that teacher beliefs are formed early in teachers' educational experiences and seldom change. These beliefs heavily influence classroom practice, including methods of instruction and selected content. To gain insight into teachers' practice and decisions, a researcher must understand teachers' beliefs, including background and cultural understandings. Despite this strong connection, teachers may adopt methods that are inconsistent with their beliefs. The literature on contextual factors notes that external pressures, school climate, and school organization often affect how teachers practice—particularly for beginning teachers, who are seeking collegial acceptance. The literature also notes a strong connection between teachers' goals and practice. Teachers are often able to clearly articulate their goals for teaching and choose methods to meet these goals, even when the methods are inconsistent with teachers' stated beliefs.

Some evidence suggests that experience can change teachers' beliefs and, as a result, their practice. In 1993, NCSS identified the four elements of an effective teacher education program designed to encourage innovative practice. These elements noted the importance of a meaningful field experience during which novice teachers are supported when trying a variety of methods. In this same report, NCSS put forth the five characteristics of powerful and effective social studies teaching and learning. Drawing from the works of Shulman (1987) and from social studies goal of preparing students to become citizens in a participatory democracy, NCSS asserted that social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active. With these five characteristics in mind—and Wineburg and Wilson's (1988) call for case studies on the wisdom of practice of effective

teachers—Yeager (2000, 2005) and Davis (2005) put together a series of essays that provided examples of wise practice in social studies education.

Contributions to the Field

Upon updating the handbook of research on social studies education, Levstik and Tyson (2008) noted the need for longitudinal case studies in social studies education on teacher beliefs and practices, particularly as novice teachers transition from the university classroom to K-12 classroom. The current study seeks to specifically fill this void, as the research questions are designed to gain access to the participant's beliefs and observed classroom practices through her first and second years in a high school history classroom. In addition, the current study seeks to address the need, noted by Wineburg and Wilson (1988) and Yeager (2000, 2005), for rich case studies on powerful and effective social studies teaching. More specifically, this case study follows up on the work of Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) on pedagogical content knowledge and teacher practice, but with a focus on effective social studies practice rather than social studies subject knowledge. By examining the beliefs and practices of a beginning teacher, this study may inform preservice teacher education programs, with particular attention to the beliefs and dispositions of an effective teacher.

Limitations

This study is limited by the amount of access granted by the teacher to her beliefs and instructional practices. This study is also limited by the context, as it takes place in one school with one teacher participant. As with all qualitative case study research, the current study is limited in its generalizability to other teachers and classrooms—although it can potentially provide insight for teachers that may prove beneficial in the field of social studies.

Description of the Chapters

This dissertation will be reported in the traditional format. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the study and reviews the relevant literature, with particular attention to powerful social studies practice as outlined by NCSS (1994) and the work of Yeager (2000) and Yeager and Davis (2005) regarding wise social studies practice. Chapter 2 describes the methods, including information on participants and their settings, sampling rationale, the research design, and the process used to analyze the data. Chapter 3 reports research findings and themes that emerge. Chapter 4 summarizes the findings, makes recommendations to support powerful and effective social studies teaching and wise practices, suggests directions for future research, and provides conclusions about teachers' beliefs and practices.

CHAPTER 2 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Review of the Purpose of the Study and Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the beliefs and practices of a high school social studies teacher who has been identified through observation by university faculty and instructors as using powerful and effective methods for teaching social studies. The literature in the area of powerful and effective social studies teaching methods suggests a lack of rich, contextualized case studies that examine the beliefs and practices of effective social studies teachers (see Wineburg & Wilson, 1988; Yeager, 2000; Yeager, 2005). The current study seeks to help fill this void in social studies research through the use of a case study within the classroom of an effective social studies teacher.

Based on this purpose, the current study will utilize qualitative methods and methodology to build on existing research while providing an in-depth understanding of an individual's beliefs. Merriam (1998) notes "[q]ualitative research is designed to inductively build knowledge rather than to test concepts, hypotheses, and theories" (p. 45). Such an approach is appropriate for achieving the above-stated goals. Moreover, the study of an individual's understanding and beliefs aligns with constructivism, a guiding theory recognized within qualitative research (Crotty, 2003; Hatch, 2002). Using this theoretical orientation as a guide, the current study addresses the following research questions:

1. What beliefs does a beginning teacher hold about teaching and social studies education?
2. How do the teacher's beliefs connect to her classroom practice?
3. What challenges does this teacher encounter in her classroom? How do these challenges influence her classroom practice?

Theoretical Orientation

Constructivism

Constructivism is the belief that knowledge is created—or constructed—through experience and interaction (Crotty, 2003; Schwandt, 1994). Constructivism is not a singular set of beliefs or methods; rather it is a guide used to provide researchers with a general direction, giving what Schwandt (1994) calls, “directions along which to look” rather than “descriptions of what to see” (p. 221). As this study focuses on individual perceptions and beliefs, constructivism is used to guide the methods and methodologies in an effort to examine the research questions.

Constructivism relies on the “unique experiences of each of us” suggesting that “each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other” (Hatch, 2002, p. 58). In constructivist research, it is understood that knowledge is a human construction. Such research relies on the researcher understanding and reporting how the participant constructs meaning (Hatch, 2002). As subject and object—namely, the researcher and participant—interact, the interpretation and interactions form meaning (Crotty, 2003). Consequently, constructivism is subjective, relying on the interaction and meaning-making of individuals to arrive at an agreed upon truth based on the interaction and the experience (Hatch, 2002; Schwandt, 1994).

According to Schwandt (1994), “Constructivists are deeply committed to the contrary view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective,” (p. 125). Constructivist qualitative research seeks to make sense of and interpret the meanings that others make of the world (Creswell, 2007). As such, constructivist inquiry is based on individual experiences and a description of the world as each individual understands it (Schwandt, 1994). This is particularly noteworthy as the current study focuses on how a specific teacher constructs meaning from his understandings and experiences as well as how these influence his classroom practice. In addition, the study examines how an individual’s beliefs about social studies as well

as powerful and effective social studies teaching—as outlined by NCSS—influence his classroom practice.

Beliefs and Practices

The connection between teacher beliefs and classroom practices has been examined throughout educational research (Brownell, Yeager, Rennels & Riley, 1997; Cuban, 1984, 1986; Fang, 1996; Goodlad, 1984; Leming, 1989; Onosko, 1989; Pajares, 1992; Sarason, 1996; Shulman, 1987; Thornton, 1991; Wilson, 2000; Wilson, Konopak & Readance, 1994). Pajares (1992) stated that “the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affects their behavior in the classroom” (p. 307). Although much of the previous research is focused on preservice teachers, Fang (1996) noted 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 literature supporting the beliefs-to-practices connection was outlined in chapter one; however, it is important to note that this body of literature influences the methods of the current study because more in-depth case studies are needed to understand how beliefs connect to powerful social studies teaching and pedagogical decision-making.

Methods

Case Study

In accordance with constructivist theory, case study research focuses on the process of the research, enabling the researcher to examine the interactions of characteristics within a bounded unit of study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002). By focusing more on the process than the outcome, case study research allows for interaction between researcher and participant, resulting in the construction of knowledge or meaning making from that experience (Crotty, 2003; Merriam, 1998). The purpose of a case study is to examine—in great depth and in

context—a single, bounded unit, such as a teacher in the classroom (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002). The idea of a single, bounded unit (or case) provides a framework—or, as Merriam (1998) notes, “fences in what is about to be studied,” (p. 27). Yin (1994) more thoroughly defines a case study as “[a]n empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 13). As such, genuine case study research is meant to elicit extensive descriptions of a single event or unit, not just provide a catch-all phrase for qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, according to Wineburg and Wilson (1998) and Shulman (1989), a lack of rich and contextualized research on powerful or “wise” teachers still persists. Case study research provides for rich and contextualized studies that can help fill this research void in social studies education. Therefore, the case study methodology—which allows for the examination of a bounded system of particular interest in order to fill an existing void in the literature—is appropriate for the current study as this study seeks to understand how a teacher’s beliefs influence his practice and pedagogical decision-making.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative research design, the researcher is constantly engaged in the research, actively collecting data within the participant’s natural setting in order to fully explore and understand the participant’s perspective (Hatch, 2002; Wolcott, 1992). Being involved on a personal level with both the research and the participant offers a unique challenge to the qualitative researcher as it may be difficult to participate while remaining objective (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002; Hatch, 2002). The close and personal nature of qualitative research makes neutrality impossible; therefore, the researcher should be willing to allow readers to examine his or her own beliefs rather than try to conceal them (Stake, 1995). This vetting of the researcher will help provide credibility to the study by helping readers to judge the accuracy in data collection and analysis (Denizen, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Hatch, 2002).

Based on this understanding of the researcher's role, it is important to provide a brief biography related to the researcher's experiences and beliefs in education, teaching, and learning. Throughout my K-12 schooling experience, I was placed in advanced or gifted classes, in which learning was active and creative, and students were given choice in projects and units of study. Such experiences influenced my beliefs on what teaching and learning looked like. As a result, I developed a strong affinity for being in school and subsequently decided to become a teacher during my senior year of high school. My strong interest in politics, current events, and history led me to major in history at the University of Florida from 1997-2000, during which time I volunteered at a local high school to help students with minor learning disabilities. My time in this class convinced me that education was the right choice for me.

After completing my bachelor's degree, I returned to my high school alma mater in Bradenton, Florida, and became a long-term substitute in a self-contained classroom with 8 students, ranging in ages from 14 to 21. The students, who had been labeled "profoundly mentally handicapped," had either Down's syndrome or had been identified as autistic. Although I loved my job and valued my time in the classroom, I was often left wondering why a 21-year-old with a history degree and no teaching certification had been hired to teach students with such distinct and challenging needs.

During the 2001-2002 academic year, I completed my master's degree/certification program at the University of Florida, during which time I became interested in the evident inequalities within the school system. My work focused on developing effective teaching methods for diverse students. After graduating, I moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where I taught seventh grade geography in a diverse, high poverty school for two years. The students represented 20 different countries and spoke 15 different languages, with Spanish being the

dominant language. During my time in Atlanta, I earned my ESOL certification and worked with the University of Georgia's Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education, where I was introduced to the idea of reintegrating schools into the communities in which they operate to support the members of the community. This concept had a profound impact on me and affected how I currently perceive schools and school communities.

During the 2004-2005 school year, I returned to Bradenton, Florida, to teach seventh grade geography in a magnet middle school that integrated fine arts into the curriculum to increase students' motivation and learning. However, I quickly learned that this enhanced curriculum was not meant for all students who attended the school. Out-of-district students who applied to attend the school (65 percent of the student body) were called "choice kids" while the remaining 35 percent were the neighborhood kids who, because of a lower socio-economic status and often limited parent involvement, were looked down upon and excluded from enrichment activities and expensive field trips. I left this school to begin my doctoral work with a desire to empower students who are traditionally disenfranchised from schools by utilizing curriculum meaningful to students and effective teaching practices. Although my ideas about social studies teaching and learning are still developing, I believe that the role of social studies education is to support the empowerment of disenfranchised students through the development of active citizenship participation as expressed in the NCSS goals.

As the researcher for the current study, I benefited from doctoral coursework that enabled me to further explore ways in which to best teach all students and for schools to reflect the communities in which they operate. I was granted opportunities to explore how these ideas connect to social studies education and how powerful social studies teaching can act as a catalyst for student empowerment. I also had the advantage of working with preservice teachers enrolled

in a master's degree/certification program, which gave me access to many classrooms throughout the county and surrounding counties where the university is located. Through this connection I met the participant in the current study and gained permission to follow him through his first three years in the classroom.

My relationship with the participant served as an advantage throughout this case study, as trust and rapport had previously been established—both of which are essential for data collection in case study research (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002; Merriam, 1998). However, my bias became evident, as I gravitated toward a teacher whose beliefs on education aligned with my own. As such, I sought outside evaluation forms completed during his internship experience on his teaching to help reduce my bias and provide an alternative perspective on his teaching.

Access

Interested in doing a case study of a powerful and effective social studies teacher in a high school classroom, I proposed the idea to my committee chair and committee for approval. Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was subsequently secured from the university and school board. The researcher then contacted the participant and his principal to gain access to the school and classroom. The participant signed an informed consent form; I also asked for verbal affirmation before beginning any data collection.

Participant

Kris, the participant, was selected through criterion sampling. Patton (1990) notes that, in case study research, establishing predetermined criteria for participant selection is essential for focusing the case study. Kris was selected based on two criteria: 1) she had been identified through observations by university faculty and instructors as practicing powerful and effective social studies methods in a high school classroom, and 2) she indicated a willingness to allow access to both her beliefs and his classroom, which allowed for authentic data collection to

support the case study research. Kris, an in-service high school teacher teaching social studies during her first and second years in the classroom, was under 30 years of age and identified herself as being of European–American heritage and upper-middle class upbringing. I selected a pseudonym to be used in the final report. A full description of the participant is provided in chapter 4.

Setting

The study was conducted in a mid-sized school district in the southeastern United States comprised of 64 schools: 31 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 15 senior high schools, 7 combination or multi-grade schools, and 1 adult center. During the fall of 2007, a total of 4, 083 teachers—77% female and 23% male—were employed in this district⁴; the district’s demographics according to race/ethnicity were as follows⁵:

White/Non-Hispanic	49%
Black/Non-Hispanic	36%
Hispanic	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%
American Indian/Native Alaskan	.02%
Multiracial	5%

Total student enrollment in the fall of 2007 was 28,378, of which 9, 092 were high school students⁶. During the 2006-2007 school year, the graduation rate was 68.2 percent, with a dropout rate of 6.6 percent⁷.

The high school in which this study took place enrolled 2, 091 students in the fall of 2007 and is representative of the county demographics, in terms of race/ethnicity identification and

⁴ FLDOE website, May 20, 2008

⁵ DOE Student Database, Survey 2 Data, October 8-12, 2007, as of March 10, 2008

⁶ FLDOE website, May 20, 2008

⁷ DOE Student Database, Survey 2 Data, October 8-12, 2007, as of March 10, 2008

graduation and dropout rates⁸. In addition, the high school has twice as many students classified as English language learners (ELL) in comparison to the district (5.5 percent in 2006-2007)⁹. The school's free and reduced lunch rate is lower than the county rate, with 36 percent of the students qualifying in 2006-2007¹⁰.

Data for the current study was collected from April 2007-April 2008. Archival data was initially collected from the participant that corresponded with her teacher education program. These documents included her internship journal, teaching observation forms, and units of study implemented her internship classroom. The researcher then observed the participant's classroom at the end of the 2006-2007 school year and at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Interviews were conducted in the participant's classroom after each observation. Additional interviews related to the participant's background and beliefs occurred throughout the period of data collection. The researcher observed a total of 10 different classes, which were demographically representative of the school's demographics, with the exception of two classes each year; these two classes had a large number of ELL students, with as much as 60 % of the participant's students receiving ELL-related services. Descriptions of the classes, as relevant to the study, are provided in chapter 3.

Data Collection

Effective case study research depends on gathering as much information as possible, as related to the case, so that the information can be properly analyzed and interpreted (Merriam, 1998). Such data are traditionally collected in three forms: interviews, observations, and archival

⁸ 2006-2007 NCLB school accountability report, August 2007

⁹ 2006-2007 NCLB school accountability report, August 2007

¹⁰ 2006-2007 NCLB school accountability report, August 2007

materials (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995). According to Patton (1990):

Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective...By using a combination of observations, interviews, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings (p. 244).

Merriam (1998) notes that the three forms are rarely used equally; rather, one or two tend to take precedence, with the others being used in a supportive role to gain a deeper understanding and provide a more complete examination of the case.

The current study utilized interviews and observations as primary sources of data collection, with archival materials being used to support or refute findings and provide background information relevant to the case under study. All interviews and observations were scheduled in advance. The researcher conducted each interview and observation, keeping a data management log throughout the process to aid in organization and analysis. The participant collected relevant archival materials and provided them to the researcher during visits to the school site.

Interviews. In qualitative case study research, interviews “provide a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 2). Interviews are personal and interactive, requiring the participation of both researcher and participant (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Merriam, 1998). This relationship requires a certain amount of trust or, as Patton (1990) states, “[t]he assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 278). As there is no substitution for the spoken words of the participant, the raw data, interviews are vital to a study focusing on a teacher’s beliefs, practices, and pedagogical decision-making; thus, they form the foundation of this case study (Patton, 1990).

The semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) were conducted from May 2007 to March 2008 using interview guides. Such guides were provided to the participant prior to the interviews. The questions were provided in advance in an effort to increase the accuracy and thoroughness of answers while building trust with the participant (Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2002). Initial interviews to gather background information were conducted before classroom observations. These initial interviews took place in May 2007 and again in February 2008. Interviews were conducted during school visits, during the school day, and again at the end of school day. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted. Each interview done in person was recorded on a digital voice recorder and subsequently transcribed. Transcripts were provided to the participant to ensure accuracy and for member-checking purposes.

Observations. Qualitative research grew out of the tradition of observing “new” cultures and phenomena (Crotty, 2003; Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). Early ethnographers removed themselves from the world in which they lived to enter into the field to experience and live the research (Crotty, 2003; Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). These researchers strived to find accurate understanding and provide the outside world with an accurate portrait of their case (Crotty, 2003). Observations place the researcher in the context with the participant and allow for the researcher to gain a more authentic understanding of what is being studied (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). The current study used observations to help the researcher gain insight into the teacher’s classroom practice and how her beliefs influence his teaching. Classroom observations allowed for the researcher to ask detailed questions about specific events that took place to gain access to the participant’s understanding of her classroom practice and decision-making.

Archival data. Bradsher (1988) stated that archival data are “[a] body of functionally and/or organizationally related material that has grown organically out of some activity” (p. 3). The current case study used documents to gather additional data on the participant and her classroom. Although collected during a one-year period, from May 2007 to April March 2008, the archival materials represent the first three years that the participant was in the classroom: her preservice year and internship as well as her first and second years as a high school social studies teacher. Documents from her teacher education program included observation forms completed by her internship supervisor, lesson plans, class work such as unit design and literacy integration, and the participant’s reflective journal from her internship experience. In keeping with the organic nature of archival materials, the participant was asked to provide documents from her first and second years of teaching she believed to be representative of her teaching and her classroom. Such documents included student work, lesson plans, syllabi, classroom contracts, and assessments. Although the documents were limited by participant selection, these data proved to be beneficial, providing insight into her day-to-day classroom practices and decision-making. Her reflective journal proved to be particularly beneficial as it provided details on her beliefs and growth during her internship experiences, which were later reflected in her classroom teaching.

All data collected were categorized according to themes that emerged during the interviews and kept in a locked filing cabinet to protect the participant’s identity and the integrity of the study (Bradsher, 1988; Patton, 1990). Archival data strengthened this case study, as it allowed for triangulation and trustworthiness (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). In addition, archival materials validated the relationship between the participant’s beliefs and practices as well as her implementation of powerful and effective social studies teaching.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves a “systematic search for meaning [...by] examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence” (Yin, 1994, p. 102). The process of data analysis enables the researcher to find meaning within the data to answer the original research questions (Hatch, 2002). In qualitative research, the data analysis begins as soon as data are collected and continues throughout the study, as the researcher finds meaning and uses such analysis to guide the study. As such, data organization and categorization are essential components throughout the course of the study—from initial data collection through the research process—that support final data analysis (Merriam, 1998).

The current case study used the nine-step inductive analysis method. In order to conduct a constructivist case study on a teacher’s beliefs and practices, the researcher analyzed the data to identify themes and generalize ideas across themes to find connections within the data (Hatch, 2002). To maintain the integrity of the constructivist paradigm throughout data analysis, it is important to note the participant-centered nature of inductive analysis. According to Potter (1996) “[i]nductive analysis begins with an examination of particulars within data, moves to looking for patterns across observations, then arguing for those patterns as having the status of general explanatory statements” (p. 151) As such, the first step of inductive analysis involves carefully reading through all of the data to fully know what has been collected. In order to analyze the data, the researcher must know what is included in the data set and read the data over and over again (Hatch, 2002), developing frames of analysis—what Hatch calls “levels of specificity within which data will be examined” (p. 163). Tesch (1990) further develops this idea by noting that data are essentially segments of meaning that is “comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode, or piece of information” (p. 116). After reading through each

interview transcript, the researcher noted that the participant consistently used the words “family” and “belonging,” which became the frames of analysis for further analysis.

The second step of Hatch’s (2002) inductive data analysis involves creating domains from the existing frames of analysis, a set of categories that properly represent the relationships that emerge in step one (Hatch, 2002). Domains are key to the inductive model as they allow for richer understanding of the relationships within the data. Spradley (1979) states, “Any symbolic category that includes other categories is a domain. All members of a domain share at least one feature in meaning,” (p. 100). These domains provide access to the data through “cover terms” or “included terms” that should make sense to either the general population or the niche group that access the particular study (Hatch, 2002). Such domains provide meaning for and accessibility to the study and its findings. For example, the domain of “community” emerged from the frames of analysis, as the participant discussed community in relation to her beliefs and classroom practice.

The third step of Hatch’s (2002) inductive analysis involves reviewing the research questions and ensuring that the domains being used indeed relate to the questions rather than simply being interesting tidbits picked up along the way. The researcher identifies which domains are relevant to the research questions, assigning relevant domains a code. Domains deemed not relevant are put aside, a process Miles and Huberman (1994) call “data reduction” (p. 10). In the current research, this step helped focus the study, as the participant’s understanding of community was central to her classroom practice and how she dealt with challenges that influenced her practice. Thus, the domain of “community” provided information relevant to the research questions.

The fourth step of Hatch’s (2002) inductive analysis involves rereading the data, refining the domains, and keeping careful records of where the relationships are found in the data. This

focused rereading is meant to aid in the refinement and recoding process as well as ensure that the data support the domains (Hatch, 2002). This fourth step allows for a closer look at the data to “give a better sense of the richness and importance of the domains you are finding” (Hatch, 2002, p. 169). In this fourth step, the domain of community was further developed to differentiate between school community and the community in which the school existed. This distinction helped to contextualize the data in a way that allowed for insight into decisions the participant made, both personally and professionally.

The fifth step of Hatch’s (2002) inductive analysis involves examining the quality of the data included in the constructed domains and determining whether sufficient data exist to support the domains. For Hatch (2002), this means determining whether the elements in the domains are repeated over and over again, thereby proving that the domain is “really in the data” (p. 170). This step also involves carefully looking for data that does not conform, or negative examples. Negative examples must be carefully considered and may result in changing or discarding domains. However, recognition and reconciliation of negative examples ensures that the data has been properly analyzed and that the findings stand (Hatch, 2002).

In the sixth step of Hatch’s (2002) inductive analysis, the researcher looks within the domains to conduct a complete analysis, identifying the complexity and richness of the domain as well as preparing for the next step in the inductive analysis process. Completing the analysis within the domains requires revisiting included terms, semantic relationships, and cover terms to search for other possible ways to organize what is in the domain (Hatch, 2002). This step ensures that the included terms could not be developed into freestanding domains not related to the original domain (Hatch, 2002). Analysis in this step supported the inclusion of the participant’s

beliefs on classroom management in the domain of community, as the two were inextricably linked, with sufficient raw data to support the domain and subsequent semantic relationship.

The seventh step of Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis requires the search for themes across domains. After looking within the domain in step six, this seventh step involved returning to the original domains and looking for connections among them. For Hatch (2002), this step means, "searching for patterns that repeat in the data and for patterns that show linkage among the different parts of the data," (p. 173). This search for relationships attempted to find meaning in the data and an understanding of how it all fit together to answer the research questions. This step highlighted the pervasiveness of the participant's beliefs on community, as this domain connected to most semantic relationships developed throughout the study, such as how she handled classroom challenges

The eighth step of Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis calls for the creation of a master outline to express the relationships within and among the domains. This process provides the opportunity to go back and refine the analysis, incorporating and organizing all previous steps in a very concrete manner. Organizing data into a single master outline helps determine which domains are indeed relevant and robust and which do not necessarily fit with the whole. During step eight, the researcher must then determine if reporting thinner or less relevant domains aids in the understanding of the case study and whether such domains should be set aside or kept in the final report. The original domains, such as "community" and "challenges," were found to be robust and relevant to the research questions and will be reported in the following chapter.

The ninth and final step in Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis involves returning to the raw data coded in the previous steps and pulling out meaningful excerpts to support the domains in the final report. This step provides a final check to ensure the depth of the data for a more

powerful final report. Excerpts of raw data that support the domains are embedded within the results chapter and provided in the appendices.

Verification of Interpretation

All research—whether qualitative or quantitative—is concerned with issues surrounding the reliability and validity of knowledge in a way that respects the researcher and the data (Merriam, 1998). Issues of interpretation can sometimes be particularly tricky in qualitative research, as so much of qualitative research is unique to the study and connected to the researcher and participants. Thus, issues of reliability and validity are most often concerned with the study design, such as conducting the study in an ethical manner and maintaining careful records of data help ensure that the study is indeed valid and reliable. According to Guba and Lincoln (1986), in a qualitative case study, reliability and validity are constructed within the study instruments, data collection, proper document analysis, and whether or not the case study can indeed be supported by the data.

The current case study addressed the issues of reliability and validity in the study design, IRB approval, and careful record keeping and protection of the data. In addition, the systematic data analysis was thoroughly described with examples that help to ensure the study's reliability. Although many researchers (see Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, 1995; Wolcott, 1994) argue against the use of the terms *reliability* and *validity* in qualitative research, these terms can be helpful in thinking about the structure and tools of the study.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research strives to establish trustworthiness in the research, thereby keeping with the changing nature or reality that is inherent to human behavior and, consequently, human study (Merriam, 1998). Trustworthiness specifically addresses whether or not the findings align reasonably with reality—or “the reality we choose not to question at the moment” (Becker, 1993,

p. 220). Lincoln and Guba (1985) created four criteria for establishing trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Marshall and Rossman (1999) define credibility as the extent to which the findings describe an accurate picture of the participants. Using multiple forms of data collection to help triangulate findings is one way in which the current study sought to ensure credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). Stake (1995) notes that, to help establish credibility, the researcher must explore bias within the research report. Such a process was outlined in this chapter. Member checking was also used to establish credibility as all interview transcripts were given to the participant to ensure truthfulness.

Transferability

Qualitative research is not necessarily generalizable to large populations. More specifically, “[q]ualitative research has as its goal an understanding of the nature of phenomena, and is not necessarily interested in assessing the magnitude and distribution of the phenomena” (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002, p. 2). Qualitative research does concern itself with whether or not research findings can provide useful insight to related instances (Yin, 2003). In case study research, transferability depends on the presentation of rich, descriptive data to determine whether or not similarities exist within and among other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Patton, 1990). To aid in potential transferability of the current research, the participant and context were fully disclosed herein. In addition, grounding this case study in powerful and effective social studies teaching helps with potential transferability within the field of social studies.

Dependability and Confirmability

The current study utilized a research audit to establish dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In qualitative research, dependability is strengthened by providing a

rich description of the research process used to generate and interpret data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A journal was kept, and an auditor was used to establish a research trail that could be checked. The auditor reviewed each stage of the study, including data collection and analysis, to establish dependability. After establishing that the research process was correctly and consistently applied throughout the case study and applied to the research questions, the auditor confirmed the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In addition, confirmability is increased by directly stating the researcher's qualifications and biases (Merriam, 1998). Member checks and the brief biography of the researcher contained herein also helped establish dependability and confirmability (Merriam, 1998).

CHAPTER THREE RESULTS

In keeping with the traditional dissertation presentation, this chapter will present the case findings as related to the following research questions:

1. What beliefs does a beginning teacher hold about teaching and social studies education?
2. How do the teacher's beliefs connect to her classroom practice?
3. What challenges does this teacher encounter in her classroom? How do these challenges influence her classroom practice?

This chapter begins with the participant's personal and professional background. The remainder of the chapter is organized according to the research questions.

Constructing Teacher Beliefs

Data for this study were collected during Kris's preservice internship experience, which occurred at the end of her teacher training program, and during her first two years teaching. During her internship experience, Kris expressed the belief that the purpose of schooling was to "aid children in their growth as individuals and citizens" (Kris, internship journal, February 6, 2006). She viewed her purpose as a teacher as supporting students' development, which did not focus necessarily on learning content. Rather, Kris believed that "the teacher/student relationship is at the heart of education and without it all motivation to learn by the students and desire to teach concepts and information is diminished" (Kris, internship journal, February 6, 2006). Kris's beliefs about teaching developed long before she entered the teacher education program. Her family and educational experience helped form her beliefs.

Influences of Family

Kris, a third-year high school social studies teacher in her mid-twenties, taught world history and American history at a high school where she completed her internship experience.

Kris spent most of her childhood in a large northern city before moving to a state in the south when she was 15 years old—an important year in her life as this was the year her parents divorced. However, Kris noted that, despite being divorced, her parents now are “best friends”:

It was rough at first. They did not get along, but as we got older, and as my sister and I moved out, it brought them closer together because they realized that they still needed each other even if they weren't married (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Once divorced, both parents desired to keep the family together. They worked toward this goal by moving to the same town in which Kris's paternal and maternal grandparents already lived.

Kris identified closely with her Greek heritage. She consistently described how her heritage and family influence her sense of community and togetherness. When asked to describe her culture, Kris related how family members worked together to create family meals, thus showing their love and care for fellow family members (Kris, reflective journal, February 7, 2006). She described the cultural importance of holidays and tradition:

The first thing that comes to mind is the annual holiday routines practiced by my family, especially during Easter and Christmas. I also think about the importance my family placed on the Orthodox religion and family dinners while I was growing up and, of course, the passion for sports that my family and family friends show, especially when my siblings and I were playing or the local team was on TV (Kris, April 25, 2007).

Kris noted that once she moved to the south, despite having her extended family living in the same community, she did not find the same sense of togetherness that she felt growing up in the north:

It's big to me to have people get together, and not only be close to your family, but have families be close with other families. When I feel that your friends are only your friends because of maybe something you have, then that's not pure to me. I want friends that will be there no matter what because that's the type of friend I think I am and so I want that from my friends. I got that a lot more in The north and it was just [in] that village atmosphere. You go to the grocery store or you go to a festival and it's that whole “*Cheers*” effect—everybody always knows your name. That's important to me and that will be important to me when I have a family...that will be very important to me because I will want my kids to have that (Kris, March 3, 2008).

Kris consistently expressed such ideas about community and family in interviews, observed classroom practice, and reflective writings. Moreover, Kris was careful to note that her desire to feel the closeness and sense of belonging that a community provided drove her decisions, such as where to attend college and, subsequently, where to begin her teaching career.

Influences of Schooling

Kris attended private school in grades K–7. She did not reflect favorably on this experience. Kris stated that she “hated school” because she felt that this environment was full of “rigid rules that could never be bent because they [the teachers] couldn’t remember what it was like growing up” (Kris, March 3, 2008). However, Kris talked about having teachers in public high school who had influenced her growth and development, leading her toward a career in teaching. Kris described one teacher “who was very helpful in introducing me to politics”:

He opened me up to the ideas of social responsibility and that’s what it was about—social responsibility—and I liked that. I liked the idea that he actually helped me understand that the purpose was to help others, not just yourself (Kris, March 3, 2008).

The role of politics and social responsibility in the community and in schools ultimately led to Kris’s decision to become a social studies teacher. Kris completed high school and earned a softball scholarship to a college in a northern state, close to where she had grown up. However, after two years, she transferred to a southeastern public college where she completed her teacher education program. Kris’s sense of social responsibility, coupled with a strong sense of family and community, drove many of Kris’s classroom decisions and will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Kris noted that her high school social studies teacher introduced her to the idea of social responsibility, which fit with her ideas of family, culture, and community that developed throughout her childhood (Kris, March 3, 2008). During Kris’s second year of college, this sense of social responsibility became a call to teaching. Although Kris was committed to the idea of

social responsibility, she had not found an outlet until that time. She described the moment she decided to become a teacher:

It was a warm day in December and I was reading outside. I just remember sitting on a bench of campus and reading [Kozol's] *Savage Inequalities* and thinking that's not right, and I knew I had to do something. That's just not the way it should be and I had to do something. That's when I decided to become a teacher and that was my responsibility to society (Kris, May 20, 2007).

After completing her internship and learning of an opening in the social studies department at the same school, Kris applied for and accepted a position teaching history. Although Kris discussed moving to a large urban area after graduation to teach in a high poverty school, her desire to maintain a sense of community and belonging led to her decision to remain in the same school. In subsequent interviews during her first and second years of teaching, she revisited the idea of moving; however, her sense of loyalty to her school and her students contributed to her decision to stay.

Case Findings

Kris's focus on the importance of community that developed from her family and culture remained central to her beliefs about the purpose of teaching. Kris further believed that her role as teacher developed from a sense of social responsibility, which should be reflected in her teaching and developed within her students. Kris defined social responsibility:

It's just a way of thinking that, well, I don't know why we are here, but there's a reason. There is more than just one person in this world, and there's the people that have things and the people who don't have things and the people in the middle. And at the same time, I don't think that people who don't have things did something bad and, like I said, I don't have all the answers. I just feel like there's something in everybody that can be used to help someone else. And I don't understand how anyone can be happy when the people around you are miserable—and there are a lot of miserable people around there, and I don't want to be like that. Probably from the experiences I've had with making others happy, there's just a different connection there other than getting a paycheck or object or new gift, which is always nice. I'm not going to lie, but there's a different level of satisfaction in making someone else happy and from that experience, if I can make someone else happy, then that's what I do. It's like the Ben & Jerry's saying "if you are not happy doing it, then why do it?" (Kris, March 3, 2008).

When asked what it meant to be a good teacher, Kris stated:

It means not working eight to five. It means not just coming in and teaching your content area. It means coming in and teaching about what it means to be getting involved in school. It means wearing the school colors, and wearing these when the school wears their colors on a certain day. It means attending not only if you are a coach, not only your own team sporting events but you kind of get into the whole coaching fraternity and attend the events of other coaches. It is not something that you can get up at 7 o'clock, come to work an hour later, go home at 3 o'clock and relax and watch TV. My best friend was a doctor who is probably or should be if not close to retirement now and every single day he comes home and he studies. And, I kind of see that in the same life for teachers. If you want to be a good doctor and good teacher, you really never stop learning. You never stop analyzing yourself. You don't have all the answers, and that is all right (Kris, March 3, 2008)

This statement reflected her commitment to her school. Further, Kris believed that her commitment to the community developed from a sense of social responsibility, which ultimately influenced her decision to become a teacher.

Beliefs about Teaching

Through her teacher education program, Kris was introduced to issues of diversity, including culture and socioeconomic status as related to schooling (Kris, internship journal, March 24, 2006). Although the notion of class differences in education perspective was something with which she was familiar—because of her previous readings—she believed that her teacher education program made this concept something tangible and real for the classroom. Kris specifically mentioned one course instructor whose focus on diversity helped shape her understanding of citizenship, global perspective, and community:

Charlotte was explicit. I think a goal of her classes was to encourage creative thinking and thinking outside the box and to encourage us to think about education in different ways—to make education interesting and invigorating and motivating and at the same time keep the values of citizenship and community in place, especially when you have international students who aren't familiar with the community or even how a democracy works. While I think those were probably the goals of the [teacher education] program as a whole, I know that those were Charlotte's ideas and they were important (Kris, , May 21, 2007).

Kris discussed her trepidation about entering the classroom at the beginning of her preservice internship experience. However, the school proved to be welcoming and supportive, and Kris quickly grew to feel like a member of the school community, describing the school as “welcoming,” “comfortable,” and “supportive” (Kris, internship journal, February 6, 2006).

Kris’s beliefs about the purpose of teaching were formed before her preservice internship. As previously indicated, her K-12 schooling experience led to a sense of social responsibility that drove her decision to become a teacher. This theme was apparent throughout her internship experience, as recorded in the reflective journal she kept as a class assignment. Although Kris expressed concern about taking over in a classroom in which the previous teacher had established the rules and norms, she welcomed the opportunity to develop the skills she deemed necessary to becoming a successful teacher (Kris, internship journal, February 6, 2006). Kris quickly noted the need to develop a strong classroom management style that would support her goals of creating a classroom that centered on collaborative learning and student communication (Kris, internship journal, February 6, 2006). The focus on student learning and student support discussed throughout her internship journal provided a framework for understanding her decisions in the classroom during her first and second years of teaching. When asked to reflect on how her beliefs about a student-centered classroom influenced her classroom practice, Kris wrote:

Teachers should ask themselves every day if what they are doing works. Teachers must organize their methods of teaching, organizing the classroom, emphasizing a sense of community, and rewarding students around the question of *is what I’m doing encouraging students to engage in the process of learning?* When it comes down to it...well, that is the only thing that matters (Kris, internship journal, February 13, 2006).

However, the lack of control over many of the classroom decisions left Kris frustrated, and she questioned the methods of instruction utilized most by her supervising teacher (Kris, internship

journal, March 6, 2006). Kris stated that she was encouraged to use more traditional methods of instruction—specifically, teacher lecture and student note-taking (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006). When Kris tried to deviate from this course, her supervising teacher discouraged her and asked her to change her lessons to accommodate more “reading and note-taking practice” (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006). Although she disagreed with the teacher’s actions, Kris noted that her supervising teacher had stated that he believed that these methods would prepare students best for college courses and for the state standardized tests (Kris, internship journal, February 27, 2006). However, Kris expressed her frustration with the supervising teacher’s persistent use of methods of instruction that did not align with her beliefs:

Many teachers and educators across America become too comfortable with their methods of instruction. They begin to seriously take the “my way or the highway” approach to teaching and alienate many students who simply might not possess any other route than the proverbial highway. Whether this approach to teaching is created from years of repetition, a lack of respect given to his or her career, or just plain laziness, this type of education encourages and inspires no one. Students learn in a variety of ways and each adolescent finds comfort in the idea that their teacher cares about how they learn and who they are as people. Educators at all different levels need to be aware of their responsibility of ensuring that their teaching methods are assisting as many students as possible (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006).

Despite these challenges, Kris reflected upon her internship favorably during her first year in the classroom. She referred to her internship as “the most valuable part of my education” and cited the supervising teacher’s promotion of more traditional methods of instruction as the reason:

After that [internship] I knew for sure that I would never run my classroom that way. I knew that, yeah, it’s probably harder to come up with other, more creative lessons, but that was my job as a teacher. That’s what we are supposed to do. I mean, I choose to see teaching not as my job, but as my privilege. It is my privilege to come in here every day and teach so that they can learn and make a difference (Kris, May 24, 2007).

Beliefs about Social Studies

Kris was committed to creating a sense of community in her classroom, which reflected her belief that a classroom community supported growth and learning. Her beliefs created a

desire to empower young learners to be active members of their communities. This view of teacher as activist was persistent throughout Kris's work as a teacher. Kris viewed social studies teaching through this lens and, as such, believed that the purpose of social studies education was to develop within students the skills and knowledge necessary to be active citizens and to have a sense of responsibility for the communities in which they live. Consequently, the role of social studies was to highlight instances in which change had occurred through active citizenship. This view also influenced Kris's classroom practice, which will be explored further in this chapter. Such beliefs were reinforced throughout her classroom experiences—from her internship through her first and second years of teaching. Kris's introduction to diversity reinforced her beliefs about social inequity and convinced her that the purpose of social studies education was to develop a sense of citizenship among all members of a community.

During the period of this study, Kris consistently expressed a dislike of politics and the political system in the United States. Her view of politics was one of corruption and repression, which undermined the principles of social responsibility. She believed that her purpose in teaching social studies was to empower her students with the knowledge to seek change (Kris, July 3, 2005). Kris connected her beliefs about politics and social responsibility to social studies teaching:

I view politics and social studies in schools as it's going to help people out and redistribute some of the power and I want to be a part of that. The more people that have power, then the less power certain people higher up have and that's a good thing, I think (Kris, May 21, 2007).

According to Kris, social studies is the conduit through which the redistribution of social capital can occur in schools. This idea drove her beliefs about social studies teaching. As a teacher, she taught both world history and American history; however, she stated that an inherent

interconnectedness existed among all disciplines, which made her responsible for more than just history content. For example, when discussing her role as a world history teacher, Kris stated:

I mean, just because it's world history doesn't mean we don't talk about rights and the Constitution and voting and being active. I mean, if something's not right, do something. We look at times in history when something wasn't right and somebody did something and we talk about how we can do that today (Kris, May 24, 2007).

In spring 2008, toward the end of Kris's second year of teaching, her beliefs about teaching and social studies were addressed again; her answers were consistent with those documented during her internship and during her first year of teaching. She was able to articulate her beliefs about social studies teaching more specifically and her passion on the subject was clear. Kris talked extensively about how her beliefs concerning empowerment and society intertwined with her role as a teacher:

I really do believe that we are becoming less and less vocal as a society and as citizens of America. As a teacher, I want to try and teach them that it's their right and responsibility to do; I mean, if I get fired from my job or go to jail for something that I said, then I'm willing to make that sacrifice. I mean, I believe, I don't think I'm committing a crime. I'm not advocating hurting anyone and I'm not telling them to hurt anyone or anything. Most of the laws that we hold to be standard throughout the world, but I'm willing to...I'm not going to sacrifice my moral beliefs to say what other people want me to say or to say what other people think is right. I mean the government, so I want them to feel safe and comfortable saying what they want to say to a certain extent and to be a citizen and that's part of their rights to stand up and speak (Kris, March 5, 2008).

During an interview at the end of her second year of teaching, she reflected on her development from her internship through her first and second years in the classroom:

I don't think my beliefs have changed really. I still believe what I believe. However, on a personal note, I feel it is my role as an educator to make a commitment toward improving the educational system in America, which is my role in this society, my responsibility. I've learned over time that this can either be done in my day-to-day work with students or by actively engaging in speaking out about educational issues and needed reforms on a local, state and federal level. So, I don't feel that my beliefs have changed so much as what I do or how I teach (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Beliefs about Students

Kris's beliefs did not change during her preservice program; rather, her beliefs related to the purpose of teaching, particularly teaching social studies, were reinforced by her instructors. Kris subsequently taught in a school with a large percentage of international students; thus, the ideas of diversity, community, and citizenship merged in each of her classes during her first three years of teaching. The diversity in her classrooms strengthened Kris's commitment to equality through education and, more specifically, through social studies education:

In order to root out this oppression, we need to focus on why many groups have been discriminated against throughout history, how they were able to still find success despite the obstacles they've had to face, and why it is important that every young student receives an equal and equitable education so that the American democracy can flourish or begin to flourish (Kris, July 5, 2007).

Beliefs about Classroom Practices

Kris's classroom practice reflected her beliefs on the purpose of schooling and social studies teaching and learning. First, her focus on community in the classroom strongly influenced her classroom management; she perceived her classroom as a learning community and based all decisions on this idea. Meanwhile, Kris's beliefs about community and social responsibility influenced her methods of instruction, as she encouraged students to work together and communicate effectively to increase learning. Kris's commitment to student achievement was evident in her use of assessment, which reflected her desire to see active learning and application in the classroom and community.

Classroom Management and Establishing the Learning Environment. Kris's belief that one learned and developed a sense of self through community drove her ideas about classroom management, as did her beliefs about active citizenship. At the beginning of her preservice experience, Kris noted that she thought classroom management would be the biggest obstacle to overcome in the classroom, but she did not necessarily see this as a negative. Rather, she viewed

this as a way to try and understand the needs of her students and develop a sense of trust and belonging in the classroom. In her internship journal, Kris wrote:

I forgot what it was like to be in high school, but I have begun to understand the environment and experiences that surround my students on a daily basis and thus, my classroom management style has improved that to the strong rapport I have built with my students and they have built with one another (Kris, internship journal, February 6, 2006).

The focus on communication and rapport-building as part of a community remained a primary factor in Kris's classroom management once she began teaching. Toward the end of her second year, she again reflected on her classroom management style, reasserting the importance of teacher–student and student–student personal connections:

I would describe my management as loose, very loose. I know a lot of younger teachers here try and pretend that they are way older than the students and say, "I'm too old for you and you are all young and immature and whatever," and they fail to understand what it's like to be those students and they lose them and don't even know [it]. So I try and create an environment where they can come and relax and feel safe and learn. If they don't feel safe and feel like I want them there, then they won't want to be there and there's no point (Kris, March 4, 2008).

During the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 school years, Kris used a variety of ways to establish and maintain a community in her classroom. Kris noted that she spent the first week of each academic year working to create a classroom community before introducing content: "There's more to learn in school than content, and the content is useless if they can't talk to each other or me" (Kris, May 21, 2007). Kris discussed various ways in which she worked to establish community, such as ensuring that students knew each other's names and changing the classroom seating regularly to prevent "cliques" from forming (Kris, May 17, 2007).

She discussed two specific lessons from her first and second years of teaching. The first involved students drawing pictures of themselves, which subsequently were passed around in a circle so students could poke holes in one another's pictures. Students then tried to put their own pictures back together, but were unable to do so. Kris connected this with the words students

chose to use with one another and the irreparable damage that poking at one another caused (Kris, May 17, 2007, and March 4, 2008). The second example involved asking students to write the word “welcome” in their native language and then posting these different words around the classroom doors (Kris, May 17, 2007, and March 4, 2008). Through this activity, Kris emphasized that all were welcome in the class and that—regardless of how they spoke—their words were important.

When asked to describe a classroom management problem she experienced, Kris noted that the only time she felt her management was not working was when she had to send students out of the classroom. Kris stated that she felt personally responsible for these failures because she viewed them as a breakdown in the classroom community, not just a single event:

Because of the environment I have set up, I know it’s my fault, too. There are just a handful of students who will take advantage of any situation and try and get me mad and I send them out, which almost never happens, but it does sometimes and it’s my fault, too (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Thus, because Kris wanted her students to participate actively in the learning community, she believed that her classroom management had to be flexible. She noted that “encouraging students to be loud and active citizens” now and then resulted in “teenagers pushing the limits and sometimes going over the limits” (Kris, March 4, 2008).

However, during Kris’s second year, a student noted Kris’s choice not to use discipline referrals except in extreme situations. The following dialogue depicts a situation that arose during a world history class one afternoon:

(Teacher from another class walks in, addresses Kris): “Do you have any referrals?”

(Kris): “No, I do not.”

(Teacher): “That’s okay, I’ll go get some. I’ll get us all some. These kids have gone crazy!”

(Kris): “Really?”

(Student): “Miss Kris, you never write no one up. How come?”

(Kris): “Well, I don’t like to write people up. I don’t think I need to.”

(Student): “Well, then, she don’t need to bring you any referrals just ’cause she’s going on a writing spree” (Classroom observation, March 4, 2008).

Kris also talked extensively about the use of classroom contracts that were created in each class at the beginning of the year (Kris, May 21, 2007 and March 4, 2008). Each class developed a contract, including class rules, students’ responsibilities, and teacher responsibility. In keeping with her beliefs about social studies education, Kris referred to these as class constitutions, and the rules and responsibilities amounted to classroom citizenship (Kris, March 4, 2008). Each class constitution was signed by each student and displayed prominently in the classroom, to be referred to when a student behaved in a way that violated the contract. For example, during a lesson on Vietnam, a student was talking to a friend while another student was trying to ask a question. Kris turned to the two students talking, pointed to the class constitution, and asked, “Are you being respectful of yourself or your classmates? Let him finish please, then you can finish” (field notes, May 21, 2007).

Content Selection. Kris articulated an understanding of how teachers’ beliefs influence the content choices made in the classroom. She stated that, “You can’t teach all of history in one year, especially because history grows every day” (Kris, March 3, 2008). Kris’s choice of content in her classroom aligned with her beliefs about forging community, in that Kris chose content that related to her students’ backgrounds, with a desire to “help them feel like they belonged in history” (Kris, May 17, 2007). Kris also chose content that gave her students opportunities to engage in discussions about their similarities and differences in order to “give them a different perspective and help them respect each other” (Kris, March 5, 2008). Her goal of promoting social responsibility was evident in her focus on content that would “debunk the myths from the textbook and look at what happened from another point of view” (Kris, July 5, 2007).

Kris was explicit in explaining in how she chose content that would respect and incorporate the diversity of her students to support the learning community. For example, when discussing World Wars I and II, Kris incorporated the role of Puerto Rican soldiers in the U.S. Army to encourage her students from Puerto Rico to “further explore how their history has helped shaped US history” (Kris, May 22, 2007). When asked to choose lesson plans and student work that best represented her teaching, Kris chose work from this section and articulated how encouraged her students were during this activity; she said that certain students were “more engaged and participated more during these lessons” (Kris, May 22, 2007).

At the end of her first year, Kris’s curricular choices clearly were driven by her desire to help diverse students “see themselves even though it’s American history.” The lessons observed during the final two weeks of the 2006–2007 academic school year focused on women’s rights, the Civil Rights movement and its connection to hip-hop, and Vietnam and the Vietnam War. When asked why she chose these particular topics to end the year, Kris stated, “Quite honestly, there are more people than white European people in the world. I mean, you may as well call the [text]books European history or European American history for all the good they do on this part of history” (Kris, May 22, 2007). Furthermore, Kris said, “Well, my students from Vietnam asked if we were going to get there [to the Vietnam War] and so I knew I owed it to them to do it so they could talk about their experience. It was the fair thing to do” (Kris, May 22, 2007).

Kris believed that much of history—both American and world history—was written from a singular point of view that does not accurately represent people’s struggles. She believed that part of her responsibility to her students was to show diverse points of view throughout history, with particular attention to oppressed groups that often are discriminated against in society (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006). Kris understood how her beliefs influenced her content

choices and asserted that her content choices were an essential part of promoting social responsibility in her classroom. For example, Kris used what she called “the misconceptions of various groups portrayed and reinforced in the media” (Kris, March 4, 2008) to choose what to teach in her classroom. During her second year of teaching, Kris initially focused her world history course on African and Native American history, in addition to the histories of Greece and Rome that tend to dominate world history courses. When asked why she chose to incorporate these cultures, she pointed out that the media—particularly movies and the news—tended to portray these groups in a “negative or savage way and that’s not what it’s like at all” (Kris, March 5, 2008):

More than anything, I think the media plays on a negative outlook. “Here is what the media is showing us, but here is the reality.” Not, “here is what the media is showing us so it must be right.” The problem with it is that, because I do have a negative outlook on the media, I know how much the media affects them and what they do when they get home. They turn on the TV. They watch TV and pop culture with the media. That shapes so much of these students’ lives that they get these false beliefs as to the ways things really are. Is there some validity to what the media says? Sure, but it’s not the complete picture (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Kris’s beliefs also influenced how she constructed content throughout the school year in another way. She developed themes and units for instruction in her world and American history courses by selecting content that would highlight historical events in which groups or individuals acted for the common good and not just for personal gain. In addition to selecting content that reflected her goal of promoting social responsibility, she noted that her content selection was directed in part by student interest: “If they are bored in the beginning of the year, you can’t always get them back,” (Kris, May 21, 2007). She chose themes for instruction that would help students better understand current issues and societal problems, such as Reconstruction, Industrialism, the Civil Rights Movement, and Feminism (Kris, course syllabi, 2006–2007; 2007–2008). During an interview in May 2007, Kris described how she used hip-hop and rap music to develop themes of

the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s as well as “ongoing civil rights struggles that [students] see today” (Kris, May 17, 2007):

I was someone that was very much on the side that maybe the hip-hop movement of the thug rap movement is not the best message to be sending to our kids; but, at the same time, it is an expression of African American culture and I felt that a lot of the reason there was so much animosity towards it is because we never stop—mainstream America never stopped, or really White America never stopped—to think of where the roots of that movement came from. That being said, I’ve kind of changed my position on that recently. I’ve kind of read a lot more by people like Bill Cosby and people who come out and are putting more and more pressure on parents and moving away from it [hip-hop]. I do think now that it is destroying African American society in America. I see the biggest reason why is because I see it in my classes on a daily basis—who the kids look up to, who the kids admire—and this is the impression that they can all treat each other like that and it’s okay. And what message does that bring to them? I mean the fighting and the violence that goes on, even here at school, which I consider to be pretty safe, still it’s out of control. And this is not what kids should look up to. So, we talk about Martin Luther King Jr. and we talk about Jackie Robinson and we ask each other if this is what they would want—would they be proud of hip-hop and rap and think that that’s what is helping strengthen communities? (Kris, May, 17, 2007).

Thus, Kris specifically chose content that would encourage students to reflect on how their choices affected their communities.

At the end of her internship experience, Kris expressed concern about trying to cover the content of a world history or American history course. She noted that the sheer volume of history content was intimidating, especially in light of the idea that history content grows every day:

One of my major concerns going into the year was how I was going to get through all of American/World History. I truly believe that by the end of my internship, I understood that history teachers really need to master the idea of “surveying” history and picking out the most important points that students should know, regardless of bias. One way or another, something from history is going to go unnoticed, but that is what history professors at the college and university level are relied upon to do, touch upon many historical topics that students should have received at the middle and high school levels and fill in gaps where needed. I simply hope to get my students interested in history so that they develop that desire to engage in future history lectures/classes/books, etc. That being said, combined with the state standards, what my own history professors have taught me, and my own desires, I will try to provide a stimulating overview of important historical topics (Kris, internship journal, April 5, 2006).

Kris had limited control over content during her internship; this experience subsequently reinforced her beliefs that content should be selected with the purpose of what she termed “debunking the myths of history and teaching for equality” (Kris, May 17, 2007). She also believed that history textbooks present a narrowly constructed narrative of history that neglected to include all members of society (Kris, internship journal, February 20, 2006). Consequently, Kris selected content and materials that would address directly the role of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and social classes in American and world history (Kris, May 17, 2007).

During Kris’s first year in the classroom, she stated that she carefully selected materials that would “match the diversity of my classroom and show my students that they were a part of history, too” (Kris, May 17, 2007). Kris noted that many of her students were living close to the poverty line and, as a result:

My students are not very well informed—at least, my students aren’t the demographics [...that] really allow for them to stay current with current events. They, um, for one reason or another, they are not interested in the news and they wake up in the morning and, if they to watch television, it’s, um, kind of unworthy MTV or cartoon or ESPN or something like that. In the morning, they don’t read the newspapers or watch the news when they get up. They struggle to find various articles in the newspapers when I give them a newspaper and say, here, find a story—let’s look through the paper and find stories they don’t know how. And they just aren’t informed about what’s going on and it takes me—and this is how I know I have to change—it takes me pointing out what’s going on. They are very quick and they know what’s going on with the war in Iraq and they want to talk about the current opposition to the Bush administration, but it’s not that they are informed about it, it’s more that they hear the Bush-bashing and they want to make a point. “Oh this is cool, let’s bash the president.” But they don’t really know why or what it is that they are bashing about. But, other than that...it’s my duty, it’s my responsibility to help them learn how to get informed (Kris, , July 5, 2007).

During the final two weeks of the school year, when observations of Kris’s class took place, Kris selected content that she believed to be “provocative but important” (Kris, May 17, 2007). As class began, Kris played the song “I Am Woman” by Helen Reddy, which was an anthem for the women’s rights movement in the 1970s. When asked why she chose this particular song, Kris

stated that, “I wanted the females in my class to listen to the powerful words and feel encouraged” (Kris, May 17, 2007). The observed lesson on women’s rights came after a lesson on the Civil Rights movement, and Kris noted that the Civil Rights movement influenced the women’s rights movement that followed. She asked students to think about whether or not the goals of these movements had been met and, if not, why not. The class discussion that followed was lively, and all students participated at least once. When asked about this afterwards, Kris said:

I get so frustrated when my students make choices that continue to oppress them. I mean, they listen to music or buy certain things and they objectify themselves and they don’t know it because they’ve never had to think about it. Last week when we did the Civil Rights movement, we listened to the lyrics of some thug rap and I asked them, “Is this what Dr. King would want you to think about yourself? Is this what Malcolm X would want you to think about yourself?” Then I asked them, “If this is still what’s going on, if this stuff really represents African-American culture in the United States, then is the Civil Rights movement over or is it still going on?” Then I asked them, “If it is still going on, what are YOU doing about it?” And then they think, and I have them write a paper about it and they have to think about the choices they are making and if it makes their lives and their community a better place (Kris, May 17, 2007).

Kris also explained that her women’s rights lesson was prompted by the popularity of the *Playboy* bunny symbol among the students in her classroom. During her lesson on the women’s rights movement, Kris discussed the objectification of women in society and asked her class, “Do you think this is what little girls really dream of when they are growing up? Why do you think this happens? Why does it pay? What would Gloria Steinem and Helen Reddy say?” Her class responded that they did not believe this was what young girls dreamt of being, and Kris then posed the question, “Why do you think it happens?” Almost all students were quick to note the money associated with the industry, and many believed that *Playboy* was a legitimate way to raise one’s socioeconomic status and get away from poverty. After class, Kris expressed frustration with this idea:

It makes me sad to think there are so many young women out there that think their only shot at a better life is to pose for Playboy or something like that. It makes me realize that, as a teacher, I have to work to show them how education can make their lives better and that they are smart enough and capable enough to do it. College is a big hurdle, a big issue. I mean, we are right down the street, literally, from a college that most of them believe they can't get into and, even if they did, they don't think they could afford it. It makes me wonder what good living in a college town does and if it makes that dream seem even harder to reach. So, I keep trying to show them ways to get involved and make a difference (Kris, May 17, 2007).

During her first year in the classroom, Kris incorporated content that she believed would empower students. While this theme continued in her second year of teaching, Kris's content selection focused more deliberately on debunking the myths of history. She noted that she had been able to reflect on her first year and "realized that I could work even harder to get to the myths and really point them out and let the class take them apart" (Kris, March 3, 2008). Kris specifically discussed issues of classism, sexism, and racism that "textbook teaching promotes, whether it's on purpose or not" (Kris, March 3, 2008). Kris selected content that would 1) include groups of people traditionally excluded from the curriculum, 2) develop themes of activism and empowerment, and 3) help her student become more informed about their community and their world (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Kris also chose content in her world history and American history classes that would help her diverse students see their cultures in the curriculum. As mentioned previously, Kris included the role of Puerto Rican soldiers in her unit on World War II to show her Puerto Rican students their "value and importance in the American story" (Kris, March 4, 2008). In her world history class, Kris chose to spend more time on African civilizations and Asian civilizations than on Greek and Roman civilizations. When asked how she made this decision, Kris stated:

Look at how the media portrays Africa and African people in all different countries—it lumps them together even though they are different people and different societies, so I chose to show them the uniqueness and strength of the ancient African kingdoms. I asked them [the students] why they think that the media portrays people from Africa as starving

and violent and unable to take care of themselves. And they want to know why nobody ever told them about the strength of Africa before and then they want to know more and they really get into it and think about things, especially the media, differently afterwards (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Kris's American history classes learned about imperialism and westward expansion for the period observed during her second year in the classroom. At the beginning of this unit of study, Kris explicitly communicated to her class the purpose of that day:

Today we are going to debunk another myth that's out there. It goes back to the Eurocentric history we have talked about all year—is it really all about Europe? (Students call out, NO!) How do you define what is best? If it's yours, right? Well, that's how the Europeans okayed slavery and okayed wiping out Native Americans—because their cultures and their skin [were] different, so it wasn't the best. And, if it wasn't the best, then it must be inferior. Well, class, today we are going to debunk the myth of American Indians being savages, just like we debunked the myth that Africans were savages (Kris, classroom discussion, March 4, 2008).

Kris guided students through a primary document exercise that provided information with multiple perspectives from multiple sources. Students then were asked to create a two- to three-minute presentation and defense of their ideas on the treatment of Native Americans during the period of westward expansion. Students were asked to think about how this is portrayed in old Western movies and how the media and entertainment industry perpetuate the myths. Kris noted that this later would connect to her Civil Rights and women's rights lessons (Kris, March 4, 2008). When asked her goal in teaching these lessons, Kris stated:

I want them to take a look at some of the ideas deeper and think about the myths that are portrayed and how that affects their lives. Maybe they won't debunk the myth, maybe it will hold, but I want them to think and learn that there are multiple sides to any story. I want them to learn to not take everything at face value and that it's okay to ask the hard questions. I want them to think about the decisions they make in their lives and if they are being forced into those decisions because of somebody else's beliefs. I want them to learn how to investigate and that there is value in learning and learning more every day (Kris, March 4, 2008).

In both her world history and American history classes, Kris ended the class by talking about the war in Iraq and the media's portrayal of a different culture and religion. In her world history

class, Kris discussed the media's portrayal of people from the Middle East—specifically Arab Muslims. Kris asked her class why the media and the government might want people to feel afraid of a group of people who were different and whom many Americans did not know or understand (Kris, classroom communication, March 4, 2008). The students responded that fear might justify war and linked this sense of fear to the fear created about various minority groups in the United States to justify the myths about people of African descent (classroom discussion, March 4, 2008). When Kris asked, “Well, what can you do about it?”, students responded quickly that perhaps they should learn more about Islam and Middle Eastern cultures. Kris agreed and stated that the class would do just that in the next unit. Kris later explained that this was her planned course of study and that she liked to let the students feel that they had a choice in the content selection. “Well, they pay more attention and work harder if they think I listened to them and went in the direction they wanted to go” (Kris, March 4, 2008). This link between history and current events demonstrated Kris's commitment to helping students learn how to become better informed about the world.

Kris used a similar content link in her American history class. She asked students to think about who profited from the wars that were a part of western expansion. The students were quick to note that those with money and those with land would benefit. Kris discussed this idea with her class:

Who is getting rich off of this western expansion? The rich and powerful. Who do you think always makes money off of wars? The rich and the powerful. And who is fighting these wars? The poor, right? How popular do you think these wars were? Not very, and people get tired of the images and the wars begin to slow down (Kris, classroom communication, March 4, 2008).

Kris's students quickly began discussing the war in Iraq and linking the battles of western expansion to that war. They asked Kris whether or not the Iraq war was for imperialist reasons.

Kris ended class by discussing the war in Iraq:

Whether you are for the war or against the war, most of us can agree that Hussein was not a good man. What do we say we are in Iraq for? [Class says "terrorism."] Right. And everyone agrees that this is a problem—nobody likes terrorism, but how do you fight an idea? Some people say that terrorism has no one country, so they question how we ended up in Iraq. These people are concerned that America is being imperialistic and won't leave Iraq now that we are there. They worry that the war is being put in a good light and that we are helping the world and being positive to take the heat off of what may have been a bad decision by the United States. Now, does America do good in the world? Absolutely, yes. Does America sometimes have an agenda? Yes, everyone does. That's why it's your job to stay informed and really think about what the media is telling you and what the government is telling you. Don't believe everything you hear just because you hear it. Your job is to really think about what's going on in your world (Kris, classroom communication, March 4, 2008).

Again, Kris encouraged her students to become informed about the world around them by selecting content that would encourage connections to current events and lines of inquiry related to the topics.

Methods and Materials. When asked about the process of writing a lesson, Kris first noted her thematic development and content selection within each theme. Once these choices were made, Kris considered how to teach the lesson best:

I think about whether it's going to be better to do a reading or by group work or by activities or by a project. I think about whether I need to do a little lecture to get it started. I don't think about the easiest way to teach it, but what's going to be best for my students and help them get what they need (Kris, July 5, 2007).

She noted that most of her classroom instruction was student-centered, and she encouraged students to work together and learn from one another. Her belief that learning occurred when students worked together reemphasized her focus on creating a classroom community; this approach was consistent throughout her internship and first and second years in the classroom. For example, with one week left in the academic year during her first year of

teaching, Kris began her short unit on the Vietnam War in American history class mentioned earlier—a unit developed with her Vietnamese students in mind. On the first day of observation that week, Kris lectured and worked with timelines to introduce the material. This lesson also included a very brief discussion (15 minutes) at the end of class (field notes, May 21, 2007). During the interview immediately following the lesson, Kris expressed dissatisfaction with her lesson:

I don't like doing that, don't like lecturing, but we're running out of time and we have to get to Vietnam. I told my kids we'd get here. So, I chose to teach in that way, but it was only supposed to last 15 minutes so we could get to [the] discussion, so my kids from Vietnam could talk about their lives and the differences from their experiences and what the textbook says. I thought it would be okay. But I just don't know... (Kris, May 21, 2007).

The next day, Kris's change in energy was evident. The room had been rearranged, and the overhead projector had been put away. It was clear that this would be a different lesson than the day before. Kris explained to her students that they would be working together to learn more about the different views of the Vietnam War. She asked each of her students from Vietnam to work with another group to provide a different level of insight. She then provided each group with reading materials from various points of view—e.g., war supporters, war protestors, government officials, small town and large city newspaper clippings, and stories from the Vietnamese. Students then were asked to think about why the points of view were so different, what conclusions could be drawn, and what lessons could be learned from this experience. Students ultimately wrote a one-page reflection on the experience and what the war with Vietnam could mean in the present (lesson plan, May 22, 2007). When asked about the change in lesson plan from the previous day, Kris stated:

I knew I couldn't teach in that way [lecture] again, and I thought it was more important for them to walk away with knowledge about perspective and a sense of what happened instead of a timeline of events. Just because we are running out of time doesn't mean we

can't have class in the same way [student-centered] that they know and that they are used to and enjoy (Kris, May 22, 2007).

This example was consistent with Kris's beliefs that the classroom should be a community, as diverse students were encouraged to work together to learn and be given the time and space for such learning to occur. Moreover, Kris encouraged students to apply the ideas surrounding the Vietnam War to current global conflicts, again in line with her belief that the classroom should stimulate a sense of social responsibility.

Kris's belief that learning is communal and interactive was consistent over the three-year period under study. Toward the end of Kris's second year, she discussed her favorite way to teach:

I like questioning, lots of questions, asking question after question to get them involved and see if they are really processing the lesson. And I know that they like the experiential exercises and collaborative stuff that we do, so we do that a lot (Kris, March 5, 2008).

When speaking about her teaching and classroom, Kris consistently used *us* and *we*, which was indicative of her belief in a classroom community of which she was a member and shared power with her students. Such beliefs also were reflected in her pedagogical decision making when she chose lessons that encouraged collaboration, as she demonstrated toward the end of her second year when she described her best lesson:

The best lesson I've taught over the last three years is probably the factory lesson. They love the factory lesson. They like coming in and having fun and really walking away with an understanding of what it might have been like to work in a factory at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. They always remember that lesson and even students I have had in the past come into my room and ask, "Did you do the factory yet?" (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Kris defined her favorite lesson through students' engagement and success, and she described her least favorite lessons as "lessons where I talk too much or the students don't walk away with something they think matters but ones we have to do anyway" (Kris, March 3, 2008).

The influence of Kris's beliefs about social responsibility also was evident in her choice of teaching materials. On Kris's desk, next to the teacher's editions of textbooks, were the works of Howard Zinn and James Loewen, two scholars whose works present a more inclusive (some would call it radical) historical perspective. When asked about these texts, Kris stated, "Well, [the books] help fix what the textbooks get wrong" (Kris, March 3, 2008). This correlated with Kris's stated purpose of "debunking the myths of history" and of using social studies to promote social responsibility through social awareness.

During her internship, Kris stated that she relied on the textbook to teach "more than I would like to," but—as a visitor in the class—she did not want to go against her supervising teacher. However, in her first and second years, she discussed using the textbook as either a supporting text or a differing viewpoint. Rather, she sought materials that she believed offered a more accurate perspective on historical events or exposed students to multiple perspectives to encourage historical inquiry in her classroom. With regard to her process for choosing materials, Kris stated:

Well, I have a few resource books I use all the time, one of which is an American history book that tells history through primary documents. It only tells history through primary documents and that's it. I use the internet a lot to see what information is out there, what's available, what other teachers have done, and what scholars in the field say. Sometimes I look at the resource books that came with the textbook, but I use just the documents out of that. I try and give different points of view, especially from different [socioeconomic] classes so that they get a better sense of what happened (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Assessment. Kris's definition of assessment echoed her overarching beliefs about education: "I know students have learned when they can go do something with it in their communities or they bring information back to me; otherwise, it's just a bunch of useless facts," (Kris, March 5, 2008). Her assessment was influenced by her beliefs about active student learning. Kris's use of assessment developed over her first three years of teaching (preservice

through year two) and evolved into something she believed was more representative of active learning and student engagement. Kris noted that she did not necessarily follow what she called “a traditional grading system” (Kris, March 5, 2008). Although she used the percentage scale that her school district established, she believed that the way she arrived at a student’s grade might be different than her colleagues (Kris, March 5, 2008):

I am a pretty liberal grader on assessments like projects and group work because I know they are new to the students and new to me, too. I know they are not perfect, but we are all learning. I have to take into consideration there may be flaws in the way these are set up and assess fairly. I mean, if it’s something simple like a reading exercise, that’s different, but for the big things, I think about their work and their process and ask them to fix the problems and think about it more to get them where they need to be (Kris, March 5, 2008).

During her internship and first year of teaching, Kris used more traditional forms of assessment, such as tests and quizzes, along with projects. However, she believed that these were not an accurate measure of how or what students were learning (Kris, July 5, 2007). Concerned about her assessment process, Kris used the summer between her first and second years to rethink it. She developed a method of assessment that focused on student choice and interest, using writing, art, music, and presentations to assess student learning. Students were given the choice of completing a project, with equivalent requirements, and encouraged to show all they had learned about a particular topic (student assessment, March 5, 2008). Kris assessed students more frequently, doing so after just a few lessons rather than at the end of a unit. She also used cumulative, portfolio-type assessments, examining student growth over time rather than just in a single instance. When asked why she had developed this form of assessment, she stated:

I do it for the students. They are creative and I want them to be thoughtful and think beyond a multiple-choice test. I do it to keep them interested and to keep them engaged. I want their grades to come up and I want them to care. I want them to be successful. I don’t want them to associate this class and all of social studies with failure because then nothing will ever change (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Such development of alternative assessments demonstrated her commitment to student-centered learning, as well as her growth and learning as a classroom teacher. During her first three years in the classroom, she came to understand learning as an active process that should be assessed actively, not a finite process that can be assessed in a “closed, impersonal, multiple choice method” (Kris, March 5, 2008). However, Kris stated that this type of assessment made her uncomfortable:

I know it's the right thing to do and I know they enjoy it and learn from the assessment, but it doesn't match the FCAT and I feel responsible for that. I feel like I should fall into line instead of going out on a limb like this. I am afraid of parents. I am afraid that I will let my administration down. I am afraid that if they fail the FCAT that it's my fault for not testing them in the way that they were going to be tested. I don't mind the criticism, I can deal with that. I don't want them to fail the FCAT because of me (Kris, March 5, 2008).

In terms of classroom management, content, and methods and materials, the connection between Kris's beliefs and classroom practice was clear. Kris constructed a collaborative learning community that encouraged thought and action through student-centered learning. Her effort to incorporate multiple perspectives and encourage discussion and inquiry evidenced her sense of social responsibility. Her development of alternative assessments over the course of her classroom experience also reflected her beliefs; however, her concerns about moving away from more traditional, multiple-choice tests demonstrated how contextual factors may influence a teacher's beliefs and classroom practice.

Challenges in Teaching

Kris's beliefs about teaching are strong and rooted in her experiences both in and out of the classroom. However, she encounters challenges in implementing what she considers to be effective social studies teaching. Kris spoke extensively of the challenges she encountered in the classroom influenced her classroom practice throughout her internship and first and second years in the classroom. Testing and state standards greatly influenced her practice and the context of

the school in which she taught. She reflected on how the pressures of testing often put teachers at odds with one another or encouraged teachers to focus on methods of learning that were not necessarily those they would explicitly teach within their content areas. She stated that testing and standards limited the amount of instructional time across subjects, which placed additional stress on teachers and discouraged collaboration. This was especially evident during Kris's internship because, as a guest in another teacher's classroom, she sometimes was encouraged to take "short cuts" to get through material quickly and efficiently (Kris, internship journal, February 28, 2006). Kris also spoke of how her students' needs and backgrounds influenced her beliefs about teaching and, in turn, her classroom practice.

Required State Testing. Despite the current high-stakes climate in schools, Kris did not believe that the state standards for world history and American history greatly influenced her classroom practice. Rather, she felt that the state standards for social studies were broad and vague, which enabled her to teach the content she felt necessary for her students. At the end of her first year, Kris explained:

I know the standards are there. We have to have our standards posted and on all of our lesson plans. So, look at the standards and basically see what aligns with what I want to teach and just works from there. And I'll check and see if there's anything major I need to accomplish. Honestly, I use the standards because I have to but it's not so rigid that I have to adapt my teaching to meet the standards (Kris, May 17, 2007).

During her second year in the classroom, Kris described the state standards:

The standards are so vague and so general that, I mean, I know that some teachers have the same four standards on the wall all year and never change them and that's how vague they are. In history, you can't stay vague, so just because I fulfilled a standards doesn't mean I'm done teaching. Standards are just one of those laws that we have to have to prove we know what we're doing or when a teacher gets in trouble and they can fall back in the standards and if they are abiding by the standards. It's just some kind of law to judge if a teacher is doing his or her job or not (Kris, March 3, 2008).

Despite Kris's belief in the limited usefulness of state standards, she recognized that the testing that stems from the accountability and standardization movement greatly impacted her school and her teaching. During her internship experience, Kris spoke very little about state standards or standardized testing requirements. She noted the amount of instructional time lost while the tests were administered, as well as student and school anxiety levels, but she did not emphasize testing in any way (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006). Rather, she noted that, since no social studies subjects were tested, it was not as much of a concern for her as it might be for other subject area teachers (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006).

However, during her first and second years in the classroom, this belief changed quickly: "Gone are the Utopian beliefs that I can just always teach social studies in the best way it can be taught...Now I know the reality that the state and my school can direct me on how to teach" (Kris, May 17, 2007). Kris elaborated on this in an interview during her second year of teaching, a week before testing was to begin. When asked what she perceived as the primary pressure on the school, she stated:

FCAT, unfortunately. You know it's that everything is geared towards FCAT and how we can improve FCAT and it's among all the teachers and the English teachers feel incredibly pressured, especially this time of year. Whenever I talk to them, whenever I see them, nine times out of ten they have a frown on their face and everyone, especially the students; everyone knows it and can see it (Kris, March 3, 2008).

The pressure of testing was of particular interest in the current study, as it demonstrated how the contextual factors set by the state affect a school and—in turn—a teacher's beliefs and practices. In the state of Florida, no social studies disciplines are tested; thus, social studies content has no affect on the grade the state gives the school, which is based in part on testing. However, as Kris explained, testing did influence her classroom practice:

I do things to help with FCAT. We do a lot of reading assignments and I look at the readings myself and create questions that mimic FCAT style questions and things that

might be seen on the FCAT. We do a lot more writing and a lot more reading than I ever expected to do and we never do a reading without questions to follow otherwise I feel bad. As long as I can maintain the integrity of history, then I think it's okay and I hope it helps my students out and helps the English teachers out and takes some of the pressure off (Kris, March 3, 2008).

Thus, the contextual factors of the school—Kris's community—did indeed influence her practices. Furthermore, choosing methods designed explicitly to support the work of other teachers reinforced her belief in the importance of community.

Kris's concern that "the integrity of history" might be in danger when social studies classes focus on reading influenced her beliefs about testing in a way that is worth noting. Her concern that history might be at risk led her to believe that incorporating social studies into the FCAT would be beneficial. Despite her belief that testing was stressful and ineffective in measuring student success fully (Kris, internship journal, March 6, 2006), Kris stated:

I think that, overall, I would feel better as a social studies teacher that I was being recognized as a real teacher and that it's important that it would be on the test, but at the same time I'm skeptical of what a social studies FCAT might look like. I mean, as much as I would like to think that it would make us [social studies teachers] matter, it might take it away as well, I mean we're already so restricted by reading because of what the state requires, I might feel like I was being restricted even more (Kris, March 3, 2008).

The pressures of testing in the state, and, consequently, the school, led to the conflict that she felt in implementing what she believed to be effective classroom practice. This was particularly evident during the school's testing time. However, Kris's beliefs related to social responsibility and its role in social studies were consistent and ultimately drove her classroom practice. When asked if she believed that implementing a social studies test would allow for more support of social studies instruction, she expressed skepticism about the content that might be on a social studies test:

Well, I would have to look at any FCAT and see what bias is there. Right now, I don't have to worry about that. With a test, I would have to teach the government's bias because that would be the only way for them to pass the test—to know what the

government wants them to know and what the government decided was important in history and I don't necessarily like that idea either (Kris, March 3, 2008).

Kris openly discussed the pressures of teaching in a high-stakes environment within a school whose focus was to raise the school grade from a low C to a B by emphasizing reading (Kris, March 3, 2008). Although Kris's thoughts on testing changed during this study, her greatest struggle occurred when her beliefs about the importance of community conflicted with teaching for social responsibility, as she explained in an interview during her second year in the classroom:

I am expected to use methods like reading comprehension, writing skills, vocabulary, stuff like that. Everything you can think of that's not interesting about history and doesn't make a difference. Nowhere is there an analysis of differing viewpoints, none of how the social classes work together. I mean, the main points of history aren't "let's sit down and do a read aloud" and I'm not saying that it's not important, but it doesn't allow for the kids to make anything from history. It allows them to make something useful on a standardized test. Great, they pass, they are going to graduate, but then are they going to enjoy doing it? Are they going to college? Do they want to learn more? This is the issue around here, they are going to be less likely to understand history or their role in their communities but they will feel like history just helps out with the FCAT and it makes me feel like I need to move away from teaching in a way that helps students explore history and understand how they fit into history and this greater need to help one another. I know what my administration has done for me as far as supporting me and making me feel welcome and comfortable. So, if I don't teach in ways that help the test, then I'm being disloyal. I'm letting my school down and I'm letting my administration down (Kris, March 4, 2008).

The school's contextual factors clashed with her beliefs and, subsequently, her classroom practice. To mediate this conflict, Kris tried to determine what was most beneficial for her students and worked to strike a balance in her classroom (Kris, March 5, 2008). For example, she continued using alternative assessments, despite her concern that not creating multiple-choice assessments mirroring FCAT tests might go against her administration. However, to help students prepare for the FCAT, she included a reading section, with FCAT-style questions within each unit of study (Kris, lesson plans and assessments, March 5, 2008).

Despite the extra work and longer hours, Kris taught consistently in ways that reflected her beliefs about teaching and the purpose of schools. However, the pressures of time and testing sometimes created situations in which Kris felt she had to teach in ways that were inconsistent with her beliefs about teaching. Because of the school's focus on standardized testing and reading, Kris often felt pressured to incorporate more reading into her classroom. Although she was quick to note that social studies content naturally involves reading quite a bit, Kris felt forced to create questions for each reading that mimicked the tests students ultimately would take. Although she created these questions, she felt that it often undermined her teaching by making the content seem "forced or boring or too test-like" (Kris, May 21, 2007). Thus, Kris taught in ways that were inconsistent with her beliefs, although her commitment to community and the overall well-being of the school ultimately influenced her decision to incorporate these readings into her classroom:

No, I don't this is the best way to teach, but my school needs me to do it and I would feel guilty if something happened, like I was letting my administration and the English teachers down by not helping and doing what they needed me to do. So, we just do it sometimes (Kris, March 3, 2008).

Toward the end of the school year, Kris felt rushed to include content that she deemed important; consequently, she lectured or gave notes in order to fit in topics such as the Civil Rights Movement or the Vietnam War, as evident in her first year. However, after just one day of teaching in a way that was inconsistent with her beliefs about good teaching (e.g., collaborative learning, discussion), Kris changed her lesson plans to be more consistent with her beliefs—"ways that the students expect in class and that they like more and respond to" (Kris, May 24, 2007).

Time Constraints. Despite the extra work and longer hours, Kris taught consistently in ways that reflected her beliefs about teaching and the purpose of schools. However, the pressures

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Peer Teachers. Kris did not believe that her fellow teachers influenced her beliefs or classroom practice. She stated that she did not teach in ways that many other teachers in her school did, but she did not see this as an issue. Rather, this knowledge reinforced her commitment to teaching in ways that were consistent with her beliefs that learning should occur

within an active community of learners, with a focus on developing a sense of social responsibility through activism. Kris described one instance, during her first year, in which she was encouraged to teach in a way that was inconsistent with her beliefs:

I was told that I needed to learn the benefits of worksheets. Mr. Snow said that students like worksheets and, well, the whole gist of the conversation was that I was working too hard and I needed to start using my time during class to plan and that I needed to start using worksheets so I could plan and grade while the students were in my class. He was telling me that, just that day, he had gotten 18 essays graded in one class just by giving out a worksheet. I mean, his heart was in the right place, I guess, but he said that this would solve all my problems. What he didn't get was that didn't solve any of my problems like making learning active and interesting every day. That didn't solve anything (Kris, May 22, 2007).

Kris believed that this was a general attitude throughout the school as well as the social studies department. However, she still felt connected to her fellow teachers, particularly other social studies teachers or teachers with whom she shared students. At the end of her second year, Kris still viewed her school as a strong community in which learning took place and teachers were supported in trying to make a difference in their classrooms. She did not feel that she was being asked to change her practice by veteran teachers, but rather that these teachers were trying to give what they believed to be beneficial advice to a novice teacher.

Kris's belief in the importance of maintaining a community within her school and working collaboratively with other teachers served as a buffer against criticism or negative comments. For example, she talked about being able to work with teachers, but not letting their "negativity" change her classroom practice or lead her to "conform to the norm":

Teachers in our school, especially the ones I talk to, definitely converse about what is going on in their classrooms. From my point of view, I ask a lot of teachers about some of the things that I notice in my classroom and I think that's part of the self-critiquing process and part of professional growth. Sometimes I take that into consideration. I mean, some of them criticize me and that's fine. I do things differently than they do. But some of them do teach like me and are friendly and do get to know their students and so I usually ask those teachers more than the others (Kris, March 4, 2008).

She also noted that the majority of teachers at the school were supportive and effective.

However, the vocal criticism of the school by one particular group of teachers offended her, but that only strengthened her feeling about her beliefs and methods of instruction:

I just had a conversation with a teacher at this school who called the school “ghetto.” She teaches in a different track and she said that the rest of the school is ghetto. I don’t think this school is ghetto, and if you think this is ghetto and you think of our students like that, then you should go move to another school and not be here. She used that word, which I do not like at all and I don’t let my kids use at all and she stereotyped them and that just tells me that I’m teaching in the right way, working with students so they want to fight that kind of stereotype, that kind of attitude (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Diverse Student Body. According to Kris, her students’ needs and classroom diversity had the greatest impact on her beliefs and classroom practices. Her commitment to promoting equality through social studies was reinforced by her teaching students who were considered to be on a lower track in the school. In terms of race, culture, ethnicity, language, and religion, her classes were diverse (Kris, May 17, 2007, and March 3, 2008). In terms of socioeconomic status, her students were more likely to be on free and reduced-cost lunch programs than higher tracks within the school (Kris, May 17, 2007, and March 3, 2008). However, when asked to describe her classes to someone who never had entered her classroom, Kris described her students as:

Rambunctious, yet creative. They are a little wild sometimes, and then there are some not-so-wild times, but they are not uncontrollable, they are just active. We take all the skills they learn all year and we become more and more integrated as a class, more and more of a group, and they are more and more comfortable with one another and get more and more comfortable working together. I mean, it’s not perfect, no class is, but I’m really proud of my students and the bonds they have formed this year (Kris, May 21, 2007).

This “bond” and sense of community were evident when the administration proposed a change to Kris’s class demographics in the middle of the 2006–2007 academic year. In an effort to make Kris’s job easier, the administration offered to divide her classes by moving students who were English Language Learners (ELL) to a self-contained class, with the idea of developing language not necessarily connected to the curriculum. “There was a point when they were talking about

taking away the [ELL] kids and making just a regular class and no [ELL] class” (Kris, May 21, 2007). Noting that her classes did indeed have ELL students, Kris described what occurred after the proposal:

The regular kids and the [ELL] kids were so against that, so vehemently against that, that they talked to the administration and talked to teachers and told the administration that they wanted the classes to stay the same and that they liked this type of diversity in the classroom... Well what happened was basically I was in agreement and I thought maybe the regular kids were not getting what they needed to because it was slower with the [ELL] kids. And then the more and more we all thought about it and we talked to the regular kids and the [ELL] kids and we talked to them separately and then together and they all said, when we sat down—me, the administration, and the kids—we all sat down and came to the decision that, for us, that the diversity and what we learned from each other was more valuable and more important and something to consider in a world history class because they were really learning so much content from each other—more than they would if the kids were separate. And they decided that they didn’t want to be switched around and sometimes it was because they didn’t want to change their schedules but for the most part they wanted to stay together as a class (Kris, May 21, 2007).

Kris was encouraged by the administration’s responsiveness to the students, as it reinforced the sense of community and belonging that she felt for her school. She was able to take this renewed sense of community and encourage students in a new way. Students told Kris that they felt like a “genuine part of the school and that adults would listen to their voices” (Kris, May 21, 2007). Furthermore, Kris was able to strengthen the ideas of citizenship in a participatory democracy. Rather than just describing how change might occur and how her students could act as agents of change in their communities, Kris’s students actually were agents of change. The contextual factors in the school enabled Kris to create an exercise in democracy that resonated with students and encouraged not only engagement in the classroom, but also a sense that activism worked—which transcended the curriculum and reinforced her beliefs about teaching.

The diversity of Kris’s classes clearly influenced her classroom practice. She developed her curriculum to recognize students’ diverse backgrounds, encouraging her international students to share what their lives were like in their home countries before moving to the United

States (classroom observations, May 21, 2007, May 24, 2007, March 3, 2008, and March 4, 2008). For example, when discussing the Vietnam War, Kris noted what she called the “negative perspective of Vietnam from the textbook” (classroom observation, May 21, 2007). Kris asked her students from Vietnam to provide a different perspective. They quickly launched into a discussion about Vietnam, creating an open dialogue among students (classroom observation, May 21, 2007). After the lesson, Kris explained that this was common in the class:

I don't necessarily agree with singling students out but, in this case, I asked them ahead of time and they agreed. I mean, they know more than me, more than their classmates, so they have to teach what they know and give their experiences. Why would I teach alone about Vietnam or Bosnia or Puerto Rico when I haven't even been there? I ask them to help and be the one that does that because it's their class and their time to do it (Kris, May 21, 2007).

Toward the end of her second year, Kris again discussed how the diversity of her classroom influenced her classroom practice:

It has allowed me to be more open to understanding of other cultures. Not that I never was open, but it has forced me to be more open because I kind of look for articles or lessons that may be geared towards their cultures yet still get the theme. When we were talking about World War II and war heroes and what not, we talked about several Puerto Ricans that came to America to fight and about the as effort and with Puerto Rican students in the class it got the point across of war heroes. At the same time, it allowed them to be a little bit more engaged in the class because they could see a little bit of their own history within American history (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Kris also noted how the diversity of her classroom influenced her methods of instruction:

I know that kids learn differently and I have to think about what I am doing and what methods I am using all the time. For example, some students will not respond to me if I am not looking at them, so I have to be careful when they are working in groups to go over and directly talk to them. I know others need lots of visuals and lots of graphic organizers to really connect to content and get the big ideas. I also know that I have to give them time to talk to each other in the class because sometimes they need to work it out together, to help each other understand, especially when language is an issue (Kris, , May 21, 2007).

During the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 school years, Kris utilized a variety of methods, including collaborative learning, experiential exercises, structured debate models, and storytelling. She

stated that she “tries really hard to match the right method to the right topic” (Kris, May 24, 2007). This willingness to use methods that were responsive to the students was evident when Kris changed her methods of instruction because students were not active in her class during her first day of instruction on the Vietnam War.

Challenging Student Behavior. Kris’s beliefs about teaching challenging students changed during the course of this study and were inconsistent with her overall beliefs regarding teaching and learning. In her internship journal, Kris stated: “Maybe I’m just too Utopian, but I know that I can teach and motivate every child to be successful in my classroom. That’s my job as a teacher and I am fully committed to making this happen” (Kris, internship journal, February 27, 2006). Kris explained that she had heard teachers complaining that students were “either stupid or lazy, never anything positive or something they [the teachers] might be doing” (Kris, internship journal, February 27, 2006). Kris believed that engaging content and effective methods, as well as her efforts to create a classroom community, would motivate all students to learn in her classroom:

What I really need right now is just more experience. I need more time in the classroom to develop and mature into the teacher I want to become. The more I am in the classroom and the more I undergo the trial-and-error process that is a natural part of teaching, the more I will learn about how to reach all of my students in a way that makes a difference in their lives (Kris, internship journal, February 20, 2006).

Toward the end of her first year, Kris began to express doubts about the willingness of all students to be successful in school. Although she did not appear to be discouraged from her goal of teaching and engaging all students effectively, she began to discuss factors that influenced student motivation in a different way than she had discussed during her internship. Kris noted that some students in her class rarely engaged in the lessons and class discussions (Kris, May 24, 2007):

I mean, I know these guys have [sports] practice after school or they have jobs after school, but this stuff is important. It's about their rights and their government and they just don't care. I try to get them to read. I try to get them to discuss. I show YouTube clips. I play songs that I know they know. I put them in groups. I give them notes. And it just doesn't work. And it's only a few, I mean, one or two in each class and they all seem to be the football players. I've been working on them all year and I am beginning to think that maybe you just can't get them all. So I get as many as I can every day and I keep telling them that I am here when they change their minds. I mean, they are passing the class and everything, but they just don't, um, engage like the rest (Kris, May 24, 2007).

Toward the end of Kris's second year, she expressed frustration with her inability to reach certain students in her classroom. She again identified these students as athletes or those with jobs, and she struggled to find ways to motivate these students (Kris, March 4, 2008). She first discussed the methods learned in her teacher education program: "I feel like nobody said these are things that can work for some students some of the time—it was that these things work for students and sometimes they don't and you have to figure out what works for your students," (Kris, March 4, 2008). Kris still worked to incorporate many of the methods taught in her methods course, but her sense of their effectiveness had changed: "Gone is the Utopian belief that I can help all students, but I know I can get a lot of them and that keeps me going and that's what it's all about," (Kris, March 4, 2008). She continued to use student-centered methods in an effort to engage students in her history class. She continued to create assessments that she believed would measure students' learning more accurately. Her classroom practice remained consistent with her beliefs about community and social responsibility. Kris recognized the change in her beliefs, but she stated that, "Just because they give up doesn't mean I have to. I can recognize that they don't want to be engaged but still keep trying to engage them. They can fail themselves, but I don't have the option of failing them" (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Despite Kris's best efforts to maintain a classroom community that dealt with behavior issues "in house and according to our classroom contract" (Kris, May 17, 2007), Kris did send a

student out of the room on one occasion during an observation for this study. Students were working in groups of three to create an illustrated narrative about a topic related to the Vietnam War based on a character who would have been relevant to the period (e.g., soldier, war protester, Vietnamese citizen). One particular group caught Kris's attention during work time, and she walked over to ensure that they were completing the assignment. Kris began to talk to this group about what was appropriate and what was inappropriate for their stories. One student responded to Kris with inappropriate language that disrupted the class and called attention to the group. Kris became visibly distressed and immediately sent the student to the administrator's office with a discipline referral (classroom observation, May 17, 2007). The school day soon ended and, after returning from the administrator's office, Kris asked to talk about the scene that had taken place (Kris, May 17, 2007):

I hated to do that. I hate when I have to send someone out because then they don't learn and that's probably what they want anyway. But he can't curse at me like that and expect to sit there, which is probably what he wanted. I mean, he's been like that for days now, and I think he's just trying to get kicked out so he doesn't have to take finals. I don't like to send kids out, but he didn't give me a choice there (Kris, May 17, 2007).

Kris also discussed the inappropriate nature of the group's story and its lack of relevance to the assignment. Kris noted that the story "was just about pot and drugs and they thought they were being funny and talking about the [19]70s, but it was about drug dealers and guns and that's not funny" (Kris, May 17, 2007). Kris believed that her trust had been violated and that this lack of respect for her and the classroom warranted a discipline referral, as the actions of the student had jeopardized the classroom community that Kris had worked to establish. Kris stated that the student's actions "not only disrespected me but disrespected his peers and made a joke out of a topic they should be paying attention to because it's going on again" (Kris, May 17, 2007). Although this instance was inconsistent with Kris's overall classroom management style, Kris

believed that the actions were warranted because of the nature of the problem. Such inconsistency appeared to be resolved the following day when the student returned to the classroom and turned in a completed assignment. When asked about the student's return, Kris stated, "Well, he just had some stuff going on at home and he's going to not act like that and we're going to move on" (Kris, May 18, 2007). Kris's willingness to move past an isolated incident seemed consistent with her beliefs about teaching and student needs and aligned with his overall beliefs regarding classroom management.

Long Hours. Although Kris's commitment to her beliefs about teaching and learning did not change over the course of the study, the day-to-day challenges that teachers encounter began to challenge Kris's practice. Toward the end of her second year, she began to express concern about long hours, challenging students, and difficult classroom management situations. These stressors, coupled with issues of standardized testing, forced Kris to question whether or not she was teaching in the right city or in the right school. Though her beliefs and practice did not change, her loyalty to her school community was tested.

Kris's enthusiasm for her profession and for her students was evident from her internship through her first and second years in the classroom. She created lesson plans that were student centered and included materials other than the textbook or workbooks. Kris noted that this often meant working outside of school, during the evening and on weekends (Kris, March 4, 2008). Although the work hours were extensive, Kris remained committed to the idea of student-centered teaching and stated that, "I knew that teachers could be influential but I never knew how much work it would be. If you do it right it takes real work, really hard work," (Kris, March 3, 2008). However, toward the end of her second year, Kris began to ask about teacher burnout and her feeling that she was "never leaving work, never leaving my students" (Kris, March 5,

2008). Kris feared that she was at risk of burning out for two reasons. First, despite gaining classroom experience, she still was planning and grading on weekends. Second, her role as a varsity sports coach put her in the company of her students outside of the school day. “I have no life outside of school and I don’t think that’s a good thing. I don’t want to grow to hate my job,” (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Kris’s commitment to less traditional, student-centered methods and her incorporation of materials other than the textbook left her with a significant amount of planning. She noted that lesson planning and preparation “could take hours and [take] up most of my weekend. I even have to come to school sometimes and plan,” (Kris, March 4, 2008). She had believed that her workload would decrease after teaching the same subject for two consecutive years; however, her desire to address specific student needs left her adapting and reorganizing lessons that she had used in the past (Kris, March 4, 2008). Kris also was reflective about her content choices:

I have to make sure that my content reflects my students and their backgrounds. I mean, teaching a lesson one year that looks at student backgrounds may not work the next year when I have different kids. I mean, yeah, I can keep some stuff, but I need to know where my kids come from to know whose history I need to make sure I include (Kris, March 3, 2008).

Kris noted further that she often was the first teacher to arrive at school and the last to leave, and she questioned how other teachers managed to plan and gather materials without working after school (Kris, March 4, 2008). She thought that perhaps one day she might not work the same hours, but then noted quickly that, “well, I always have to change something or improve, so I really don’t know how I would manage my time differently” (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Although Kris’s school provided her with many resources to aid in her teaching, she commented on the lack of reading materials, such as primary documents, that would help her in her goal to teach historical inquiry:

I have to use my college notes and books a lot, but the reading level is way too high and I end up rewriting some stuff anyway. I spend a lot of time on the Internet. A lot of time...I have some books, like one that teaches American history only through primary documents, but that doesn't help my world history class. I am always looking for the materials I need to teach the way I want because, you know, they aren't going to buy them for just me. My department does a really good job of getting me the technical stuff I need, like my projector, but they don't get the other stuff. So I am always looking for stuff that my students will find interesting and that shows how one reading is biased or that something doesn't match something else they read so they have to think about it and figure it out for themselves (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Kris's role as varsity sports coach added to her concerns about burning out, as her afternoons and weekends often were spent with her team. Kris talked extensively about her love of coaching and her concern for her players, noting that "the level of respect being a coach is very different" (Kris, March 5, 2008). Kris also developed a strong working relationship with many of the players' parents. Kris discussed how the relationships she built with her players' parents helped her develop relationships with other parents as well:

Even the ones that aren't [sports] parents, I get e-mails all the time from parents regarding the classroom and whatnot. Because of the relationship I have with the players and natural byproduct and their friends' comment as well, it opens me up to other students that aren't players because I kind of get on their level and understand some of the things that are going on in their lives. And so even their parents feel a little bit more comfortable in calling me or writing e-mails. It is not as frequent as some of the players but I still have a relationship...with the parents of other students (Kris, March 5, 2008)

Kris appreciated the personal connections and sense of family that developed from working with these families. She noted that, her role as a varsity sports coach reinforced her sense of belonging and commitment to her school. She talked of her commitment to her players and their families as well as her commitment to her school:

That is what has kept me in this town longer than I thought I would originally be. It is because I have this home-grown relationship with other families in the school and in the community, and it goes back to that whole idea of if you are not in it for the entire community and you are just here for a paycheck and that you have just done it another day—I can't believe that is a happy life (Kris, , March 4, 2008).

However, the time spent coaching and planning led Kris to believe that her personal time “is completely nonexistent at this point” (Kris, March 5, 2008). She expressed concern about still living in the same town and thought perhaps moving would provide her with more social options:

It more has to do with my social life. I stay close to very home-grown towns, especially when you are away from the university, and I am kind of in that unfamiliar and confusing stage in my life where I am young, not married, and still like to enjoy life, but I feel that kind of...doesn't provide me that opportunity too much, so I feel that a lot of my time that could be spent doing that is spent towards work. And maybe some of the anxiety that I sometimes experience, which isn't a whole lot, but some of it would be alleviated if I was more socially active myself. Not even just going out and having fun, but being active...I used to be active in so many grassroots organizations when I was in the north and when I was living in the north and even to a certain extent when I moved here and went to the college, and I just don't feel like I have that time anymore (Kris, March 5, 2008)

However, Kris's beliefs about the importance of community left her questioning her “loyalty to the school and my students” if she chose to move. Her commitment to her beliefs left her feeling concerned that, regardless of what decision she made, there would be a great sacrifice that she was “just not ready to make, at least not for this next school year” (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Successes in Teaching

Kris was able to identify the challenges she faced in implementing effective social studies practice. However, she also spoke of her successes in the classroom, which kept her motivated to teach in ways that were consistent with her beliefs. Kris reflected on her successes, the events or lessons of which she was most proud, towards the end of her second year in the classroom. She identified three areas-her evolution as a teacher, her classroom management, and her ability to develop classroom practice that she believed to be consistent with her beliefs and teacher education program. Each of these will be described in the section that follows.

Classroom Practice. Kris explicitly stated her beliefs about teaching and learning, indicating that schools and teachers are responsible for empowering students through education.

She stated that her strong sense of community and interconnectedness supported this goal. She believed that learning was assessed through application—that students demonstrated learning when classroom knowledge was applied to the school community or the community in which the students lived. Kris asserted that such ideas were consistent with the goals of social studies education, in that community and activism are characteristics of citizenship in a participatory democracy:

My greatest success as a teacher so far is in building lasting relationships with my students. Although I would love for all of my students to go out and tell other people about the content they learned in my classroom, it's far more satisfying when they e-mail me and tell me they are doing volunteer work or registered to vote. I've always felt that life is just not about me being in some bubble. It's about me and what I am able to do that makes life better for others (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Content and Methods. Kris carefully selected content that reflected her beliefs about teaching and students' needs. She often sought materials to use instead of the textbook, because she believed that the textbook had limited information and presented a biased view of history. Her attention to diversity and her desire to make her classroom more inclusive also showed in her choice of materials. She respected her students' cultures and chose materials, such as the readings on Puerto Rican soldiers, which would help her students feel a sense of belonging in the history curriculum.

Kris's methods of instruction were consistent with her beliefs about teaching and school. She used methods such as experiential exercises and collaborative learning that enabled her students to work together to find answers. Kris's students were active participants in constructing content, as she taught content through historical inquiry with an understanding that there was no "one best answer or one right answer even" (Kris, May 21, 2007). According to Kris:

I learned, and I agree with, the idea that we have to look at teaching in a different way, not just the same traditional way it's always been done. These kids are different and have

different needs and live in a different world and we have to respect and include that. Otherwise, we're not teaching, not really (Kris, March 4, 2008).

Her respect for student diversity and student needs, as well as the classroom decisions she made based on that respect, demonstrate how her beliefs influenced her pedagogical decision making and the ways in which she applied her beliefs to her teaching.

Classroom Management and Community. Kris's classroom management clearly reflected her beliefs about teaching; it centered on developing and maintaining a learning community in which she built relationships with students and engaged them in the construction of the classroom environment. Her belief that students learned best as part of a community persisted, despite her fellow teachers' questions or criticisms of her classroom management style. This idea was exemplified in a statement from Kris toward the end of her second year:

You know what keeps me going? When a student just comes in to say good morning or ask how I'm doing or just to tell me thank you for caring about them. It's amazing when that happens and that's the stuff that really matters. I've learned that, yeah, you can help every student, but sometimes that help is an A [as a grade] and sometimes that help is helping them feel like they belong and they matter (Kris, March 5, 2008).

Summary

Growing up in a large Greek-American family grounded in the principles of collaboration and community first shaped Kris's ideas of what schools should be. In addition, her high school social studies teachers introduced her to the idea of activism, which shaped her ideas of what it meant to teach social studies for citizenship in a participatory democracy. . Even when the challenges that teachers face, such as time and testing, caused her to feel that she had to teach in ways that were inconsistent with her beliefs, she was able to maintain her sense of community and collaboration through her lessons. Overall, her experiences in the classroom reinforced her beliefs, thereby encouraging her to teach using what she learned in her teacher education program about effective social studies practices. Kris's teacher education program gave her the

encouragement and confidence to align her beliefs and teaching practices, even after some of her peers criticized and questioned her classroom methods. Kris's connection to her school and her students was evident throughout the period of this study, and this connection was how Kris ultimately measured her success as a teacher.

In the next chapter, the findings will be summarized. Specifically, the chapter will discuss the implications for teacher education programs, practicing teachers, and social studies teachers. In addition, the chapter will suggest directions for future research, and provide conclusions about the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices, with particular attention to wise practice in social studies.

CHAPTER FOUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings of the Study

Beginning Teacher Beliefs and Practices

Kris's beliefs regarding the purpose of education did not change over the three-year period of this study. At the beginning of her teacher preparation program, Kris clearly articulated her belief that education should create community and encourage active citizenship. These core principles persisted through her first and second years in the classroom and became the goals of Kris's teaching. Kris continued to develop her classroom practice around these goals despite experiences that might have deterred some beginning teachers, such as the pressures of the accountability movement and peer pressure from more experienced teachers. This persistence of a history teacher's goals driving decisions in classroom practice aligns with Van Hover and Yeager's (2007) research on the practices of a beginning history teacher. What makes Kris's case unique is that her beliefs, and thus her goals, aligned with the characteristics of powerful and effective social studies instruction as well as social studies goals related to active citizenship. As a result, her classroom practices stood in stark contrast to the traditional methods of instruction that tend to be favored by beginning teachers. It is noteworthy that the more progressive methods that were taught in her teacher education program, such as historical inquiry, operationalized in Kris's classroom, despite challenges related to accountability, time, and peer pressure. Her ability to maintain her beliefs in the face of such challenges was what made Kris's case unique and worth noting.

Although significant research has been conducted on teacher beliefs and practices within the context of teacher preparation programs, this research often examined teachers whose beliefs and practices were aligned with more traditional classroom methods, with little change occurring

in teacher preparation programs that did not adhere to their long-held beliefs. However, in Kris's case, the philosophical underpinnings of her teacher preparation program were consistent with her beliefs about education. Consequently, Kris's teacher preparation program provided her with a skill set that enabled her to teach in ways that were consistent with her beliefs and with wise practices in social studies education. Furthermore, because her beliefs were validated through her teacher preparation, she had the strength and conviction to teach in less traditional ways even when discouraged to do so.

Moreover, Kris's classroom goals did not change during this study. Her desire to give students a more diverse and inclusive history curriculum to encourage a sense of belonging remained consistent through her internship and first and second years in the classroom. She used the curriculum to demonstrate to students that throughout history oppressed groups used their collective voices to initiate change. Her goal was to empower students and help them understand that they were responsible for their own choices. Furthermore, Kris's beliefs about the purpose of schooling influenced her goals for teaching—and the themes of empowerment and community were evident in her teaching. Although her beliefs and goals remained constant, contextual factors in the state and school forced her to expand her classroom program to include the skills necessary for standardized testing and literacy that she did not fully consider in her teacher preparation program. Ironically, it was Kris's focus on community that allowed the expansion of her teaching goals—Kris recognized both school and student needs and willingly made changes to incorporate the goals of her administration. As such, her practice grew to include additional readings, with questions that mimicked the standardized testing questions that students would be expected to answer. Although she included more readings, she did not view this as a departure from her beliefs or from wise practices in social studies education. Rather, she viewed it as yet

another opportunity to include alternative views of history—often from James Loewen’s *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995) or Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States: 1492 to Present* (2005).

As cited in chapter 2, Grossman et al. (2000) noted that the day-to-day experiences of novice teachers often led them to use the more practical applications learned in their teacher preparation programs. While Kris certainly did this, she again relied on the program’s philosophical foundations to guide her teaching and adapted the methods she learned to fit her students’ needs and the content being studied. Kris’s focus on the philosophical ideas of the program may merit further research into the attitudes and dispositions of novice teachers in relation to the purpose of schools and schooling.

Powerful and Effective Social Studies Teaching

According to Grant’s (2003) model of effective social studies teaching, Kris’s pedagogical decisions related to social studies education were influenced by the idea that the role of the teacher is to act as a reflective thinker and be committed to social action. Furthermore, Kris’s actions can be viewed within the framework of powerful and effective social studies teaching as characterized by NCSS (1994): a) meaningful, b) integrative, c) value-based, d) challenging, and e) active. Kris’s practice was meaningful, both to her and her students. She believed in the importance of social studies in fighting oppression and “debunking the myths” of society. Consequently, she found ways to connect the content and methods to the lives of her students and their communities, thus engaging them in their learning.

In addition, Kris’s classroom was integrative; her social studies instruction included other disciplines such as language arts. Although the school context was responsible for Kris’s first step toward integration, she worked to incorporate reading and writing skills into the classroom in authentic ways that supported social studies teaching and learning. For example, Kris had

students read primary documents and alternative views on history then write their responses in ways that encouraged the development of informed opinions. Kris's methods of assessment focused more on writing than multiple choice tests, further highlighting her commitment to providing more integrative social studies teaching.

Kris's teaching also was value-based. She presented students with multiple perspectives on history that allowed them to analyze why one perspective might have been privileged over another. She encouraged her students to search for truth beyond their textbooks and gave them the materials and space within the classroom to explore a variety of ideas. Kris also pushed her students to think about social issues that affected their lives, such as racism. She encouraged students to explore the historical roots of such issues and reflect on their contemporary applications. In Kris's classroom, the truth was not something that presented itself easily; rather, she encouraged students to find truth beyond what might be more superficial or convenient.

Kris's teaching can be characterized as challenging, because students were engaged in inquiry throughout much of the year. Even when encouraged to use simpler methods of instruction (e.g., lecture with notes) or simpler assignments for students (e.g., worksheets), Kris continued to use methods of instruction that encouraged critical thinking. Students worked most often on a project or a collaborative learning exercise that challenged them to think about content in a way that perhaps was different from their past experiences in a social studies classroom.

Finally, Kris's classroom practice can be characterized as active. Both she and her students often were engaged in debate and discussion; in this context, the teacher was learning and working next to her students. Kris explained that her students remembered her classroom because of the discussions and experiential exercises she used to teach social studies. Students

were asked to participate in constructing the knowledge taught in the classroom, knowing that their teacher would be next to them, learning about history as well.

One of the stated goals of this study was to add to case study research on wise practices in social studies education. Kris's practice indeed can be characterized as powerful and effective (Yeager & Davis, 2005). However, can a novice teacher's practice be deemed wise? Kris's recognition of students' needs and her ability to adapt content to these needs seemed to resemble the wise practice of more experienced teachers, as did her ability to maintain the integrity of her content area while responding to the needs of the school's testing (Yeager & Davis, 2005; van Hover & Heinecke, 2005). So too did her belief in the power of social studies teaching and learning to promote change, as well as her reflection on whether or not she was achieving these goals (Yeager & Davis, 2005; Grant, 2005). Thus, this case study adds to recent social studies research on wise practices by serving as an example of how novice teachers can work to make their practice effective within the mandates – and confines – of standardized testing.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

At the end of her first year teaching, Kris noted that her “Utopian beliefs” were gone—a note that told how the idealism she had carried with her about teaching had somehow diminished once faced with the realities of teaching. Often, teacher education programs prepare students for the ideal and the reality—accountability and testing, lack of resources, lack of time—that often prevents powerful and effective practice from operationalizing in the classroom. Perhaps teacher education programs should consider this chasm between college and the K-12 classroom and ask—is there a way to keep beginning teachers motivated, encourage powerful and effective practice, and fully confront the challenges of the classroom?

Much research has been conducted with novice teachers whose beliefs and practices do not align with the pedagogy taught in their preservice programs (see Barton & Levstik, 2002; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005; Slekar, 1998). However, Kris's case provides an opportunity for teacher educators to consider better ways to support novice teachers whose beliefs *are* consistent with those promoted in their preparation programs. Kris's instructors encouraged her by providing additional readings and resources that extended the work she did in the program. Kris mentioned specifically how one of her instructors, Charlotte, gave her materials on culturally relevant pedagogy when she expressed an interest in teaching diverse populations. Once in the classroom, Kris was confident about teaching with the knowledge she gained about "wise" and "powerful" practices in her preservice program and through her network of professional support (teachers within the school district, fellow novice teachers, and university instructors and faculty). Her case demonstrates that teacher education programs can support novice teachers by helping create professional networks and providing support once novice teachers enter the classroom.

Identifying Preservice Teacher Needs

Teacher preparation programs often instruct their preservice teachers on the importance of differentiated instruction in K-12 classrooms, but they rarely practice such pedagogy in college classrooms. Researchers have noted that preservice teachers tend to resist the pedagogy in their preservice programs when they feel that their beliefs and experiences are questioned and challenged (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Hinchey, 1998; Pajares, 1992; Thornton, 1998). If the goal of preservice programs is to provide novice teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to teach students effectively, perhaps preservice teacher educators could begin by assessing the needs of the preservice teachers who are their students. Differentiated instruction in preservice programs may allow for the inclusion of more "powerful" or "wise" practices (e.g., collaborative

learning, historical inquiry, culturally relevant pedagogy) according to individual preservice teachers' beliefs and skill levels, while also expanding the experiences and successes of the beginning teachers through field placements. University instructors and field supervisors can provide support throughout the field placement to help ensure a positive and successful experience that perhaps will lead to a change in the preservice teachers' beliefs about powerful and wise practices.

Professional Networks

The influence of peer teachers has been noted in social studies research (see Barton & Levstik, 2004; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). Many preservice programs are constructed on a cohort model, in which students are grouped according to major area of study and are with the same classmates throughout their preservice program. Since these cohorts often serve as the first professional network for preservice teachers, the university can help students stay connected once they have completed their preservice programs. The use of technology, such as e-mail, blogs, or Google Groups, could enable novice teachers to stay in touch during trying times and provide cohort members with resources that have worked in their respective classrooms. Having a supportive peer group could provide encouragement for beginning teachers who are not finding the support they need to explore a variety of wise practices in their schools, and at the same time prevent feelings of isolation that might result in the teachers reverting to methods of instruction they might not prefer but adopt just to "fit in." In addition, university faculty could help novice teachers connect to program alumni who already are established in the same school district. This extends Lawrence's (2005) research on the power of professional networks within schools, as these professional networks would be developed between peers across schools and districts. Future research on professional networks may seek to examine university cohort models as

emerging professional networks, since cohorts indeed may benefit novice teachers beyond the university setting.

The University-to-Classroom Connection

In addition to helping create professional support networks, teacher educators should be available to their graduates once they begin teaching. New teachers often have questions or need support and turn to peer teachers for help. However, peer teachers may criticize or undermine the philosophy of a teacher education program, and beginning teachers may frequently follow the advice of their peer teachers – again, because of the need to fit in. This suggestion is not intended to add to the overwhelming workload of university faculty. However, if the goal of a program is to train new teachers to teach diverse students successfully in engaging and powerful ways, then university faculty must be willing to act as a resource for beginning teachers. This support may help first-year teachers successfully apply the pedagogical skills and content learned in their teacher preparation programs, which may lead to a more permanent change in practice.

The Internship Experience

Research has shown that the internship experience as part of preservice teacher education is vitally important in shaping teacher practice (see Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Owens, 1997; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). However, the methods promoted by the intern's supervising teacher may often contradict those taught in teacher education programs (Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Owens, 1997; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). This was true in Kris's internship experience, since she was encouraged to exclusively use teacher-centered methods of instruction rather than her preferred student-centered methods that she learned in her methods course. In fact, it is often difficult for universities to place preservice teachers in classrooms in which students can fully practice what they are taught in their methods courses (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Owens, 1997).

Professional networks of alumni may help establish field placements with experienced teachers who have completed the same methods courses and who have maintained contact with their peers and university faculty and instructors.

Implications for Social Studies Teachers

Teaching for Democratic Citizenship

In order to prepare students to become active citizens in a participatory democracy, educators must first define democracy and identify what democracy might look like in practice. It may be difficult for social studies educators to move forward in an era of accountability without having this conversation. Perhaps social studies classes should become places where students are encouraged to examine the democratic structures that are in place in the United States and think critically about how these structures measure up against the ideal. This should include a careful analysis of the documents that are used to frame our society, beginning with the Constitution (Patrick, 2002). By using the Constitution as a starting point for analysis, teachers can aid students in better understanding what exactly the Founding Fathers had in mind for the fledgling democracy that became the United States. This also provides a strong foundation for social studies teachers and teacher educators on which to link content with theory and work to teach for democracy in their classrooms in a thematic way, with the Constitution at the center (Sleeter, 2005).

The idea of the “Common Good” (Barton & Levstik, 2004) must become part of any discussion on the ideals of democracy. Barton and Levstik (2004) state there is a purpose to studying history that goes beyond the memorization of names and dates. “When people refer to studying history for its own sake, they may not be putting forth a reasoned argument so much as trying to associate the subject with other deities with whose sake we should also be concerned—Christ’s sake, heaven’s sake, Pete’s sake, and so on” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 27). It is

important to help novice teachers recognize that history in K-12 education may not have the pure content focus that students of history in colleges and universities cherish, but rather a thematic approach to learning focused on democratic values and citizenship. This is part of the ontological switch identified by VanSledright (1996) and why history instruction in secondary classrooms still tends to mimic that of post-secondary lecture halls. The study of history should help students develop a sense of the “Common Good” and what that means in terms of democratic citizenship. Thus, social studies teacher education programs should explicitly focus on the principles of historical learning (historical inquiry, citizenship) rather than the learning of history. This distinction introduces novice teachers to the skills of citizenship and democracy that can be fostered in K-12 classrooms, which gives young learners the opportunity to discover a sense of purpose in who they are and what they should be striving to become, as a citizen and as an individual. The learning of history and the learning of citizenship should never be rote memorization or indoctrination of patriotism and rituals, but a set of analytical skills, as outlined by Barton and Levstik (2004), that will support the dialogue and participation for democratic citizenship.

Wise Practice in an Age of Accountability

Research on wise practices in social studies education provides a framework that can help social studies teachers teach in ways that still engage students in an age of high stakes testing (see Yeager & Davis, 2005). In the current study, Kris’s use of materials beyond the textbook and her incorporation of literature in her classroom showed how the goals of standardized testing and meaningful social studies instruction could be met simultaneously. Kris’s case also demonstrated the power of being a team player in a testing environment; because she was willing to aid school administrators in their goals for student achievement, she felt supported in using methods that she considered less traditional. By including language arts practices while

maintaining the integrity of social studies content, Kris provides a strong example for social studies teachers who feel threatened by standardized testing mandates.

As cited in chapter 2, recent research has found that social studies has disappeared in many elementary classrooms, particularly in states that do not require social studies testing (Henning & Yendol-Hoppey 2004; Neill & Guisbond 2005; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford 2004). This threat appears to be affecting secondary social studies classrooms as well, in that many middle and high schools are encouraging social studies teachers to focus on language arts skills through social studies content (Knighton, 2003; Neill & Guisbond, 2005). While Kris's case does indeed provide evidence of this trend, she nonetheless aligned her reading selections with wise social studies practices, thus allowing her to integrate language arts in a manner consistent with the NCSS "powerful and effective" social studies philosophy (1994). Kris chose readings that included diverse perspectives, selected primary documents, and created activities that incorporated skills needed for both standardized testing and historical inquiry. By doing so, Kris demonstrated one way that she could meet the demands of her school while still teaching important social studies skills and content. In addition, Kris's student contract system may serve as an example for social studies teachers seeking to apply democratic principles to their management strategies. Importantly, Kris recognized that wise and powerful social studies teaching extended beyond the curriculum to all aspects of her classroom.

Future Research

Certainly, the importance of contextual factors in pedagogical decision making is a necessary avenue of future research that would allow teacher educators to consider how to support preservice teachers in their transition into the classroom. Future studies on powerful and effective social studies teaching may also benefit from including student voices. In Kris's case, the influence of her teaching on the actions of her students would have provided another

dimension of understanding her practice. Student voices would provide greater insight into the influence of contextual factors – specifically testing pressure and student diversity – on student learning and engagement.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: A first-year social studies teacher's beliefs and practices.

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: To investigate how a first-year teacher in an Alachua County school understands culturally relevant pedagogy and the theory's application to classroom practice.

What you will be asked to do in the study: To answer and discuss interview questions that will be recorded, be observed by principal investigator, and provide lesson plans, syllabi, and other classroom materials used in your classroom.

Time required: A maximum of 4 hours per week for interviews and observations

Risks and Benefits: No more than minimal risk. The tape recorded interview will be saved for five years and then destroyed. All materials will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home office. There is no direct benefit to the participant in this research. However, this study will add to the understanding of the application of culturally relevant pedagogy in classroom practice. It can promote discussion on how to eliminate the theory-to-practice gap that currently exists. This research can also be used by colleges of education to inform teacher education programs

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in the study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. The final results will be presented in a paper as partial completion of EDF 7483 Qualitative Data Collection; to education journals and magazines for possible publication; and discussed at educational conferences.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer or share any archival evidence you do not want to share.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Michele Phillips, 2403 Norman Hall, e-mail: mlsphillips@cox.net, phone: 284-1905

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

UFIRB Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; ph 392-0433.

I have read the procedure outlined above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and have received a copy of this description.

Participant's signature and date

Principal investigator's signature and date

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

First interview

1. How do you define your culture?
2. What does your classroom look like?
3. How would you describe your students?
4. How do you define your role as a teacher?
5. How does this shape your classroom practice?

Follow-up interviews after observations

1. How do you feel about how your class went today?
2. How did you decide to teach in this way?

Additional questions will be determined by observation and answers from previous interviews

Interview at completion of school year

1. What do you believe were your greatest successes for the year?
2. How will this affect your classroom next year?
3. What will you keep in your practice?
4. What will you change?

Additional questions will be determined by observations and answers from previous interviews

Interview guide-after preliminary data analysis

Family Background

1. Describe your family-what was it like growing up?
2. How would you define your culture?
3. Would you consider yourself a religious person? How does that influence you?
4. Describe your political beliefs. How do you think this affects your teaching?
5. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
6. What does being a teacher mean to you?
7. Do you think your role as a coach affects your role as a teacher?
8. Tell me about your k-12 schooling experience. What stands out to you? How do you think this has affected your ideas on teaching and learning?

Social Studies

1. Tell me about your experiences in college-what stands out to you?
2. Think about your teacher training program.
 - a. What do you remember the most?
 - b. What did you find the most helpful?
 - c. What did you find the least helpful?
3. What did you learn in your program about what constitutes good social studies teaching practice?
4. Referring to the NCSS guidelines-which of these to you remember and find most influential?
5. Was there anything from your teacher preparation experience that made you think about teaching in a different way?

6. Was there anything from that experience that gelled with what you already believed about teaching before going into the program?
7. What is your definition of social studies?
8. What do you believe is the purpose of social studies?
9. Why did you decide to teach social studies? Did you ever consider another discipline? Career?
10. What do you believe it takes to be a good social studies teacher?
11. How often do you refer to the social studies guidelines or to the NCSS website?
12. How do you keep up-to-date on social studies and teaching?

Teaching Questions

1. Describe your school.
2. Overall, how would you describe your students? How would you describe each class?
3. What methods of instruction do you use most often?
4. What influences what methods you choose?
5. How do you most prefer to teach?
6. What is the best lesson you have taught this year?
7. What made that one a good lesson and why?
8. What lesson were you the least satisfied with? Why?
9. Describe your classroom management.
10. Tell me about a classroom management problem you have had. How did you deal with it? What has happened since then?
11. Can you describe ways in which your teaching has been consistent with the program? Why did you teach in this way?
12. Have there been times when you have taught in ways that are inconsistent with the program? Why did you decide to do this?
13. Do you ever teach in ways that contradict with what you believe about teaching? When? Why?

Contextual factors from data analysis

1. You have mentioned time and testing at various times during our previous meetings. Can you elaborate on these concerns? Do these affect how you teach or what you teach?
2. Previously, you talked about the ideas on teaching that are within the social studies department at your school. Can you talk to me more about that?
3. Why have you chosen to work with ESOL students? How does this affect how you teach and what you teach?
4. How do you think working with international students has influenced your teaching?
5. How does having an international classroom influence your management style or classroom community?
6. What role does your administration play in how you teach?

Specific question related to contact with participant

1. You stated that you are now teaching in a different way-what made you change?
2. Do your colleagues ever talk to you about teaching?
3. You stated that you “didn’t go conservative or anything. If anything it’s the exact opposite.” Tell me about this.

4. Why is teaching in this way intimidating?
5. Why is it important to you?
6. You are thinking about moving-can you tell me about that?
7. What factors are playing into this decision?

Follow-up interviews after observations

1. How do you feel about how your class went today?
2. How did you decide to teach in this way?

Additional questions will be determined by observation and answers from previous interviews

Final Interview

1. What do you believe were your greatest successes for the year?
2. How will this affect your classroom next year?
3. What will you keep in your practice?
4. What will you change?
5. How do you believe your practices are consistent with these NCSS guidelines and with what you learned in your program? How are they inconsistent?
6. What is your perspective on the guidelines at this point? Are they important and defining or idealistic and unrealistic?

APPENDIX C
EXCERPTS FROM RAW DATA

Interview 8 (3/4/08)

M: How would you describe your family?

T: (pause) My family, my family is very close, we are very close, I have two parents who are divorced and are now best friends. it was rough at first. They did not get along, but as we got older, and as my sister and I moved out and it brought them closer together because they realized that they still needed each other even if they weren't married, and still , well, they weren't in love with one another, but we all got closer as a result of them growing closer and we could still do a lot of our family traditions and holidays and birthdays together as a family as a result so we are a close knit family I would say. We also have a very close extended family. My mom's side of the family is always around. My dad's side of the family is quickly dwindling unfortunately but there are frequent phone calls to one another and if someone does something that is considered personal in my family it's personal to all of us and that's because of how close we are and sometimes that can cause problems because somebody gets upset about something that somebody said to someone else and, a lot of times, my role in the family is mediator. Some of my family is in Naples and some of my family is in the north. My sister is in the north. There are a lot of phone calls, with me being away from each place, being in the middle, I'm kind of the one that gets the phone calls that say can you tell someone this and can you say that and I don't really want to get involved, but I want everyone to get along, I'm kind of the Utopian person with my family so I do it. So, we're close in a separated sort of way and maybe we are so close because there is distance and I think that it made us closer because we realized how much we need each other and it's not just going next door or out to dinner and I'm far away from all of them, where, every time we see each other it's important and we make it important because we don't know when we'll see each other again.

M: Now, you lived in the north and Naples?

T: Yep. I lived in the north growing up and when I was 15 we moved to Naples for high school and that was during the divorce and my mom's parents had just moved to Naples and my dad's parents had been living in Naples for a long time and we went down for Easter every year and my parents liked it there and my dad moved down ahead of us and my mom found a good-paying job and a job that she liked and we as the children were kind of stuck doing what they wanted us to do, and we didn't have a say and then I moved back to The north right after high school to go to college and then I transferred back to Florida half way through

M: What made you go back to The north for college?

T: I thought that was where I wanted to be. I wanted to go to the northern school growing up and I wanted to play sports and when that school offered me a scholarship and I waited a long time and looked a long time for the school and then in May, which was late, and The northern school offered, I dropped everything else and I went. I almost committed to another school. And I wasn't a big Gator fan at the time or anything, so I didn't have any loyalty there yet, unlike most kids in Florida who show allegiance to a big school and I thought I wanted to go back to The

north because I knew I didn't like Naples and I unintelligently made the rest of Florida out to be just like Naples-secluded, very all about an individual and not the community, not caring whose feet you step on to get what you want, and I just wanted to get out. I had a lot of friends in The north still and I thought that that would somehow bring back the past and I was looking to salvage something that couldn't be salvaged and when I realized that, that was when I transferred to Florida

M: So how did you see The north as being different from Naples?

T: It was more communal and that's big to me that's important and being able to say hi and have people to say hi back. It's big to me to have people get together and not only be close to your family but have families be close with other families and when I feel that your friends are only your friends because of maybe something you have then that's not pure to me I want friends that will be there no matter what because that's the type of friend I think I am and so I want that from my friends and I got that a lot more in The north and it was just that village atmosphere. You go to the grocery store or you go to a festival and it's that whole Cheers effect-everybody always knows your name and that's important to me that that will be important to me when I have a family and that will be very important to me because I will want my kids to know that whatever we have or don't have, you are judged by your character not your possessions

M: Do you think that affects how you construct your classroom?

T: To an extent yeah, absolutely, it definitely has an effect on how I think about my classroom because I want my students and my classes to know each other as well. I don't expect them to be best friends, I know how high school works there are cliques it is based on status and there is a hierarchy but I want them to come into an environment where, at least once a day, they are not judged by what they have or don't have, that they can lean on each other or work together and one of the things that affects me the most is when they don't find a way to lean on each other I mean, I have 125 students and as much as I try to get to each one of them and get to know them and play on their strengths, there are always a few I feel are left out and if they learn to help and rely on one another then that helps and they are getting what they need-work, notes, help, whatever, they can go to one another

M: What do you do specifically to try and form that community?

T: Team building at the beginning of the year would be one. Two, there are a lot of group projects that are mixed in different ways. They are mixed by ability, or by interest and they have to learn to work together and work with one another and the groaning about who they have to work with, it just doesn't happen very often. And. What I usually do, I set up my desks for what activity we are doing that day and if the desks are set up like tables [in groups], and they come in and sit where they normally sit, and then they have to move they don't complain any more so that's a sign to me that they don't mind working with one another and I think they have fun with it because a lot of the projects that they do require them to make something, something real life or a real situation and it makes it more fun and more interesting to work with different people because you can't get the work done without someone else's perspective. Especially in my regular class, with so many foreign students, they do get interested in the outlooks of other

students and what they have to bring to class. Um, the other thing is I do consider myself a more laid-back teacher so I think that the more they see themselves in my classroom and the more they understand that I really do want what's best for them and they trust me then they don't complain about the groups and they know that there's a reason and if they need something they can come to me.

M: What specific team building activities to you do at the beginning of the year?

T: One is the little assignment we do the second day and they have to do an illustration of a person and I tell them to basically pass the picture around and poke holes in the pictures as they come around. Eventually everyone gets their picture back and it's full of holes and I ask them what they think and they say that their pictures are all nasty and crumpled up and I say that every hole represents something negative that someone has said to you and I tell them to put their pictures back together and obviously they can't and they get the point and I tell them that when they say something negative about another person, even if it's a joke and even if you don't see it you are poking holes in each other and you can't undo that. That stain stays for a long time. Another thing is, well, my big thing is respect and I always ask them if what they are doing is showing respect for themselves and then respect for others and I ask that all the time when they make rude comments or so something they know better than. And there are a couple in each class that have a problem with respect and some that are always the brunt of the attacks, so I'm not saying it's a perfect class, but we keep working at it every day and, you know, it's important to keep working at that.

M: Let's switch back to your background. You talked a lot about holidays and traditions and in the past you have talked about your Greek heritage. How do you think that has shaped who you are?

T: It gives me a sense of culture to go back to that when I 'm out in the world and things get a little hectic I can go back to something familiar and there's a routine and I'm really big on routine and I don't like to be out of my routine I like to have things in place and people joke that I'm OCD or whatever, (laugh) but, I just like routines and when I'm out in the world and my routine gets shaken up my heritage gives me something to go back to something that's going to be there, that I can rely on. There are things I brought from my family to my home and I can walk in and see the Greek flag or see the way the kitchen is set up and know it goes back to my family. You know, I go to church sometimes and the only reason I go is because of the tradition. It gives that feeling of being with my family. That's really the most important thing for me-my culture gives my my routine, my foundation of something that's always there and it gives order even if it's different order than what somebody else knows

M: Is it okay if I ask about religion?

T: Yeah, sure.

M: You went to church growing up?

T: Yes, I went to church growing up all the time

M: And that's not something you do all the time now?

T: No, I would categorize myself now as being more spiritual than religious. I mean, I don't I do believe that there is a god and I believe that there is a higher order to how things work but I'm also one of those people who don't waste a lot of time worrying about what I can't control or trying to figure out and answer where there might not be one. Um, it's just, one of my personal beliefs I don't know and what's more important to be is doing good things every day that make the people around me happy and just understanding that somehow that will correlate to something good in the end and like I said I do sometimes go to church because it gives me a sense of what I used to do growing up and kind of puts me back in that environment and sometimes I go just because I feel the need to be in that comfortable community setting but most of the time I can get those needs met in another way not going to church Some of it just has to do with time I know it sounds bad, but I just don't have a lot of time

M: Let's switch gears and talk about politics, how would you describe your political beliefs?

T: I don't like politics and that's funny being a history teacher, but I don't like politics, I think it's a lot of BS would be a good way to put it it's a lot of he said, she said and a lot of me, me, me and pretending that they want to be here for you do something for you when you know it's not, they do it for themselves, to get in a position of power in this country...I like to surround myself with people I can trust and I don't trust politicians. I don't trust anything that they say or anything that they do so I'm not advocating the overthrow of the government or anything, but I am more of a take care of what I know and what's close and believe that the good that I do will matter. So many, so much of what we do, so many problems in the world have to do with our government and the other governments around the world not being able to just sit down and discuss something It's kind of taking away from the idea of a human race as a population that 's supposed to be vastly superior to other forms of life we don't show it by having to deal with problems by fighting and that seems to be how we solve our problems is fighting and whoever has the biggest guns wins and it's not that the problem is solved, it about who's gained what from a war and what could be gained from another war and that's my biggest issue with politics is the correlation between politics and war

M: How do you think that, do you think that influences how you teach?

T: I really try not to let it, not let it influence me too much because that's my belief that I developed from my own studies and experiences. I try and teach all sides of a story and the middle story so it would be wrong of me to come in and teach history from my point of view. That would be wrong. That's not what I'm supposed to be doing that's not what they want I want them to develop their own knowledge of history by teaching them different things and ideas that need to be taught and the essential story of history and the only thing that I would consider, well probably should be considered teaching from my point of view is that I focus a lot on social history and the people's points of view in history, what did the regular people think, not just the people writing the books. What is the experience of history and that touches on major themes in history but still allows them to understand what people who were similar to them think about events and add to history and the other thing is that most of America is made up of working class

or middle class people and so that's where the point of view needs to come from- What is the history that relates to the most people. That's what I try and teach

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE FIELD NOTES

General Observations March 3, 2008

Confident in teaching, more so than last year-why is this?

Students and teachers in and out of classroom all day, especially sports players

Students are relaxed and active-almost 100% contribution in world history-free to ask questions, not afraid to ask questions or clarify

Not afraid to respectfully challenge content or teacher

Student pictures and student work posted in classroom and students are allowed to add to as appropriate

Sense of shared power and community in learning-everyone learns from one another and each is responsible for the learning of the class

Each class has a general format-review/checking in, set up lesson/give directions, questions/clarifications, work on content, review and share

Want to know about grading and idea of individualized grading

Class organized in a consistent way-greeting/intro-review-intro new topic-description of the day's class-work (group or individual)-review-goodbye

One extra credit assignment per quarter-related to units of study, but requires individual work outside of school

Teacher leads class through samples to make sure everyone understands what they are supposed to be working on-class gives answers and feedback

Classes have a seminar-type feel where discussion is main method of instruction with graphic organizer based on readings/discussion; students are responsible for building knowledge in class-teacher does not give answers

No formal method for calling on students or getting answers, but answers come from different students and each is given the opportunity to share

Students switch between languages during class-tend to talk to teacher in English and peers in first language-teacher comfortable with this and does not appear to notice

Takes time to reemphasize/clarify key ideas and questions as they come up

In Am History-focus on literacy skills-story writing based on historical fact, plot summary, main ideas, character development. Based on Populism and Progressivism in Midwest farming circa 1885 and development of industrialization in urban centers (link to economy)

In World History-focus on alternative assessment for unit on East African kingdoms (Rap, song, or poem)

In interviews-talked about decision-making-tension between powerful and effective SS practice (authentic, engaging, student-based) and pressures of testing/test prep-"I know this is how they learn best and makes history interesting but I feel like I'm being disloyal and if they fail [the test] it's my fault. But I think it's important for social studies and life past the test so I do it"

Key words-community/communal; responsibility; loyalty; respect; social responsibility; citizenship

Talked about work and doing more work/revamping everything to get it ready for next year-what work? Why more? Why did another teacher tell you to just use worksheets?

Quotes from class to support Preliminary Analysis

"You know you are always welcomed in my class"

"I want you to be respectful of one another"

"The point is you should care about one another"

"Luck of the draw-the names aren't in alphabetical order so it's fair about who goes and who doesn't"

(another teacher) "Do you have any referrals?" (Kris) "No, I don't" (at) "That's okay, I'll go get us all some, the kids have gone crazy!" (Kris) "Really?" (student) "Mr. Kris, you never write no one up-why you don't nobody up?" (Kris) "Well, I don't like to write people up, I don't think I need to." (student) "Well, then, she don't need to be bringing you referrals just 'cause she goin' on a writin' spree"

"My internship was the most important experience for me because I could go in and try things out. I came in thinking that was my time to try things out and learn because I didn't know everything I didn't know the best way and that let me try some creative practices that I was learning about and I let that lead me into the teacher I was going to become." (methods-wise practice)

"I felt like nobody said these are things that can work for some students some of the time it was all these things work for students and sometimes they don't and you have to figure out what works for your students" (contextual factors influence methods-connection to program)

"The whole idea of bringing teaching to life and trying to gravitate away from the textbook that's what really sticks and I really use"-(link back to wise practice)

"I knew that teachers could be influential but I never knew how much work it would be. If you do it right it takes real work, really hard work." (beliefs/role of teacher-put back in context)

Focus of questions/interviews

Background information-family, politics, religion, tradition, k-12 schooling

Beliefs on teaching

Beliefs on methods/method selection

How have methods changed?

New ideas on teaching

See interview guide-social studies section and specific questions related to conversations with teacher

APPENDIX E
SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT

World History/American History

Cultural Bag Assignment

In order to create a comfortable and safe classroom environment, students should understand and learn about the cultural make-up of the class. In this assignment, students will be required to fill a brown paper grocery bag with various items from their homes that define their culture. Because I think that most individuals are familiar with aspects of America culture I am looking more for a representation of cultures other than just “American” (ie: African American, Hispanic/Latino, Italian, etc.) Examples of items to be used might be flags, photos or pictures that explain cultural practice, songs, writing, dances, and even food. Students are encouraged to work with their family members on this assignment. Extra credit will be given to those students who bring in a cultural food that feeds the entire class. Please notify me ahead of time in regards to what utensils may be needed if food is brought in. Each student will sign up for a specific date to present heir cultural bag and be asked to give a 2-3 minute presentation at the beginning of class, as well as a 2-3 paragraph essay about their culture and why it is important to them. This essay should be typed in 12 point font and double-spaced, but may be written in legible handwriting if necessary.

Grading criteria:

- Diversity of items (Presentation): _____ (5)
- Presentation of ideas (Presentation): _____ (5)
- Relatedness of ideas (Essay): _____ (5)
- Organization (Essay): _____ (5)
- Grammar (Essay): _____ (5)

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE ASSESSMENT-STUDENT WORK

It started with a few people who spoke the same language.

Coming together after centuries of separation, under Oranmiyan settling in Benin.

The kingdom spread through south west Nigeria, Benin, and Togo

Living on under Ife Ife alongside the Edo people.

The kingdom thrived bringing much prosperity to its people.

In 1100 C.E. Ife Experienced a glorious time of wealth

Which was only surpassed by the wealth Oyo achieved in 1700 C.E. till 1900 C.E.

Slaves, salt, and gold were traded through the empire's hands,

Due to controlling the coastal lands. Through the reign of king Obalokun,

The civilization became rich through their cast knowledges.

Yoruba possessed a great political structure to govern its complex empire.

The Alaafan headed the empire and had to protect tributaries and the people.

The Oyo Mesi contained 7 men who selected the Alaafan and spoke for the military.

The Councils also kept the Alaafan in check, while the Obongi spoke for the people.

The Ilari appointed by the Alaafan were government and religious officials for the people.

Oyo the kingdom was led to great glory as it conquered with great ferocity.

By 1682 it owned 200 miles to the coast from the capital after the defeat of Dahomey

Kingdom. With the joint forces in 1764 Oyo crushed the Asante army.

Oyo exercised its new power from tributaries to make a naval blockade in their amazing

Victory over in the Mali territory of the north in the 1700s. Oyo seemed unstoppable.

Under the control of the noble Oloye. The Empire began to fall into darkness.

Vassals turned on their falling people to attempt to gain independence.

Meanwhile, the Egba killed Oyo forces at the Egbado Corridor, a very important route.

Dahomey began to revolt and refused to pay tribute, then began to attack Yoruba.

Then the Fulani Empire attacked and destroyed the weakened Yoruba.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michele Seybert Phillips was born in San Diego, California in 1979, as the first child of Eddie and Mary Seybert. Though Michele spent the majority of her childhood in Indiana, her family moved to Bradenton, Florida in 1995. Michele Graduated from Bayshore High School in Bradenton, Florida in June of 1997. Michele attended the University of Florida, earning a degree in History in December 2000 and a master's degree in social studies education in August 2002. After graduation, Michele taught 7th grade geography from 2002-2004 at Summerour Middle School in Norcross, Georgia and from 2004-2005 at Electa Lee Magnet Middle School in Bradenton, Florida. In 2005, Michele returned to the University of Florida to pursue a doctorate degree in social studies education.

Michele married Wayne Phillips in July 2005 and they welcomed their first child, Max, in February 2007. They live in Charleston, South Carolina, where Michele is an assistant professor in teacher education at the College of Charleston. She teaches social studies methods courses and classroom management for early childhood, elementary, and middle grades education students. Her research continues to focus on wise practices in social studies education, with special attention to culture and diversity.