Novice Teachers' Instructional Practices in Elementary Social Studies

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to explore the instructional practices novice elementary social studies teachers utilized in the design and implementation of their instruction. This study included four elementary teachers, two intermediate and two primary; all were employed in the same affluent school system. The participants all attended, albeit at different times, the same undergraduate teacher preparatory program, and thus participated in the same undergraduate social studies methods course. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and evaluation of weekly lesson plans using the Analysis of Weekly Lesson Plan Rubric, which was developed from the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning (NCSS, 2008). The findings of this qualitative study highlight what existing research has shown: a lack of quality social studies instruction on a daily basis exists in the elementary classroom, even in a resource rich environment, with social studies being nearly nonexistent in the primary grades (Ellington, Leming, & Schug, 2006; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Tanner, 2008; VanFossen, 2005; Vogler et al., 2007), and thus a call for professional development from both the state, and from local university teacher preparation programs is vital in order to address the marginalization of the subject of social studies at the elementary level. In addition, instructors of social studies methods courses need to be deliberate, explicit, and transparent, as they model practices that are supported by theory.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Research has shown that social studies as a core elementary subject is marginalized, relegated to take the proverbial backseat to mathematics, science, and language arts instruction (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; VanFossen, 2005; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). The implementation of No Child Left Behind intensified this; however, research dating back decades has shown that historically social studies is both the least taught and least enjoyed subject (Shaver, 1989; Tanner, 2008; Vogler, 2011; Vogler et al., 2007). Today's social studies students are tomorrow's citizens, citizens that need to be informed and engaged in this complex world. Effective social studies instruction throughout their schooling would prepare them for this. However, today's students are graduating high school civically illiterate and at a disadvantage (Ellington, Leming, & Schug, 2006; Zhao & Hoge, 2005), especially those in underserved communities with disproportionately higher rates of poverty and minority populations (von Zastrow & Janc, 2004).

Preservice teachers, university students that are learning the ins and outs of what it means to become an elementary classroom teacher, typically have had little exposure to effective, meaningful social studies instruction as a student themselves (Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). Once elementary students themselves, these future teachers have background knowledge that is limited, or inaccurate, which poses a problem when they are required to design and implement lessons for use in the classroom (Lanahan & Yeager, 2008).

University methods courses and classroom field experiences are designed to prepare preservice teachers for their own future classrooms. In the social studies methods course, preservice teachers learn how to teach social studies. They learn how to help young students become "informed, educated, thoughtful, critical readers, who appreciate investigative

enterprises, know good arguments when they hear them, and who engage their world with a host of strategies for understanding it" (VanSledright, 2004, pp. 232-233).

It could be argued that placement in the field is the most significant event in the preparation of preservice teachers as professionals (Fry, 2009; Ross, 1987). Countless hours are spent observing student and teacher behaviors. These observations aid preservice teachers in forming their beliefs and understanding of what they will come to consider good pedagogy. This is important to point out, as "the personal epistemological beliefs one holds about teaching and learning influences how one interprets instruction and thus engages with the material" (Hileman & Knobloch, 2005, p. 2). Ideally in the field placements, preservice teachers would see modeled for them what they are learning in their methods courses. This would build confidence in their ability to design and implement effective standards-based social studies lessons (Fragnoli, 2005). Easier said than done. Many preservice teachers are placed with cooperating teachers that have negative views on the subject and openly communicate this to these impressionable preservice teachers (Ellington et al., 2006; Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Owens, 1997; Passe, 2006). It would seem reasonable to conclude that preservice teachers are hearing one thing in their methods courses, and possibly seeing another out in the field. Which begs the question: when preservice teachers become novice teachers, in charge of their own classrooms, what does social studies look like for their students?

Statement of the Problem

Factors such as policy implementation have impacted the perception of the importance of social studies at the elementary level. Over time revisions in curriculum have produced an imbalance of time allocated to this core subject (Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Cayot Serriere, & Stewart, & 2008; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Heafner, Lipscomb, & Rock, 2006). While

extensive research on the marginalization of social studies has been conducted, there is a gap in the literature focusing on the impact of quality social studies methods courses on novice teachers' instructional practices in the elementary social studies classroom. By recognizing the strengths and weakness exhibited in their teaching practices, future social studies methods courses could be modified to fit the changing needs of preservice and novice teachers. This would directly impact student achievement in the classroom and better prepare future citizens.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate what instructional practices novice elementary teachers use in their own social studies classrooms and why. The data from this study may help teacher preparation programs make adjustments to the social studies methods course so as to better meet preservice teachers' needs. This will in turn impact student achievement for elementary students.

Research Question

Novice teachers in this study were all graduates of the same teacher preparation program. Research needed to be conducted to analyze the ability of a novice teacher to effectively use the methods learned in their undergraduate coursework in their own classrooms. In order to ascertain what, why, and how the methods were carried over into practice, novice teachers needed to be studied. Although numerous studies exist on the marginalization of social studies at the elementary level, researchers have posed the question of whether or not preservice teachers saw enough value in what they learned in their methods courses to use it in their future social studies classrooms (Ellington et al., 2006; Good et al., 2010; Martin, 2012; Mathis & Boyd, 2009; Slekar, 2005; Turner-Bisset, 2001).

The research question that guides this study is:

1. What instructional practices do novice teachers use when teaching social studies?

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to uncover the teaching practices used by novice teachers in their social studies instruction. This is significant because identification of the strengths and weaknesses of their social studies lesson planning and implementation will aid teacher education programs so that they will be more successful in meeting preservice teachers' future classroom needs. Making adjustments should provide future novice teachers more confidence and competency in their classrooms, thus impacting student achievement. Research on the influence of university teaching programs on novice teachers' approaches to classroom teaching is limited and dated. In 1975 Dan C. Lortie's *Schoolteacher* brought to light how little impact teacher education programs had on teachers' instructional methods when out in the field, as teachers tended to teach in the same manner of which they were taught. Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan addressed this issue at a speech given at the University of Virginia in 2009 when he opined that "in all but a few states, education schools act as the Bermuda Triangle of higher education – students sail in but no one knows what happens to them after they come out. No one knows which students are succeeding as teachers, which are struggling and what training was useful or not" (Duncan, 2009). Ritter (2012) questioned the possibility of this with so much research having been conducted on education methods courses in the last twenty years. He specifically stated, "…more studies are needed to flesh out understandings of what may or may not work in the preparation of social studies teachers" (p. 119). What influence, if any did the teacher education program have on novice teachers' approach to instruction?

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study were limited to participants' truthfulness. In addition, novice teachers were selected based on geographical access and successful completion of the same elementary education program, which posed a concern for the study as participants may or may not have been a representation of their peers and colleagues in the field.

Definition of Terms

1. Cooperating teacher- A cooperating teacher works in collaboration with the university instructor(s) and/or supervisor to serve as a mentor for a preservice teacher while the preservice teacher is a guest in the classroom. The cooperating teacher provides advice and guidance during the field experience (Smalley, Retallick, & Paulsen, 2015).
2. Field experience- "Activities that provide candidates with opportunities for practical application of theoretical constructs and concepts developed in coursework, under the supervision and direction of college faculty…" (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2017, p. 5). These activities include laboratory and internship placements in elementary classrooms in school systems that have partnerships with the university teacher preparation program.
3. Integration – True, meaningful integration "… implies that a single activity accomplishes significant curricular goals in two or more subjects simultaneously" (Alleman & Brophy, 1993, p. 287).
4. Instructional practices – The approaches that a teacher takes to engage students in the learning process (Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2000).
5. Novice teacher - A general consensus of what constitutes a veteran versus a novice teacher was not found in the literature. For the purpose of this study, a veteran teacher is

one who has taught for at least five years in a fulltime classroom setting. A novice teacher is one who has taught less than five years.

6. Preservice teacher- A preservice teacher is a university student that has been admitted to the College of Education program; a teacher candidate.
7. Professional development- Professional development involves an individual, a group, a department, or a professional association as they work to seek out or provide opportunities for professional growth, procurement of new skills and strategies, or refinement of existing skills and strategies to meet changing needs in the classroom and/or the school (Schwartz & Bryan, 1998).
8. Teacher efficacy- A "teachers' confidence in their ability to promote students' learning" (Hoy, 2000, p. 2).
9. Teacher perspective-

> …a theory of action that has developed as a result of the individual's experiences and is applied in particular situations. Teacher perspectives take into account a broad range of factors, including the teacher's background, beliefs, and assumptions, the contexts of the classroom and the school, how these elements are interpreted, and the interpretation's influence on the teacher's actions (Ross, 1987, p. 228).

Chapter II: Literature Review

What Happened to Social Studies?

"As an ethnically heterogeneous nation, founded on a set of core political beliefs, the United States depends, more than most countries, on civic literacy" (Ellington, Leming, & Schug, 2006, p. 325). However, every so often, on the forefront of the national news, and in late night television for comedic relief, civic ignorance rears its ugly head. It shows its face in voting levels that are at an all-time low, and with the large number of high school students graduating without a solid foundation in history, economics, geography, and civics. The problem in this is that it leaves them with a lack of understanding of our ever-complex world (Ellington et al., 2006). This slippery slope of civic ignorance is troubling to educators, who are aware of the growing issue but for many reasons unable or unwilling to change it. As Jacob Hacker, coauthor of *Winner Take-All Politics* states, "The problem is ignorance, not stupidity… we suffer from a lack of information rather than a lack of ability" (as cited in Romano, 2011, p.3). How is it possible for students to spend a majority of their childhood in school, only to graduate without a solid foundation of what it means to be an American citizen? Many may argue that these basic skills begin at the elementary level. For elementary educators today, the demands of the present are riding on the past. Mandatory assessment has led to limited instructional time being disproportionately allocated toward the core subjects of math and reading/language arts. In addition, lack of administrative support and necessary content knowledge directly impact an elementary teacher's ability to plan and implement lessons that are effective. Students are not exposed to deep, meaningful social studies instruction, and some of these same students grow into future teachers who are then unable to teach social studies themselves.

In reviewing the extensive literature in the field on social studies instruction at the elementary level, a major issue that is mentioned again and again is the impact this cycle is having on preservice teachers. What is known is that the knowledge these future teachers bring into their teacher preparation program is limited, and often inaccurate. In addition, finding good models in the field during their university field experiences is a challenge for their professors. When all is said and done, are these future teachers able to bring the skills they learn in their university courses into their own classrooms?

Social Studies Instructional Time on the Decline

The teaching of social studies instills in students what it means to be an American: gratitude for the rights the First Amendment protects, the ability to appreciate the culture in which we live and the history that shaped us, a sense of pride in our nation, and what it means to be a good citizen. In conjunction, a lack of adequate understanding of social studies most likely will leave students unprepared to become informed, engaged citizens. Zhao and Hoge (2005) have shown that a decreased emphasis on the importance of social studies as a whole can be attributed to a diminished ability to acquire and apply the necessary knowledge one needs to be a citizen and will lead to a lack of interest. The NCSS (1992) explained that this core subject promotes civic understanding and it

> … provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as

citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Executive Summary, 1992).

The Role of No Child Left Behind

A decreased emphasis and lack of daily instructional time on the subject of social studies has been attributed to No Child Left Behind (McMurrer, 2008). With its enactment in 2002, social studies was excluded from testing mandates and thus, over time, school systems shifted their curriculum to address emphasized subjects (i.e. reading and math), which resulted in less instructional time being devoted to social studies. Thus, social studies has become "a byproduct of an educational policy shift toward national standardization" (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). This means that both the frequency and the duration of instruction in the area of social studies have been affected by NCLB because more time is devoted to other subject areas. Additional studies have also supported this claim that social studies instruction, although a core subject, takes a back seat with little time devoted to it, especially since NCLB (Ellington et al., 2006; Rock et al., 2006). Since NCLB was passed, 62% more instructional time in elementary schools is spent on reading/language arts and mathematics. The core subject of social studies lost an average of 76 minutes of instruction per week (McMurrer, 2008).

The 10th Amendment allows education to be the responsibility of each state, but what is taught in classrooms is often different from what is imagined and designed at the state level, and significantly less time is spent on social studies instruction than what is mandated (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006). At the elementary level, a balanced curriculum is needed, but sacrifices are made to allow for additional preparation in the tested subjects of language arts and mathematics. In response, some states such as South Carolina took action by implementing their own statewide assessment, and research has shown that more time is spent on social studies instruction in these

states (Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2014; Heafner, Lipscomb, & Rock, 2006; Vogler, 2011). However, these states are few and far between; according to *Education Week*'s 2009 Executive Summary, a mere 12 states have mandatory statewide assessments in place for social studies.

Is a mandated statewide social studies assessment the answer? In 2003, when South Carolina initiated its state mandated assessments to include social studies, the students' scores that year in grades three through eight were disturbing, with 81% of students scoring in the non-proficient category (Lintner, 2006). As a result of these scores, teachers began to place more emphasis on the subject. One year later in 2007, Vogler et al. found that South Carolina teachers believed social studies was now being taught 60-80% more than it had been compared to five years ago which was prior to mandated state-wide testing. Thus the testing mandate required teachers to place more of an equal emphasis on social studies instruction.

Interestingly, in 2007 a new reform was enacted in South Carolina due to the economic downturn the country was facing at the time. Students in fourth and seventh grades were still assessed annually; however, a census initiative required only half of the state's students in the third, fifth, sixth, and eighth grades to be tested. Teachers in those grade levels did not know which of their students would be taking the test until it was administered; therefore, everyone prepared for the assessment in grades three through eight. Not knowing which students would be subjected to the statewide assessment led to an enhanced commitment by educators. This resulted in teachers at the intermediate level (grades three-five) increasing the amount of instructional time devoted to the subject (Vogler, 2011). In response to the implementation of this new census testing, a longitudinal study was conducted with a sample of 196 South Carolina teachers before and after implementation of this social studies mandate. This study found a lower commitment to social studies was taking place in the primary grades (grades kindergarten-

two) because testing did not take place (Vogler, 2011). Intermediate grade teachers reported an increased emphasis on social studies, likely due to testing being conducted at these grade levels (2011).

South Carolina represents an example of what could occur if statewide assessments were conducted in social studies at the elementary level. However, as this is not the norm, considering research in other states may be more informative. An Indiana study of 594 participants by VanFossen (2005) found that two-thirds of the respondents taught social studies on a daily basis for a mere 18 minutes. In addition, when teachers were asked to rank the four core subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and the two enrichment areas of the arts and physical education from most to least important, social studies ranked fourth, only ahead of the arts and physical education.

Similar results were found in a 2006 study conducted by the North Carolina Professors of Social Studies Education. They found that the importance of social studies was ranked under mathematics and language arts, with only 23% of respondents teaching it on a daily basis. A majority of the other respondents were able to spend 30 to 45 minutes on social studies instruction two to three days per week. The limited instructional time was attributed to (1) a lack of resources, (2) an overloaded social studies curriculum, (3) a need for more training, and (4) a significant amount of time spent preparing students in the tested areas (Rock et al., 2006).

On the surface this may lead many to believe that more time on the subject means better instruction and an increased interest, but quantity and quality are not the same. In school systems where statewide assessment is mandated and more time is devoted to social studies, an emphasis on skill and drill may be promoting a lack of content knowledge. Libresco (2006) pointed out, “tests do not assess the skills and dispositions that matter most- the ability to carry

out extended analyses, solve open-ended problems, and display common or complex relationships; in short, tests punish the thinking test taker" (p. 193). Even in South Carolina, with social studies being allotted more time for daily instruction, Lintner (2006) highlighted that school administrators who ordered the core subjects by importance still ranked social studies beneath language arts, math, and science. VanFossen (2005) pointed out that the value a subject has in the eyes of an administrator may be linked to the support they are able and willing to provide their staff, which suggests a relationship between the level of support and the amount of time teachers spend teaching it.

Social studies instruction circa 2002. No Child Left Behind may have exacerbated the issue of marginalization of social studies in the elementary classroom, but it cannot entirely be to blame. Research dating back to the 1980s showed that although social studies was considered a core subject, adequate time and attention were not devoted to it. In 1984, when Goodlad released his pioneering *A Study of Schooling*, social studies was found to be the least enjoyed and least taught subject at the elementary level (as cited in Vogler, 2011; Vogler, et al., 2007). In 1989 at the American Education Research Association's annual meeting, Shaver (1989) released his paper that highlighted seminal state and regional reports on elementary social studies instruction. It not only addressed issues that are still present today, but lamented that these same problems had been present in the elementary classroom for some 20 years prior to the 1980s. He highlighted concerns such as ineffective integration of the subject matter into other core subjects, the overemphasis on teacher-centered direct instruction, the disinterested student, and the limited amount of time spent on the subject. As a whole, the issue of social studies essentially being viewed as an afterthought when compared to other subject areas has been ongoing for decades.

Limited instructional time is not the only factor. While standardized assessment has increased the emphasis on reading and mathematics and resulted in limited classroom instructional time being devoted to social studies, it is not the only factor influencing the marginalization of social studies instruction. Burstein, Hutton, and Curtis (2006) conducted a study of 172 elementary school teachers and found that the availability of materials correlated with time spent on the subject. Limited access to necessary resources likely would lead to lesson plans that lack depth and complexity.

In addition to allocation and availability of resources, experience of the classroom teacher may or may not be a factor. This same study found "that there was no relation between the amount of time spent teaching social studies and years of teaching experience or the type of credential held" (Burstein et al., 2006, p. 18). However, the research study by Vogler, et al. (2007) conflicted with this as they reported that those "with the least amount of teaching experience tended to have a greater commitment to social studies than those with the greatest amount of teaching experience" (p. 24). With conflicting information in the field, the experience the teacher brings to the table may or may not play a role in whether social studies is taught on a consistent basis.

Curriculum integration. Integration of social studies into other areas of the curriculum has a polarizing effect on social studies scholars in the field. Some question the authenticity of it and believe it devalues the subject as a whole (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). To believe that "reading instruction can absorb social studies assumes that social studies has not unique pedagogy on its own…..[it] strips the subject of its integrity and renders it a simply nice way to enhance reading lessons" (Boyle-Baise , Hsu, Johnson, Cayot Serriere, & Stewart, 2008, p. 248). Rock et al. (2006) pointed out "schools must ensure that the lessons and units that are created are

effective in meeting social studies goals and objectives, not just strengthening literacy skills" (p. 475). Burroughs, Groce, and Webeck (2005) also stated that the problem of integrating social studies with reading is multifaceted with social studies concepts being compromised, "the social studies material is not covered in any depth, and students fail to make connections with existing schema to develop base understandings for concepts needed for middle and high school social studies classes" (p. 18). With curriculum integration, the social studies are seen more as supplemental, and not worthy of being considered a stand-alone subject, even in states where statewide mandated testing is conducted (Lintner, 2006).

In a 2008 study conducted in 13 classrooms at six elementary schools in Indiana, Boyle-Baise et al. interviewed both principals and teachers to examine their position on the marginalization of social studies in the elementary classroom. They found that teachers were not ignoring the subject matter, but teaching it as a by-product of reading, assisting them in covering more content and developing reading skills such as vocabulary, comprehension and phonemic proficiencies. The researchers saw this effort as an "unplanned, opportunistic moment of supplementary explanation derived from reading topics and exercises" (p. 246). Simply put, the social studies instruction was of poor quality with reading being the primary goal. The "principals in the study saw integration primarily as a means to an end: improved reading scores" (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008, p. 245).

In 2010, individual leaders in the field of social studies, with the support of 15 professional organizations, began work on the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework, or C3 Framework, which includes the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history (NCSS, 2013). This framework was created to assist states in upgrading their individual social studies standards to incorporate literacy skills that are already imbedded in the Common Core (2013).

Ratzer (2014) explained that the C3 Framework and the Common Core both embed "question development, use of information, close reading, consideration of opposing perspectives, arguments supported with evidence, and the inquiry process" (p. 70). As both frameworks support each other, in essence, integration is possible. In 2006 Libresco supported this claim, explaining that use of a common vocabulary, used across all disciplines, would aid in integration, but lesson planning must be careful and deliberate. The goal of the C3 Framework is to guide, not prescribe (Gewertz, 2013), and thus it is not a set of standards, but does provide a framework that states such as Kentucky, Connecticut, Illinois, and Michigan have used to redesign their curriculum (Rhor, 2014). As this initiative is in its infancy, the results have yet to be determined.

Impact on students. With limited instructional time devoted to social studies (VanFossen, 2005) what does this mean for current and future students at the elementary level? Passe (2006) summed up the impact of marginalization of social studies when he stated, "the ultimate result is that our students are poorly prepared for secondary school, grievously unprepared for university courses in the social studies, and overwhelmed by the responsibilities of democratic citizens" (p.190). These same students may be the next generation of teachers. With this in mind, researchers in the field of elementary education, professors, school administrators, and cooperating teachers, need to be cognizant that social studies is essential for creating and developing good citizens with an appreciation of the culture and history that has shaped our country.

Impact on preservice teachers. Less time devoted to social studies instruction by cooperating teachers prohibits preservice teachers from gaining the valuable experiences they need in order to carry out best practices into their own classrooms. When preservice teachers are able to see social studies instruction modeled in the field, their experiences are lacking at best.

Pianata, Belsky, Houts, and Morrison (2007) conducted a study which analyzed instruction in 2,500 elementary classrooms nationwide. They found that nearly 90% of instructional time was whole class, consisting of teacher directed lessons and individual seatwork, in all subject areas. These findings are congruent with a 2006 study that focused on elementary social studies classrooms specifically; it found that instruction was delivered via reading of the text, answering end-of-chapter questions, and finding and recording the definitions of a preselected list of vocabulary words (Bailey et al., 2006). These teaching strategies are at the lower end of Bloom's model of higher order thinking skills, where progression from lower to higher order thinking skills is set in a continuum of six distinct levels (Bloom, Englehard, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956; Wallace, Walker, Braseby, & Sweet, 2014). The lower levels of remember and understanding are where acquisition of content occurs, but it is the higher levels of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application that are achieved through inquiry. Anderson (2009) highlighted that for the last century, instruction has been teacher-centered and focused on memorization, and that this is not a byproduct of mandated testing, but the inability or unwillingness, of educators to progress toward use of research-based pedagogically sound best practices. Passe (2006) added that for many in the field, their lack of knowledge leaves them in an uncomfortable position and they rely on skill and drill, rather than be exposed. Simply put, many of today's teachers continue to use outdated educational practices that do not promote critical thinking skills.

The problem with disregarding best practices in social studies is twofold. First, if teachers in the field are not modeling lessons that aid their own students in developing rich historical thinking skills, preservice teachers will not witness these best practices. Then, when out in the field, preservice teachers will most likely submit to external pressures and teach the

way they were taught as young students, continuing this vicious cycle (Mathis & Boyd, 2009; McCall, 2006). Secondly, using social studies lessons that require memorization, regurgitation, and lecture prohibit young students from gaining the capacity to think historically.

What does it mean to think historically? To teach students to think historically is to instruct them to use various sources of information from the past to create their own meaning (Rodriguez, Salinas, & Guberman, 2005). This process provides students with "unique opportunities to appreciate critical historical concepts, incorporate language development, respect multiple points of view, participate in critical thinking, and conduct authentic investigations of history" (Rodriguez et al., 2005, p. 11). Learning to think historically will help students become "informed, educated, thoughtful, critical readers, who appreciate investigative enterprises, know good arguments when they hear them, and who engage their world with a host of strategies for understanding it" (VanSledright, 2004, pp. 232-233). Marginalizing instruction in this manner will retard active learning and prevent student interest (Mathis & Boyd, 2009) and will "foster the naïve conception that the past and history are one and the same…" (VanSledright, 2004, p. 232).

Placing preservice teachers in field placements that model rich social studies lessons is easier said than done. Many cooperating teachers have a negative view on the subject and find it boring, which they may openly communicate to these impressionable future teachers (Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Owens, 1997; Passe, 2006). In addition, preservice teachers that are placed in schools which have poor test scores likely will see little to no social studies instruction (NEA, 2004 as cited in Lanahan & Yeager, 2008). It is a challenge for universities and methods professors to find teachers who not only open their doors to this next generation, but also have a positive approach that is grounded in best practice. To be a good model, an elementary social

studies teacher must possess the following characteristics: an interest in history, desire to improve by seeking out professional conferences and additional professional development opportunities, have access to a plethora of resources, and strong administrative support (McCall, 2006).

Methods Courses

The role of the university methods instructor is to aid preservice teachers in learning effective research-based teaching strategies as well as the theory and research behind them. Attempting to bridge the gap between what is learned in methods courses and the limited, and often inaccurate, schema that preservice teachers possess in social studies is a challenge (Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). This limited knowledge, combined with what preservice teachers see modeled in their field based experiences, presents a challenge for methods professors.

Preservice teachers' limited background knowledge. Preservice teachers enter their university programs with a very limited amount of background knowledge. This is likely attributed to the current design of the standard social studies curriculum found in school systems across the United States since the 1930s, which is followed more out of habit than best practice (Turner, 1999 as cited in Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). Social studies in most school systems has the American history curriculum as the focus for only three nonconsecutive years in fifth, eighth, and the eleventh grades. In addition, primary grades place little emphasis on the building of content knowledge needed at the intermediate and secondary levels (Superka, Hawke, & Morriseet, 1980 as cited in Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). The problem with this is that gaps between the instructional years leads to key information being forgotten, and thus valuable time must be allocated to reteaching. This also encourages inconsistent and inaccurate schema to be

developed. Some of these students are future teachers, who will later have difficulty designing and implementing lessons when their own background knowledge is limited or imprecise.

In addition to incomplete or inaccurate background knowledge, many have a poor opinion on the quality of the instruction that they received in social studies. In a 2006 study done by Ellington et al., 1,051 practicing elementary classroom teachers were interviewed about their perception of social studies education in the classroom. A disappointing 31% of them considered their prior social studies courses as *very good* [emphasis added]. In addition, 80% of surveyed teachers had 10 or less university courses in the social studies. With an education poor in quality and limited in nature, teachers struggle in the classroom, as they have to develop and implement lessons in a subject that they do not know. This is also seen at the preservice teacher level, where lesson planning in general is a challenge, but particularly so in social studies, as the students' background knowledge on the topic is riddled with historical inaccuracies that spill over into their planning (Lanahan & Yeager, 2008).

Methods instructors' backgrounds make a difference. Methods professors and instructors have a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. The College and University Faculty Assembly of Social Studies (CUFA) conducted a study in 1998 to determine why membership in this professional organization was so low. They found that half of the professors teaching social studies to preservice teachers were not specialists in the field. Either these professors had generalist degrees in other subjects, or if their area of focus was in social science overall (i.e. secondary and higher education), they lacked a concrete understanding of how to teach future teachers to teach at the elementary level (Passe, 2006). Lanahan and Yeager (2008) supported this claim, noting that not all social studies methods courses are taught by individuals

who are trained in the discipline. Due to a shortage of those specializing in the field, instructors may be used that have a generalist background.

Design of field placement. In addition to correcting ingrained misconceptions and addressing gaps in preservice teacher's background knowledge, many social studies methods professors also are responsible for ensuring that the students are actively engaged in a field placement. Having a supportive field experience for the students is essential, but does not always occur. A problem addressed in the research since the 1970s highlighted the difficulty of selecting cooperating teachers that do not undermine the theoretical and research-based methods that are taught in the methods course (Passe, 1994; Turner-Bisset, 2001). The mixed messages preservice teachers are receiving between their methods courses and what they witness in their field placements may leave them susceptible to not teaching social studies, or teaching it how they have perceived it, i.e. heavy use of worksheets and textbooks, poorly integrated into language arts instruction, or simply not at all (Mathis & Boyd, 2009). Ellington et al. (2006) pointed out that an increase in rigor at the university-level with a stronger emphasis on content and pedagogical skills would not make an impact on the preservice teachers' ability to teach, unless the cooperating teachers model rich social studies instruction. This is reinforced by Owens (1997) who stated:

> It is counterproductive, to say the least, to place a preservice teacher with a directing teacher who is not interested in teaching social studies… Simply finding directing teachers who are willing to have preservice elementary teachers in their classrooms is not acceptable nor a successful strategy for making field experience placements (p.118).

In order to build confidence in a preservice teacher's ability to design and implement effective standards-based social studies lessons, students must see modeled for them in a real classroom what they are learning in their methods course (Fragnoli, 2005).

A solution might be to select cooperating teachers that are known for their effective practice in the discipline and thus can model this to preservice teachers, but this is not as simple as it seems. Many university programs, for a variety of reasons, are not able to choose the cooperating teachers they would like to place with preservice teachers (Passe, 1994). Furthermore, field experience may not always occur alongside the social studies methods course. Bolick et al. (2010) conducted a study that focused on six elementary education university programs in Virginia and North Carolina, and found that three scenarios take place in the design of lab placements: (1) the ideal situation, which is the social studies methods course is directly tied into the placement and both run concurrently throughout the semester with an emphasis on social studies instruction taking place in the field experience, (2) the social studies methods course may take place during the semester after lab placement has concluded, and (3) no field experience may take place during the semester (i.e. summer coursework).

Some university programs may require preservice teachers to select an area of concentration. Although social studies may be an option, many preservice teachers make selections based on certification options, which eliminates social studies as a choice. For example, at one North Carolina university, students could work toward a reading certification if a concentration in this area was selected. Due to this option, all students chose reading in lieu of other subject choices (Bolick et al., 2010).

Design of social studies methods course. Content and pedagogy must be addressed in the social studies methods course. However, beginning with theory will hinder students in

understanding discipline-specific teaching strategies; one must lead with strong content knowledge and then follow with appropriate pedagogical practices (Brown, 2009; Ritter, 2012). An inability to understand the relationship between theory and practice will lead preservice teachers into teaching in the same manner that they were once taught (Ritter, 2012). To build content knowledge, professors must design their courses to allow for historical inquiry to take place. Historical inquiry assists preservice teachers in a multitude of ways. It allows for one to appreciate other cultures, which leads to an appreciation of the relationship that the present has with the past (Foster & Padgett, 1999). It will also increase student engagement and promote an appreciation for history (Fragnoli, 2005), as well as encourage students to "learn to ask authentic questions, to select and examine historical evidence, to appreciate historical context, to evaluate divergent perspectives, and to reach, albeit tentatively, logical conclusions" (Foster & Padgett, 1999, p. 358). Historical inquiry is supported by Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, that "knowledge is constructed by learners in complex and interactive ways" (p. 358), not through skill-and-drill where information is learned for assessment purposes only, and too soon forgotten.

Introducing how to use primary sources in the classroom can support the process of historical inquiry. To maximize the potential of primary sources and, thus, to use them in an authentic, relevant, and effective manner, several strategies must be used. First and foremost, students must be equipped with the necessary schema. Barton (2005) stated, "without prior knowledge, sources are literally incomprehensible, and it is impossible to construct meaning from them" (p. 750). In addition, looking for and learning of the bias that each source brings to the table will provide objectivity. Sources are never without bias, so addressing what bias each source has is key. Furthermore, sources should not be used in isolation of one another (Barton, 2005). Teaching historical inquiry will provide direct and explicit instruction of thinking skills

that align with Bandura's theory of self-regulatory efficacy, which is the influence of one's belief in their ability and how it contributes to the outcome.

> Beliefs of personal efficacy influence what self-regulative standards people adopt, whether they think in an enabling or debilitating manner, how much effort they invest in selected endeavors, how they persevere in the face of difficulties, how resilient they are to adversity, how vulnerable they are to stress and depression, and what types of choices they make at important decisional points that set the course of life paths (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003, p. 769).

Historical inquiry does just this. It "increases students' self-confidence and thus willingness to engage in increasingly challenging cognitive tasks they encounter later on" (Beyer, 2008, p. 201).

The expectation is high for a social studies methods professor, and the task may seem insurmountable. However, "a more rigorous understanding of the discipline of history on the part of teachers is essential in order for them to deal with the issues of breadth, and depth, confront problems of historical significance, and wrestle with authentic assessments" (VanSledright, 1996, as cited in Gillaspie & Davis, 1997-1998, p. 35).

To Further the Research in the Field

Preservice teachers who are equipped with the ability to think historically, and reflect thoughtfully, would then aid in the development of appropriate historical thinking in their own students. Methods courses need to be taught by professors with backgrounds in elementary social studies and paired with rich field experiences. These experiences must have cooperating teachers who model lessons focused on historical inquiry on a daily basis. If this situation existed, perhaps a preservice teacher's future pedagogy would be positively influenced, and the

pressures caused from lack of administrative support, limited resources, and influence of colleagues' attitudes may not interfere with what is known to be best practices.

Researchers have posed the question of whether preservice teachers see the value of what they learn in their methods courses and use it to create and implement lessons in their future social studies classrooms (Good et al., 2010; Martin, 2012; Mathis & Boyd, 2009; Ellington et al., 2006; Slekar, 2005; Turner-Bisset, 2001). This study will add to the body of literature on the effectiveness of the social studies methods course. This study will inform the field by following four preservice teachers from their methods course into their first years of teaching at the elementary level, exploring the effectiveness their teacher preparation program had on the duration and frequency of instruction in social studies. Analysis of additional factors that affect their likelihood to teach social studies (i.e. administrative pressures, mandated state-wide assessment, etc.) will be examined.

Chapter III: Methods

The purpose of this study was to discover the impact of the social studies methods course on novice teachers' teaching practices. Transferability, or lack thereof, was of interest to the researcher. Creswell (2014) explained, "if a concept or phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach" (p. 20). Thus, as little scientific research had been done on the topic and an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of novice elementary teachers in teaching social studies was of interest, a case study was deemed best (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

Although not the goal of this research, the findings could be similar to other novice teachers' lived experiences. Understanding the lived experience of novice teachers may assist the researcher in providing support for future preservice teachers in elementary education. In addition, future social studies methods courses could be modified to meet the needs of preservice teachers' based on the data collected in this study. Essentially, "the findings of one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 297). Therefore, generalizability (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 1998) was not applicable to this study.

Participants

This study consisted of four novice teachers who had graduated from the same undergraduate teacher preparation program. All had taken the same social studies methods course, and thus all were exposed to the same theory and best practices. The course was taught by one of two professors from the elementary education department. Both professors have a background in elementary social studies. These teachers were selected using purposeful sampling. "Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest" (Palinkas et al., 2015,

p. 533). As Bernard and Ryan (2010) pointed out, "Purposeful samples are particularly useful in the study of special and hard-to-find populations" (p. 365). In this case, locating four teachers in the same school district that graduated from the same university program within the last five years dictated the use of purposeful sampling.

All four participants that were selected were considered novice teachers at the time the research was conducted, each with fewer than five full years of teaching experience in a public school setting. Each had earned a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from the same university, which is a large research university in the southeast region of the United States.

Teacher A. Teacher A completed her degree in December of 2015. At the time of this study, she was currently in her second year teaching third grade in the school in which she completed her internship. In the spring of 2016, she was a substitute teacher in the district where she currently teaches now. She completed the elementary social studies methods course in the summer of 2015.

Teacher B. Teacher B completed her undergraduate degree in May of 2016. This is her second year teaching. She taught third grade in an urban school setting in the 2016-2017 school year. She began her master's degree in elementary education at a local university near the school in which she teaches in the fall of 2017. This is her first year teaching fourth grade at the school site where the research was conducted.

Teacher C. Teacher C completed her undergraduate degree in December of 2013 in elementary education. In December of 2014, she earned a master's degree from the same research university that she and the other participants attended for their undergraduate studies. At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, Teacher C will have completed her fourth year teaching. She has taught third, fourth, and fifth grade.

Teacher D. Teacher D completed her undergraduate degree in December of 2011. She has been teaching first grade for one year at the school site where the research was conducted. Prior to this experience, she did two full years of kindergarten in two separate school systems and two maternity leaves, one in first grade at the school in which the research was conducted and one out-of-state in seventh grade math during a time when there was a teacher shortage in the state she resided in.

Teacher Preparation Program

The university's elementary education program is accredited with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). The coursework is framed so that students learn theory, research, best practices, and curriculum and instruction that are developed with current professional standards. Through field placement, preservice teachers work with diverse learners and hone in on the ability to be reflective, collaborative advocates who are leaders in the field. Through a stringent selection process that includes a face-to-face interview, a writing sample, and a review of current resume, only 75 applicants are accepted each year into the elementary education program.

The social studies methods course that each preservice teacher is required to take lasts 16 weeks in length and meets face-to-face for two hours each week. Depending on the semester, students are placed in the field for two or three full days each week. This totals roughly between 120-196 hours in one semester in the elementary classroom. Typically, at the time this study was conducted, the field placement for this course was a rural setting approximately 20 miles from the university. The course is aligned with state and national standards, and focuses on pedagogical content knowledge in social studies. Lessons are modeled for the students in class

and required readings are researched based. Assignments focus on lesson plan design with an emphasis on making lessons meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active, which is based on the NCSS's explanation of powerful and purposeful teaching and learning (NCSS, 2008).

Data Collection

Three types of data were collected: interviews, lesson plans, and observations. The purpose of this was to triangulate the data. Triangulation, in qualitative research, is the collection of multiple sources of information as well as the examination of the evidence these sources provide to build rationalization of a theme, and to understand the complexity and richness of human behavior from more than one standpoint (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 1998; Cohen & Manion, 1986; Creswell, 2014). As Berg and Lune (2012) explained, it is the combination of "several lines of sight… obtaining a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements" (p. 6). Verification occurs when an attempt is made to relate the data to each other (2012).

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews in the form of one focus group interview with all four participants, and one-on-one interviews with each participant took place at offsite-agreed upon locations. Semi structured interviews were selected, as they are flexible and modifications can be made during the interview process. A list of questions, or guide, was used in each interview so that similar questions were asked of each participant (see Appendix A-C) and comparisons could be made across interviews (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Each interview lasted approximately 20-40 minutes. The questions used for the focus group interview (see Appendix A), asked participants to recall memories of their teacher preparation program, the social studies

methods course, field experiences, current professional development opportunities, and general questions about their beliefs on teaching social studies to elementary students. The one-on-one interviews were more personal in nature, and asked participants to think about their past experiences with social studies, their perception of it, and their instructional approaches. (See Appendix B for individual interview questions.) A follow-up interview with each participant was conducted for further clarification and questions from this interview can be found in Appendix C.

Lesson plans. Analysis of weekly lesson plans was conducted. The researcher opted to use all available weekly lesson plans (from August of 2017 to November of 2017) for each research participant. The researcher designed a rubric (Appendix D), which was used for the analysis. This rubric was designed with the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (NCSS, 2008). This position statement highlighted the five key characteristics of an effective social studies lesson. Social studies lessons need to be meaningful, integrated, value-based, challenging, and active. Based on this, the weekly lesson plans were analyzed for things such as frequency and duration of social studies lessons. In addition, evidence of critical thinking by the students, variety of resources used (primary and secondary in nature), variety of grouping methods, and presence of student inquiry and analysis were some of the characteristics that were of importance to the researcher as they aligned with the NCSS's guidelines for effective social studies instruction. These guidelines were the backbone of the social studies methods course that each participant took during their teacher preparation program.

Observations. The interviewer conducted one observation with each participant. The rationale behind conducting observations was so that the researcher could confirm that what the

teachers outlined in their weekly lesson plans was indeed what their social studies lessons looked like. During each observation the researcher took notes. These notes focused on the duration of the lesson, student engagement, complexity of questions, and description of resources used by the teacher.

Data Analysis

Interviews. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Pseudonyms were given to protect the anonymity of the participants. Through examination of the data, patterns and regularities emerged (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) and an inductive approach to developing the codebook took place, meaning the codes were data driven (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This process is considered open coding, which means it is a "process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 61). The data was then disaggregated to make it more manageable once codes were assigned. The transcripts were coded by hand. (See Appendix E for codebook.)

Lesson plans. Weekly lesson plans were analyzed using the Analysis of Weekly Lesson Plan Rubric (Appendix D). The researcher developed this rubric using the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (NCSS, 2008). These are the same guidelines used in the undergraduate social studies course taken by the participants as preservice teachers. The guidelines are used when planning and implementing social studies instruction. According to the NCSS, lessons should be meaningful, integrated, value-based, active, and challenging (NCSS, 2008).

Meaningful. To be meaningful, lessons "should relate to the age, maturity, and concerns of students" (NCSS, 2008, p. 211). Human achievements, as well as human failures, are analyzed, with an emphasis on depth over breadth. Lessons focus on "…information gathering

and analysis, inquiry and critical thinking, communication, data analysis and the prudent use of twenty-first century media and technology" (NCSS, 2016, p. 180). For teaching to be meaningful, it requires the teacher to be reflective in not just the practice, but the instruction, and the assessment as well. The elementary social studies teacher that is successful is one who has a deep understanding of the subject matter and is able to vary the instructional methodologies to engage his or her students (NCSS, 2009).

Integrated. Rather than being isolated to one specific time of the day, social studies lends itself to being implemented across the curriculum. Annually, the NCSS publishes a list of trade books to aid teachers in their selection of high quality social studies literature. Books selected for this list

> …emphasize human relations, represent a diversity of groups and are sensitive to a broad range of cultural experiences, present an original theme or fresh slant on a traditional topic, are easily readable and of high literary quality, and have a pleasing format and, when appropriate, illustrations that enrich the text ("Notable Social Studies Trade Books," 2017, para. 2).

In the undergraduate social studies methods course, the preservice teachers all write a lesson plan using one book from the Notable Trade Book List, thus becoming more comfortable with selection of high quality literature for social studies instruction.

For the elementary-aged student, social studies encompasses history, geography, economics, and political science (NCSS, 2008). When planning and implementing lessons, the NCSS emphasizes coherence in lieu of a disjointed approach. To be coherent, the teacher follows a logical sequence to enhance meaning and comprehension for the students (NCSS,

2009). In addition, it is essential that the teacher addresses how the past is linked to the present, and impacts the future as well (NCSS, 2016).

Value-based. For the students, value-based social studies instruction encourages a "reflective development of concern for the common good and the application of democratic values" (NCSS, 2016, p. 181). Democratic values of equality, justice, and freedom of thought and speech should be emphasized (2016). Students should be given the opportunity to look at social issues from multiple perspectives with a critical lens, and learn to make value-based decisions (NCSS, 2008).

Challenging. Moving beyond simply reading and answering questions, social studies instruction should require students to apply critical thinking skills. Challenging social studies instruction teaches students to "question, evaluate, and challenge informational sources" (NCSS 2009, p. 32). A variety of sources are used, both primary and secondary in nature. Controversial issues and conflicting perspectives should not be shied away from (NCSS, 2016).

Active. To be active, the teacher takes the guide on the side, rather than sage on the stage approach. To foster discovery and encourage engagement, the teacher may use methods such as "problem solving, debates, simulations, project-based learning, and role-playing" (NCSS, 2009, p. 32). The activities should vary in group size, from whole to small and even to individual at times. In addition, they should be flexible and engaging for all types of learners (NCSS, 2016).

Observations. Audio recordings of the observations were done using a voice memo application; this ensured student anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher took detailed notes during each observation to compare with the data from the audio recording, as well as the lesson plans provided by the novice teachers. Audio recordings were then transcribed and, as in the interview data analysis, the researcher coded transcripts by hand. Existing codes were

already in place from the interview process; however, flexibility was key. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explained, "the goal is the development of categories that capture the fullness of the experiences and actions studied" (p. 227). Meaning that constant comparisons of the data for similarities and differences would lead to a saturation of the material (2015). After the observation, the researcher met with each of the novice teachers in a one-on-one interview at an agreed-upon off-site location. Exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson were addressed (see Appendix F).

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to discover what instructional practices novice teachers use when teaching social studies in the elementary classroom. The researcher wanted to understand the lived experience of novice teachers, teachers who have less than five years of classroom teaching experience, who all graduated from the same university program, and teach in the same affluent school system with access to the same or similar resources.

The research question that informed this study was:

1. What instructional practices do novice teachers use when teaching social studies?

This study consisted of 13 interviews, which were comprised of one focus group interview with all four participants, four individual interviews, three after-observation interviews, one in-lieu-of-observation interview, and four follow-up interviews. The researcher conducted observations of social studies lessons for three of the four participants and analyzed weekly lesson plans for the purpose of triangulating the data from several sources in order to establish validity (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 1998; Cohen & Manion, 1986; Creswell, 2014). All interviewees were given pseudonyms in order to provide anonymity.

During in-depth interviews, participants described their personal experiences from childhood, their university program, and the school and system with which they were teaching at the time this study was conducted, and explained the challenges that they faced in teaching social studies at the elementary level. A close examination of the instructional practices that were present in their responses during interviews, observations of their lessons, and examination of lesson plans provided the researcher with an understanding of these challenges.

The data were coded and similar codes were grouped into code families (Berndard & Ryan, 2010). (See Appendix E for codebook.) The code families fell into 11 key themes:

Advice, Experience-Childhood, Experience-University, Experience-Professional, Instructional Practices, Marginalization, Perception of Social Studies, Perception of Students, Practice of Teaching, Resources, and Setting. Identified themes were well defined; however, some overlap did occur. Participants' responses to questions often covered multiple themes.

Setting

At the time this study was conducted, all four participants worked in the same school system. This system is located in the southeast region of the United States, and is approximately two hours driving distance from the university in which the participants all earned their undergraduate degree. The school system has a reputation of being one of the best in the state ("2018 Best Schools," 2018). High graduation rates, high teacher retention rates, and an actively involved community make this school system desirable. According to the most recent census data, of the 34,688 residents in this community, the median home value was $346,400; the median household income was $85,854, with 95.7% of residents living above the national poverty line. Of the residents that are 25 years of age and older, 97.3% hold high school diplomas, and 65.9% hold a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

All four participants had glowing remarks when asked to describe the school system in which they teach. They mentioned access to resources, involvement on the part of parents, students, and the community, and high expectations from everyone involved. As Teacher C explained,

> …I would say it's, um, a very high achieving system; um, there are high expectations for teachers, students, parents, um, faculty, staff, um, like I said the kids are really high achieving, high performing, um, you have a lot of really successful parents, um, really

intelligent parents here. We have a lot of funding and a lot of resources that are available to us in the system.

Teacher A shared that the school system was very supportive to their growth as professionals, and that the students' best interests were a top priority. Teacher B shared a similar sentiment, "…I think they just do everything they can to support student growth and student achievement…" Teacher B also mentioned that the school system was one of the top performing in the state, and there was a lot of pride associated with this. Teacher D, who grew up in the capital city of the state, approximately one hour driving distance from both the university and the school system where the research was conducted, summarized it as "not typical". When asked to expand on this answer, she explained that in most communities in the state private school is sought after if one can afford it. She believed this is not the case in the community in which she teaches. As she explained, "… it has immense number of resources and, um, is very available to help students and teachers be successful."

School A. The four participants were situated at two separate schools in the school district. School A is a PreK-5 building, with the students feeding into one middle school, positioned next door. Teacher A, Teacher C, and Teacher D all taught at School A during the time this study was conducted. School A had 38 classrooms, with approximately 650 students. All three participants at this school spoke highly of it. Teacher A explained that School A is "an enriching environment" with access to a range of resources. She also stated that the classroom teachers that work there feel a sense of autonomy in their practice,

> I'm not told this is what you have to do and this is when you have to have it completed, so luckily I have a lot of wiggle room to be able to be, um, creative, and, um, innovative and come up with ideas.

Teacher C emphasized not just the access to resources, but the people involved,

> …really, um, bright kids, um, really smart parents with high expectations for their kids, for teachers, um, really professional environment, um, very much a community out here. Um, again, lots of resources, good funding from PTO, good funding from the system as well. If you need something you know you can find a way to get it here.

Teacher D, who shared that the school system was unique to the state, also believed this was true of School A,

> …not your typical public school. Um, I would think, um, a very privileged, um, school where the community is very involved, and very… has education as one of the highest priorities for their children.

School B. Students from two primary schools feed into this fourth and fifth grade building, which houses 35 classrooms with approximately 875 students. In the district's long-range plans, School B will move to a larger location in the next three years. Teacher B has been teaching at School B since the start of the 2017-2018 school year, and attended this school as a student herself. When asked to describe the school in her own words, Teacher B said,

> …it's a great school, a great school, it's very high achieving… it's not super diverse, but there is a little bit of diversity, but the students really care about how they perform and the parents are also really invested in how the students perform in school. So I think that kind of raises the stakes, and a lot of really qualified teachers… *highly* qualified teachers that really know what they're doing and I feel like that yields really positive results.

Experience

The experience the novice teachers brought to the study was varied; however, many similarities amongst the participants were discovered. Experience was a key theme throughout

the study and was explored in three areas: childhood experiences, university experiences, and professional experiences.

Childhood. The participants shared memories about their experiences as students in general, as well as in the subject of social studies.

As a student. All four participants asserted that they were good students overall. When asked how they would describe themselves as a student each was forthright and shared strengths and weaknesses. Teacher A explained,

> I was like the teacher's pet, or wanted to be the teacher's pet, like always wanted to please and do my best. Um, things did not come naturally to me. Um, I really did have to study. Um, my mom and dad really had to take time, especially getting older in fourth and fifth, and on into middle school… but I would say that I was a pretty average student.

Teacher B's response was similar,

> I was a very hard worker. I wouldn't say I was a great test taker by any means, but, um, I got A's because I put in a lot of time and effort, and I may have gotten like B's on the test, but because I did all the homework and all the other work and tried to like really participate in class I usually ended up with A's. So I wasn't the brightest student, or the best student, I just worked really hard at it.

Teacher C reflected on herself as a student overall, including her university experience,

> I did well in school; I always had A's. Um, you know, I did my work, but it wasn't… I didn't just love learning I guess. Um, but I did well… I just didn't have to try very hard cause once I got to college it was a different story. So I feel like maybe it wasn't always super challenging, but in school I made A's and did what I was supposed to do.

Teacher C continued:

> … I felt very ill-prepared when I got to college. Just having regular discussion in classes and, like, when I got into the elementary ed program, you know there was a whole lot of that and I felt very uncomfortable. I felt like I couldn't voice my opinion or I didn't even know how to form an opinion, honestly.

Teacher D shared that she attended a small private school for her K-12 experience. Like the other participants in the study, she too had a desire to please and make good grades,

> …I wanted to please my teachers. Whether I really knew the material or not I wanted to make a good grade. Um, if it was for a test, if it was for an exam, um… I wanted to learn, but my main goal was to make a good grade.

In addition to all of the participants sharing their perception of themselves as students, Teacher A was inspired to become a teacher herself based on quality teachers she had in the classroom. She explained,

> …I just really couldn't get away from the thought of impact that my third grade teacher had on my life personally… still remembering that impact that she had on my life; um, I wanted to kind of do the same thing for students…

Teacher C and Teacher D were both children of educators, which initially deterred them from pursuing education because as Teacher D explained, "…I didn't want to be a teacher initially because I saw what all she (her mother) had to do each summer; we lived at the school as kids." Teacher B went into the field of education because she felt it had been her lifelong calling. In high school she had participated in peer tutoring and found that to be rewarding, as she explained, "… I really enjoyed helping out my peers and stuff, like when they got stuff… like when they learned something I felt a really good sense of reward."

In social studies. Memories of social studies as students were spotty at best. Lessons that would be considered best practice today, ones that were centered around inquiry, involved collaborative or cooperative experiences, used trade books, and were project-based stood out in their recollections for positive reasons. For example, Teacher A shared,

> I don't recall a lot like the younger grades, like kindergarten through… I guess second-third. Um, it was more like in fourth and fifth grade whenever, um, I remember there being, um, a topic we were discussing in social studies where we had a court case, like a live court case… and having to take our stance on that… and justify why you believed something…

Additionally Teacher A also shared a memory of learning the presidents' names in a rap. She could still recall it to this day, and proceeded to sing part of it during one interview. She stated, "You know it was something that… I mean this older teacher was rapping and just brought the, just what we were learning to life."

Teacher B, who attended elementary and secondary school in the district in which the research was conducted, did not have specific lessons that she recalled, more just an overall positive feeling. She explained,

> I always enjoyed social studies. I really, really always enjoyed geography, and learning, like, maps and where countries were. I guess it was cause I hadn't, like, traveled that much as a kid so it really made it, like, interesting to me to see the rest of the world and what it was like. I really love history, I still do today. I remember it, like, really started clicking in eighth grade. I had, like, my first world history class and I just loved it. And it just seemed, like, a big story to me, and it really interested me, and tested me, and so

then I went on and did, like, AP history and stuff like that in high school. So I really enjoyed learning it as a student.

Teacher B continued:

I remember doing, like, projects growing up about, um, different countries or different people in history and I really liked learning about different important people in history and I did, like, several, like, important people projects, and poster boards and things like that that I presented in front of the classroom, and I remember really liking that too.

Teacher D reflected back positively on two projects that she took part in in social studies. One centered around a cookbook from long ago. The other was what she considered her first real research project,

…I think it was fourth grade we had to do, like, our first research project on a state. And I remember doing it on a state and I remember just learning so much about that state, and so many people from the state that are famous. I learned how to research, and that was interesting. Just learning all the cool things about the state- the geography, the climate, the, um, things that I found on my own that I didn't find in the textbook that I had to reach out for to figure out was really fun.

Teacher C's positive memories were vague, and the earliest one she could recall on a happier note involved the reading of a trade book in the sixth grade on the topic of the Holocaust. Her next and final positive memory that she shared about social studies as a student occurred in high school,

…my teacher, which where I grew up… you know, like, the history teachers were the football coaches, you know, that sort of thing; and I just remember one day our teacher just gave us a what-if kind of thing. Um… and said, like, what if you were on an island

> and you had to come up with your own economy. Like, what would you do? Like, you didn't have any resources. Like, what would you do, and we just had to talk amongst our groups and talk about what we would do and then we shared… and that was fun…

As vague as some of the positive social studies memories were for the participants, the negative memories appeared to be much more ingrained and, for three of the participants, much more defined. Teacher C did not share any positive memories of social studies from grades kindergarten through fifth grade; however, she was able to recall fourth grade social studies being about her state history. She stated, "I just remember always having a bad feeling getting it out. Just, like, dreading getting that workbook out." Teacher C remembered a heavy use of the textbook and workbook, "I remember doing a lot of, you know, work from the workbook… writing definitions down from the back of the book." When asked about social studies projects as an elementary student, Teacher C recalled nothing and explicitly stated that nothing stood out in her memory of it.

Like Teacher C, Teacher A also recalled a heavy use of the textbook, "…you read pages 5-11, and do questions number 1-5 and turn it in. And that'd be the social studies lesson." She stated that her experience overall in social studies was dull, "…except for a few here and there, um, it was just redundant and boring and reading out of textbooks…." She also remembered limited class time spent on the subject,

> …when my teacher had time for it she made time for it, um, but whenever weeks got crammed and had to be flexible I'm sure that it got tossed out the door. So that might be why I don't have, like, a really solid foundation, um, of history.

Teacher A continued to share about what she considered a rocky foundation in social studies being to blame for poor performance on the graduation exam she took in high school,

> …I do remember in high school we had the graduation exams, and history was one that I did not pass the first time. I had to study up on, like, specific dates and historical events, and people in history, like, that I didn't obviously have a foggy memory of because of years past, just it not sticking. So I remember my history teacher in tenth grade basically threw a study guide at me and said, like, 'you've got to know all of these dates, all of these people, and to be able to pass the test', and so I learned them and of course passed that time, but it was just, like, I just didn't have a very good, like, experience with social studies. It was just, like, you need to do this, you need to learn these people, you need to know these dates, and that's history for you.

She continued to share more about her tenth grade history teacher,

> …like I was saying he was a baseball coach, of course, in high school. Um, and just really did not take the time to, like, teach. I remember he sat at his desk all day and there were, like, PowerPoint slides and lots of bookwork. Um, like, it just wasn't brought to life, like, I feel like I would have learned a lot better… so I feel like that was a really bad experience just being a 16 year old in high school, failing the graduation exam, and having to retake it and then my coa-my teacher not taking the time to teach me, but rather just giving me something to memorize in order to pass.

Teacher D recalled that if her teachers liked social studies, it was taught, and projects were part of the curriculum; however, if the teacher did not like the subject, they would stick primarily to use of a textbook. In describing a sour memory of social studies, Teacher D proclaimed it a living nightmare,

> …my seventh grade civics class was pretty much a nightmare. Um, we had notes we copied from the overhead every single day. We had pop quizzes that were straight from the notes. It was just kind of a write-this-down and figure-it-out type thing.

Although Teacher B had an overwhelmingly positive experience in social studies as a student, she did share a high school experience that surprised her, as she had always felt confident and competent in the subject,

> …my senior year of high school I took AP government one semester and, but if you did AP government they made you take AP economics the second half. And so I was, like, sure I love government, like, I love learning about government and I'll do AP, and I had done AP thus far and then when I got to the economics part I was, like, I was so bad at it and I had never struggled at anything in social studies my whole life. It was so hard for me. And I cried during one of my AP exams. Like, this is the hardest thing I've ever done.

University. All four participants graduated from the same university teacher preparation program. Teacher A graduated in December of 2015, Teacher B graduated in May of 2016, Teacher C graduated in December of 2013, and Teacher D graduated in December of 2011.

Teacher preparation program. In reflecting on their teacher preparation program, the participants had both positive and negative remarks. Both Teacher B and Teacher C felt the program did a good job preparing them for the field. Teacher C shared what stood out to her most,

> But I do remember professors doing a really good job of, like, talking about dress, and talking about social media etiquette and, you know, we're held to really high

expectations. Um, like, even just how we carry ourselves in public. I remember that a lot.

Teacher B continued to share about the anxiety level experienced by those in her cohort at the time and how she believed this was beneficial in the end,

> I don't know if this was for all cohorts, but any time anything changed or it got stressful or, like, we just had a lot due at one time everybody kind of, like, freaked out. I remember thinking, 'I'm glad it was stressful; I'm glad that it happened' cause that's teaching.

Teacher A, however, felt there was a disconnect between her learning style and the way material was presented in her university teacher preparation program, "…like, with some of the professors I had, not downing them at all, just, like, how they presented the material I was not interested. I was bored." Teacher D had a similar sentiment; "I feel like a lot of the things I did in the classroom, from the university classroom that was presented in a school classroom, would not be what I would present to my students." She continued on in a later interview to add, "…it's not really reality what you're learning in college."

Although Teacher C shared that she saw the significance in doing the required lesson plan format, the other participants did not share this sentiment. Teacher C stated,

> …I see the value in us doing the lengthy lesson plans, like, and the professors needed to make sure we knew, like, they couldn't always observe us so they needed to see that we could do that and what our lessons looked like…

Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher D all thought the required lesson plan format was detached from the practicality of what is expected in an elementary classroom. Teacher B noted,

> I feel like the lesson plans, like, I kinda laugh now, thinking how I would write a four-page lesson plan for one lesson. Now my lesson plans are, like, one page for a week. I definitely remember doing that, and spending a lot of time doing that in undergrad…

Teacher D's remarks mirrored Teacher B's, "I wish they would be more realistic, in a sense of three-page lesson plan for one single subject, for one single lesson is not what you do in the real world." Like Teacher D, Teacher A also stated,

> …not so much emphasis on lesson plans… I feel, like, we did a lot of that in college, and then when I got to, um, teaching, I mean, it's just not in reality that you're going to have time to spend on three days working on lesson plans, and saying it word for word.

Teacher A continued,

> …why not take that time and energy in preparing future educators for what a real day in the life in the classroom looks like. What is a problem solving team? What is… Tier Two, Tier Three intervention? What is, um, you know, just preparing, um, teachers for all the things that are kind of hush hush until you get a job.

Field experience. As part of the undergraduate teacher preparation program, field experiences that encompassed practicums, labs, and internships were required. As preservice teachers, each candidate took part in these experiences under supervision, and were required to complete a number of clinical hours each semester. In the teacher preparation program at the time, traditionally preservice teachers had two full days in the classroom each week for their lab experience for one semester, approximately 168 clinical hours, and then three full days in the classroom each week the following semester, which was approximately 252 clinical hours. Internship followed these lab experiences, and was a full-time, 16-week commitment. In addition, as preservice teachers, additional courses such as physical education, music, and

reading required fieldwork. If coursework was taken over the summer, as was the case for three of the participants, a summer school lab placement was done in lieu of either the two-day or three-day lab experience. This summer school lab placement consisted of three full weeks in the field. Overall the participants felt that the field experience was worthwhile and prepared them for their own classrooms. Teacher B shared,

> And I feel like that was probably the biggest thing that really prepared me going in was coming… watching great teachers and having them watch me and push me and then critique me was probably my biggest thing.

Teacher A's comments mirrored that of Teacher B, and she believed the field experience was the most beneficial component of the entire university preparation program,

> You can learn all day long, like, in a classroom in my opinion, sitting in a classroom with a professor speaking, but when you go in a classroom and see real life, a lesson laid out, like, that changed my whole mind of what teaching looked like.

During her follow-up interview, Teacher A emphasized the quality of the cooperating teachers in field experience as being pertinent to the overall experience,

> Field experience I feel, like, you're thrown in a classroom and you don't really know if that teacher… I hate to say successful or not… um, I hate to even use that word, but, like, at this point in education I mean there's a- there's a wide variety of ways you can teach…

Both Teacher A and Teacher B expressed gratitude for the cooperating teachers' support during the field placement. Teacher A stated, "…I loved that my internship teacher let me have that freedom to feel out what worked, what didn't work." Teacher B gushed, "Yes. I tell people all the time I had the three best mentors you could ever possibly have going through."

Teacher A, Teacher C, and Teacher D all experienced a summer lab placement. Teacher C and Teacher D both felt it was a weakness in their teacher preparation. Teacher C summarized it as, "We didn't get to do anything."

The university teacher preparation program intentionally emphasizes a diverse experience for the preservice teachers. A variety of placements were used, from rural school systems to more urban school systems, ranging from a few minutes from the university up to a couple of hours drive away (if requested). Overall, the participants appreciated the multiplicity of field placements. Teacher A explained,

> … being able to have that experience being in a wealthy school and being in a not so fortunate school with resources and finances. It's just being able to see how you take both of those and combine them together in your classroom to teach.

When questioned about the subject of social studies in their field placement, the participants were overwhelmingly in collective agreement. With the exception of one of Teacher B's three placements, social studies was virtually invisible. Teacher C explained,

> …I don't really remember social studies being taught when I was there and, you know, I would be there for the whole day. Um, but I don't, I don't remember social studies, um, I'm not saying it wasn't taught, but nothing stands out in my memory as social studies being covered in the classroom.

Teacher C continued to recall social studies in her internship experience as she reviewed over the second grade social studies standards, "…looking at this, I don't really remember doing anything in there." Of her cooperating teachers' attitudes on social studies, Teacher D noted, "…I think it was just one of those things, just check off the list."

Though Teacher B's cooperating teachers, a wide-range of social studies instruction was observed. She shared that one teacher would teach it the last 15 minutes of the day if time permitted. In another field placement, a weekly rotation between science and social studies instruction occurred. In a third fifth-grade placement, the cooperating teacher was intentional about her social studies instruction, and this had a positive impact on her. Teacher B explained,

> …she just loved social studies and loved teaching it. Like, she had it every day, just very intentional about it, and she had a grant that just did- where she got to go to DC. And, you know, fifth grade was all about American Revolution, American history, so she had just done a grant where she got to go and go to, like, all these cool conferences and brought so many cool resources back with her. So I got to use those resources and it was really awesome, and she was just really encouraging, and gave me lots of ideas, and just seeing her intentionally teach it every day was a really good model. So I really had a great experience teaching it…

Social studies methods course. The social studies methods course spanned one semester of the teacher preparation program. At the time the course was taught, lessons were shared in the course that encompassed analysis of primary sources and implementation of high-quality trade books that are featured on the NCSS Notable Trade Book List. The preservice teachers were charged with writing lessons that embedded these materials. Best-practice instructional strategies were modeled, such as collaborative and cooperative learning and inquiry based instruction.

During the initial focus group interview, Teacher A and Teacher B both expressed how much they enjoyed the course overall. Teacher B shared,

> I mean, we enjoyed going to that class. You know some classes you go to and you're like 'ugh I'm kind of dreading this', but we always eagerly engaged, we were learning new things, and then, like, I just remember everyone talking about that class and enjoying it. And I think it was in the morning, so it was a good way to start off…

When the participants were asked to share what they recalled about the course, one particular lesson stood out. Teacher C shared, "I remember her Thanksgiving lesson plan. I love it. I do it every year now.… that was amazing. We used those primary sources and we used, like, articles and, like, I love that." Teacher A agreed and found that lesson foundational to her understanding of how she learned history, "… and the misconception of what actually went on compared to what actually did go on. I thought that was huge, cause, I mean, I learned the wrong way growing up obviously."

Teacher B recalled the primary source lesson plan assignment and the benefit she saw from this type of instruction,

> I remember the primary source unit too. This is kinda funny. I loved that one so much that I spent a really good amount of time on that. I really took that to heart. I really wanted to do well. It was the first lesson I ever taught that my kids, the kids that I was with, it was fifth grade, were like 'we loved it; can we do this more?' Like, can you read more primary sources? Sure. It just got me really fired up about teaching and I really enjoyed teaching it and seeing the reaction from kids really. I actually put it on Teachers-Pay-Teachers and it sold really well.

Although Teacher C remembers fondly the Thanksgiving lesson as well as a trade book lesson on the picture book *Boxes for Katje*, she expressed a disappointment in a collaborative group lesson plan. She explained,

> …I just remember that unit and just not feeling satisfied. Like, just not feeling like this is good work that we just did as a group. Like I didn't feel that way, and I doubt anyone else felt that way. Like, in theory it sounded good, all these groups are going to do these units and then whatever grade you get you'll have a unit, but it just was not… I mean, I know it was on us to find resources and I feel like I'm better at finding resources now than I was then. We didn't know what to look for at that time.

Disconnect between the practicality of what the participants see in the field now as classroom teachers and what they experienced in their social studies methods course was mentioned. Teacher A mentioned one weakness involving lack of integration,

> So all that to say I wish that in college, like, a weakness I guess would be to show how to incorporate social studies. Maybe integrating it in reading and writing.… combined with a subject so that if you don't have an allotted amount of time you can still pull…

Teacher A also explained in a follow-up interview that, after completing the social studies methods course, she felt there was a disconnect between what she learned and what she saw in the field,

> …I would say, okay, walking away from the social studies course. I felt, like, so passionate about social studies after, like, that course and everything that we learned. And you know how the real Thanksgiving was, geography and things like that, and then, like, getting a job, um, three years ago, um, nothing was ever said about really social studies. Whenever I asked my team, like, 'what do you plan for social studies?' Oh it's the newspaper, oh it's this. So we were given the resources, just like the other things, but no one really plans social studies like planning other subjects…

Teacher B also mentioned a need for support with integration as well, and in addition highlighted the need to learn how to design mini lessons in social studies. Teacher B explained,

> I feel like we got so many good ideas for lessons, but they were done in like an hour and I have less than that. So either a way to integrate, or short quick lessons that can be done and over in like a week.… because when they give you like one giant lesson that you can do in a hour, well that would be great for a reading block…

Teacher C believed her social studies professor was very good at what she did but may not have understood the pressures of today's elementary classroom teacher. She explained,

> …they're excited about social studies, and teaching it, and they want us to be excited as well, um, but I feel like you know it's not really talked about much. Like, hey if you want to teach this well you're really going to have to work to get it taught. Um, you know, and there wasn't much talking about, hey you may not have tons of support in teaching this from… from coworkers or really anywhere. You're not gonna have much support. It's going to be challenging to find resources. Here are some good places for resources maybe…

Teacher D, however, believed that social studies professors were well aware of the situation of social studies in the elementary classroom. She stated, "…I'm sure that some professors are aware, um, but that social studies is not an everyday in the classroom, in the lower grades." Teacher D also had little to no recollection of her social studies methods course. In the initial focus group interview, Teacher D explained this to the researcher,

> Teacher D: "I don't remember my social studies class."
>
> Researcher: "That's okay."

Teacher D: "Um, I want to say I took it in the summer. And I want to say we took a field trip to the historical museum…"

Researcher: "The Archives?"

Teacher D: "Yes. And I want to say that we… I know for a fact that we had to write a lesson plan and it was published through the… through the archives, maybe. We wrote it there and I think… and that's really all I remember."

Researcher: "Have you used that lesson plan?"

Teacher D: "No."

Perception of Social Studies

Personal definition. Social studies in the elementary classroom encompassed the disciplines of economics, geography, history, and political science. To guide instruction, the NCSS provided the following definition for teachers of social studies,

> Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world ("National Curriculum Standards," 1992).

All four participants shared their personal definitions during their first individual interviews. Both Teacher A and Teacher D addressed the discipline of history in their definitions, but did not include economics, geography, and political science. Teacher A stated,

> …I would say that social studies is the historical events… that have happened in the past. Like time, time periods, dates, um, significant people that have made an impact. Um, this is a terrible definition. I don't know how to describe it.

Teacher D explained social studies as,

> …when I was younger it was always history, history, history. Um, the study of social environment and… social environment in different time periods and the way people adapt to that environment.

Teacher C's definition encompassed all four disciplines that are taught at the elementary level, but unlike the NCSS definition did not highlight the need to teach citizenship,

> …I guess social studies would be the study of interactions over time. So I guess history, and then geography, and government, civics, economics. So I guess human interaction with the world maybe.

Teacher B shared a broad definition,

> …I would say social studies is just like learning about the world around you. And learning from the past, and how we can push toward the better present.

As a student and now as a teacher. Participants were asked questions during the initial focus group interview and during individual interviews to gain perspective on how their perception of social studies as students had influenced their ability to teach socials studies in the elementary classroom.

Teacher A. Teacher A believed her social studies experience was lackluster at best. Over the course of her interviews she expressed this,

> So my experience in elementary, middle, and high school… my perception of history was boring, just because the teachers, the material, except for a few here and there, um, it was just redundant and boring, and reading out of textbooks, and learning information.

She explained that due to this uninspiring set of experiences as a student herself, she now found it a challenge to teach social studies,

> So as a teacher, whenever I hear social studies my eyes don't light up, and I'm not like 'oh my gosh I can't wait to learn more'. I'm not a history guru and maybe that might fall on my experience as a child and, um, young adult with the experiences that I had.

Now as a classroom teacher, Teacher A found that to find pleasure in teaching the subject of social studies it is contingent on the particular discipline she is teaching,

> Because, for example, in third grade, like, social studies that I'm teaching to my kids is just really, like, redundant. I mean it's, like, civilizations, and it's economics over here, and then it's, like, a little bit of the branches of government. And then it's… it's just kind of, like, all over the place. So I feel like it really depends on what branch you are teaching of social studies in general… will depend on my attitude towards it I guess. Um, because some are a lot more interesting than others…

Teacher A explained further,

> …let's just say government… government really excites me, but ancient civilizations makes me want to, like, hit my head against the wall. So it really does depend on the branch that you're looking at with social studies, will depend on how I view that.

During the interviews, Teacher A explained how she realized that her own experience with social studies could, and does, affect her ability to teach it,

> I feel terrible because I feel like this is a cycle of events. Like, I want to make a change in my own classroom because of the experience I had and I know the teachers that really stood out to me, so it's, like, I've got to make that same time and effort that those teachers did so that my students don't have a bad perception of social studies.

Teacher A later stated, "…I need to step up my game."

Teacher B. In reflecting on her own experience and how this relates to her ability to teach social studies, Teacher B shared the following,

> …I wanna love teaching it as much as I loved learning it, but I'm not sure that I do in the elementary setting. If I was a high school history teacher and that's all I had to do all day, I'm definitely sure I could come up with something better.

Teacher B drew comparisons between the teaching of social studies and the other subjects she was charged with teaching to her fourth grade students. Although she appreciated social studies more as a student herself, she still expressed how much she enjoyed teaching the subject overall in respect to other subject areas,

> I love teaching social studies. It's one of the better parts of my day, cuz it's almost like a break from reading.… I think that it's so important. I hate that it gets pushed aside, but it was one of my favorite things to teach last year in third grade as well.

Teacher C. When asked how her personal experiences with social studies as a student may have influenced her social studies instruction, Teacher C believed that it did not have an impact any longer. She stated, "... based on how I had social studies taught, I felt like everything now that I do… I don't feel like it's, you know, it's necessarily because I did or didn't have something…" Teacher C explained that as she became more comfortable with the content she was teaching, her appreciation for the subject matter grew,

> … I have started enjoying, like, the more that I've taught it. Um, like, my first year of teaching… it wasn't super great. I feel like every year I've, um, gotten better at it and have kinda of gotten… better teaching it…

She continued to explain,

> So I feel like… as I started getting more excited about those types of things I started taking more interest in teaching social studies and …all that to say, I've gotten more confident and enjoy teaching it more over, like, every year.

Teacher D. Teacher D was frank in her explanation of how she felt about teaching social studies. She stated she felt, "Not negative, or not positive… it's there. That's terrible, but I've got to be honest." She also explained, "I feel like it was one of those things that was just kind of there that I didn't really have passion for, that I would have to do a lot research…" This attitude she believed is due to how she experienced social studies herself,

> I just wish I was a better social studies teacher and how to learn to become one so, like, I kinda wish that I had a good experience with it as an elementary student because I feel like the experience that I had is what I'm giving my students now. Like, we'll do it if we can. And I think that's kinda my mentality of it, we didn't really do it and I'm okay so maybe…

Perception of Students

In addition to considering their own perception of how their social studies instruction may have been influenced by their previous experiences with the subject, the participants were asked to reflect on their elementary students, both the students' attitudes towards the subject of social studies and their ability in the subject at the beginning of the school year.

Attitudes towards social studies. Both Teacher C and Teacher B expressed that their students enjoy the subject of social studies and are interested in it. Teacher B explained that for her students, "…It's almost like a little bit of a break from teaching reading and language, and I kind of feel the students feel that way too." Teacher C shared, "Like, I'm enjoying it and I feel like they're enjoying it…. I mean, I think they all like it pretty well, but some of them are really getting into it."

Teacher A did not feel her third grade students felt the same way. During the initial focus group interview, Teacher A explained that a majority of her social studies instruction was centered around the use of a weekly student newspaper. Of this she stated, "…I mean, they read the newspapers, but they don't love it. You know?"

Teacher D's situation was unique compared to the other participants in the study, as social studies in her school, in her grade level, consisted of what was called "Round Robin Days". These days occurred twice during the school year, and consisted of one entire school day being devoted exclusively to social studies instruction. During "Round Robin Days", each first grade teacher taught one lesson six separate times, once to each classroom of first grade students. When asked during the interview how the students responded to this type of instruction she stated, "They love it." She continued on to say,

> …but the kids really do enjoy it, and it is fun, and they usually have something to take with them in a little suitcase that they fill up. So they are learning, but I don't know how much they're learning.

Ability in social studies. During the interview process, the participants were asked how prepared they felt their students were in social studies at the beginning of the school year. Teacher D, who taught first grade at the time this study was conducted, stated that her students

were "So young, not prepared." Teacher C also shared a similar sentiment, explaining that her fourth grade students were ill prepared, with the exception of a few, "… you know, each year I've had a couple of kids who are good at thinking that way, but, um, not really as a whole." Teacher A explained that some of her third grade students were prepared, but attributed this to their desire to read nonfiction text,

> …I do think that they come to us with background knowledge on certain events, but I also think that that comes from what the students choose to pick up and read. Because I've had a lot of students, like my boys especially, like, knowing things about certain wars, um, but that's because of the nonfiction books that they picked up to read for Accelerated Reader. It's not because the teacher before them taught them about the Civil War, about World War II, and Pearl Harbor and all that good stuff.

At the time of this study, Teacher B was in her first year teaching fourth grade, and had previously taught third grade in another school system. She compared both of the experiences in respect to difference in grade level preparedness, and the difference in the school district,

> …so I could definitely tell you last year they had never, like, done social studies before. For whatever reason, like, K-2… until they got to me in third grade, they didn't know, um, they didn't know what continent we lived on. They didn't know that there were seven continents. Like, when I got them, and that might have been the school system I was in too, um, but they just, like, had no background knowledge whatsoever. However, in fourth grade, and then it's a new school system too, I feel like they came to me definitely a little bit more prepared. And they just had, like, a really broad knowledge of social studies, but, like, I said no like true deep understanding. But it was definitely different at the different schools and at the different grade levels. I don't know if in third

> grade they just kind of, like, bring it up more or whatever it was, but they, um, did not… my third graders were like on an island; they had no idea what was going on. Which kind of made it more fun to teach too, um, because I could really dig in with them. But, my fourth graders definitely came to me with a little bit more background knowledge.

Practice of Teaching

The four participants were asked a series of questions during individual interviews, and notations were made during observations in the classrooms to gain a bigger picture on what each teacher's individual teaching practice looked like. Codes were developed that centered around their personal teaching style, lesson planning in general, and the practice of teaching social studies.

Teaching style. Each of the participants' style of teaching was examined by responses given during interviews and/or observations made during instructional time spent by the researcher in the participant's classroom.

Teacher A. When asked to explain her style of teaching, Teacher A described it in the context of teaching the subject of language arts,

> … my style of teaching.… I teach mini lessons. Um, so I'll take a skill or strategy in reading that we're looking at and I will teach a mini lesson, 10-15 minutes, on that skill and strategy. Um, and then I will have the students, um, do a literacy station for about 20 minutes, and then we will come back together and do another mini lesson on that same skill or that same strategy that we were looking at, but we might look at it in context that time.… they learn a little bit, and then they go apply it in a literacy center, and then they come back to me and we apply it for the second time, and then they're practicing it again,

and that way I'm meeting with small groups, whole group instruction, and then small group instruction.

The use of mini lessons, small group, and whole group instruction was present in Teacher A's observed social studies lesson as well. The lesson opened with students discussing at their seats their prior knowledge of producers and consumers. Teacher A moved around the room clarifying and redirecting during this initial stage of the lesson. Teacher A then moved into a whole group discussion, which included questioning on both the part of the teacher and the students. The objectives were posted on the Promethean Board, which were: *After today, I will be able to tell the difference between producers and consumers; After today, I will be able to identify trading patterns between countries and regions; After today, I will be able to compare trading patterns between countries and regions.* Teacher A had students repeat the objectives back to her line for line. She also utilized the practice of turn and talk. After each stated objective, students were charged with sharing their ideas with their classmates sitting beside them on the carpeted area.

The whole group lesson consisted of two main components: a virtual fieldtrip and a video. During the virtual field trip to a local co-op, which was conducted via Facetime, the students interacted with Mrs. M, the woman who ran the co-op. The students were allowed to ask questions and, to ensure the objectives of the lesson were addressed, Teacher A would stop and explain periodically,

So just to summarize everything that we've kind of talked about, you guys, the farmers… they produce the plants and, um, they just buy the seed from you so they're a consumer… consumer, um, but they also… they produced the plants that they actually plant inside the

ground, and we as… we go to Publix and Winn Dixie… we buy those vegetables or peanuts, and all that good stuff.

After the video was shown, small groups were charged with reading a portion of the weekly social studies newspaper, a student-friendly subscription-based newspaper, and were instructed to use a Chromebook to visit a website that featured imports and exports of the state in which they lived. During this time, Teacher A moved around to each group clarifying, redirecting, and managing student behavior.

Teacher A prided herself in being professional and reflective in her teaching practice. This was highlighted during her interviews,

> …just being committed and walking in every day on time. Just really proving myself in a way. I feel like that even goes far, knowing you're here for the right reasons and showing excellence in your work. Like, all of those things lend itself to opportunities. And so I feel, like, you can be a phenomenal teacher, but if you don't show up on time and professionally dress and you don't, you know, look professional in how you behave, like, I feel like that also can take away opportunities.

Teacher A added,

> …there's always something… like, I love to evaluate myself and I love talking through with other people, um, that are kind of doing similar things just so I can tweak, um, and so I always want to be a reflective teacher. So there's always things that I do want to change and if something worked and didn't work…

Reflective practice was apparent on the part of Teacher A during her interview after the observed social studies lesson on producers and consumers. Teacher A's comments highlighted

her ability to be reflective in her practice when she explained what she would do differently the next time she taught this lesson,

> I think a weakness would definitely be, um, just I guess the website that I attached, um, to their Google classroom account, um, I did preview the website, but it… some of my students are lower than others and so it wasn't… it wasn't a link that every student could have read through easily I guess is the best way to say it.

During this interview she also stated,

> I do have a tendency to move on quicker than… than I need to, and so maybe slowing down and, um, giving time… giving the students time to really think before I ask another question. Um, to probe their thinking, just allow that think time…

Teacher B. During the focus group interview, Teacher B reflected on what she considered a big take away from her first year of teaching and how this impacts her current teaching practice,

> …I will say this, like, the biggest thing I learned my first year is flexibility. Not everything is going to go how you think it's going to go. Timelines are going to change, lessons are going to change. I'm going to have an assembly here…

Like Teacher A, Teacher B also described her teaching style as placing an emphasis on the use of mini lessons, and a variety of grouping methods, in what she called a workshop model. She explained,

> Um, normally for my style of teaching I try to do, like, somewhat like a workshop model, um, if I can in all my subjects. So I'll usually start and, like, present the information, and we talk about learning targets. And then we have an opening, or a quick mini lesson, and then I kind of go over it. And then I let them either process the information, work on

> what we talked about, or talk about it- the information- with themselves. And then I kind of walk around and try to make sure that they're on track, and then I can pull students who may be off track. So if I hear conversation that's a little off, or there's some sort of confusion, I try to pull them back. Um, but for the most part I try to be very student-led, and student-centered in everything that I do. And the workshop really keeps me true to that…. I definitely try to do that in everything that I do. Social studies can be difficult just because sometimes it does kind of take the teacher standing up in front and telling what's going on, but I try to let them do as much of the work as possible, and let them explore. And then we kind of, like… like, I'll do a mini lesson, let them explore, and then we'll kind of talk about what they've learned.

The "workshop model" was not present in the observed social studies lesson. The lesson opened with students doing a short comprehension task from a teacher reproducible, which featured a famous individual from the state in which they lived. It read,

> *When Mae Jemison blasted into orbit around the Space Shuttle Endeavor on September 12, 1992, she became the first African American woman to go into space. Mae joined the National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA) in 1987. She worked as a science mission specialist and a researcher before going into space. Today Mae encourages young people to pursue jobs in science. Mae was born in* (city located in the state).

Students were charged with answering three comprehension questions: *Which word describes Mae?, When Mae blasted into space she was part of what organization?,* and *Mae wants young people to try jobs in science. What are three science-related jobs you could do?* Teacher B used these short comprehension tasks on a daily basis and received them from her partner teacher.

After the initial seatwork task, Teacher B went over the answers with the class and then instructed the students to read a section out of their textbooks. She had the page projected on the Promethean Board to ensure all students were on the correct page. After reading the section, Teacher B reviewed what was read. Students took a short break to attend physical education class, and then resumed with reading of the text and answering clarification questions posed by the teacher. Students raised their hands to answer questions, such as "…tell me one thing that you learned about the Declaration of Independence after reading this?, What is the main idea of the Declaration of Independence?, What are the three different branches of government?" The lesson came to an abrupt end when a timer went off indicating recess.

Teacher C. When asked to explain her teaching style, Teacher C placed emphasis on teacher- and student-led discussion,

> I enjoy having, um, discussion time and the kids also having time to think and share with one another. Um, I feel like in all subjects… we spend a lot of time discussing things and, um, turning and sharing their opinions or their thoughts on things and then coming back together as a group…. I guess try to keep them thinking, um, like in subjects, I don't… I'll wait to share the answers to things. Like, I'll want them to spend good time like attempting to struggle with things. Or I don't know if struggle… well yeah, struggle is the right word, um, and mull over things before I just give them the answers to things.

Discussion was at the forefront of the observed social studies lesson in Teacher C's classroom. The lesson opened with a review of the previous day's focus, which was *when* (emphasis added) settlers came to the state, and then proceeded to explain that the current lesson would be on *how* (emphasis added) settlers came to the state,

> So now we need to think about how they came. How in the world did people get here? How do we think that all these people got here? Cuz we know it was a lot. We talked about in ten years the population grew like 140,000, so a lot of people came in. I want you to think about how they may have come. Okay, turn and talk.

The lesson then unfolded with students completing a teacher-created graphic organizer, which consisted of fill-in-the black statements that were answered chronologically as the lesson went on. Multiple times through her explanation of how the settlers arrived in the state, students were asked questions such as, "Okay, why boat?" and "What made you say that?" and were charged with turning and talking to their neighbors. After the lecture, a game ensued in which students had large, laminated maps of the state in which they reside in front of them. Teacher C proceeded to answer yes or no questions generated from the students on her mystery location. During the after-observation interview, she explained that the game was played infrequently, and estimated maybe four or five times that school year, thus making it a special treat.

Teacher D. When asked to summarize her teaching style, Teacher D explained how she taught math, reading, and science,

> Um, we usually do, like, the whole group mini lesson and break off and do small groups. This is just, like, a typical math/reading… um, science is more whole group, get together, explore, kind of engage them for a second, and then explore it for awhile and then come back together and talk about our findings. Um, a lot of little whole group instruction, a lot of independent, um, work. And not research, but a lot of independent, student-led, students working together and then kind of meeting back together to wrap it up.

As Teacher D had not formally taught social studies at the time this research was conducted, and was not expecting to conduct a lesson until after the winter holiday break, an observation to observe her teaching style in social studies was not conducted. In lieu of this, an additional interview took place where she clarified "Round Robin Days", and explained the emphasis on science was due in part to a state initiative.

Lesson planning. Each participant shared what an average week looked like for her personal planning routine. Each was systematic and explained that the same procedures were carried out during a typical week. Each planned ahead to ensure that resources were available.

Teacher A. Teacher A preferred to plan on her own, and did not seek out collaborative support from her colleagues. She explained her planning process as such,

> …I do a lot of my planning at home, um, just so I break up the workload, and just so I'm not planning all the time at school. Um, I do a lot of planning during my plan period, but what I don't… what I don't get done I usually do at home. And so usually when I get home, I'm usually spending 30 minutes to an hour each night on grading papers and preparation for the next week.

In addition to explaining how she allocates time for planning each day both at home and at school, Teacher A explained that she begins her planning with language arts,

> …I usually start planning every Wednesday for the next week…. I take the skills and strategies we're looking at in reading that week, the genre we're looking at specifically. Um, I look at all the information that I'll be teaching and then I pull resources that really help emphasize those skills, strategies, and the genre.… So I usually just take all of what I'm teaching and find resources that go along with that.

Teacher A further explained how she plans for the subject of social studies by integrating it into her language arts plans,

> …I take the Social Studies Weekly that I'm given and I come up with either a creative lesson to integrate into my reading instruction, or we look at it, um, that Thursday or Friday, um, kind of separately from reading, and maybe use our skill or strategy in reading to apply in our Social Studies Weekly.

To explain why social studies was planned through only integration of the language arts, and not as an isolated subject, Teacher A elucidated that time was the biggest factor because she believed social studies lessons were often "extravagant" in nature,

> …so just making that time is just a huge weakness for me. And… and making time to, for example I could spend two hours planning this beautiful lesson plan, and then teaching it, and, um, it go great or not go great, and that's two hours that I've spent planning this really creative, innovative lesson and I just can't do it. I just can't do it every week.

Teacher B. Teacher B taught social studies to her fourth grade students every day for a total of 35 minutes as indicated by her weekly lesson plans. When planning, she preferred to collaborate weekly with both her partner teacher, who much like herself taught social studies every day, and her mentor teacher, another fourth grade teacher that was assigned to her for her first year at her new school. She shared the steps she takes when planning out her lessons,

> Okay so I try to plan a week ahead or so. So like I started planning today for next week. Um, I usually plan in my classroom during one of my breaks…. But I try to plan during my breaks, um, just in my classroom when I can.… I'm kind of, like, methodical about it. I usually write it all down first and make sure it makes sense in my head. Then I make

sure I have all the resources. And then when I'm sure that I have everything that I need, and that it all makes sense, and it's in a timely manner that will flow, then I go and I type it out. And then my typing it out, like my final product of my lesson plans.

Teacher C. Teacher C described that her colleagues depend on her to plan social studies for their team and then share the plans with them. She explained that as she had done a majority of the social studies plans the previous year, the planning was not as time consuming. She indicated that her colleagues have good intentions of providing her support in the planning process, but often do not, "…. I'm kind of carrying the weight and I'm farthest along. They're like 'well, where are you at?'. And so I'm saying where I am, 'can you send me your stuff?'…. they say 'I promise I'll get ahead and I'll help you', and I'll say 'okay', and then they don't…". She laid out her weekly planning routine as follows,

> So I plan here at school, um, and I have just like a lesson plan template. Um, and I just sit down and look at the upcoming week especially in science. So I've got that pretty well laid out, so I plug those things in. And then I take a look at math, um, and just kind of get a general outline of where I think we'll be, because you know some days, or some weeks, it takes more days to get things done. Um, and then in social studies I look back at the notes that I used last year, and, um, right now for social studies I'm taking, like, my written notes that I did last year and making them… those, um, fill-in-the-blanks notes for the kids. And so, um, I've kind of been creating stuff for social studies the week before I teach it. So as I go to plan, um, throughout that week, sometimes even into the week that I'm teaching it, I'll type those notes out and get those things prepared. Um, so I do it the week before.

Teacher D. Teacher D collaborated with her colleagues on every subject, with the exception of social studies. "… we touch on every subject, but because we're not bringing in social studies we have not collaborated with social studies." She explained her weekly lesson planning routine as follows,

> … I plan at my house usually around Sunday night. I get my plans ready for the following week, so not that week but the next week. Um, personally, and then I meet with another teacher on our grade level either Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday… just kind of what works out best. So I preplan and then we meet together to make sure we are meeting criteria for the week, make sure we have everything covered…

The subject of social studies. Instructional practices were observed by the researcher during the classroom observations, and mentioned either directly or indirectly by the participants during the interviews. Additional insight was gained from analysis of the weekly lesson plans provided by the participants and analyzed using the Analysis of Weekly Lesson Plan Rubric (see Appendix D), which was designed with the NCSS's guidelines for teaching and learning of social studies. These data were coded under the first order category- instructional practices- and under the second order categories- collaborative learning, cooperative learning, debate, differentiation, discussion, games, independent seatwork, inquiry based, lecture, note taking, presentations, productive struggle, project based, questioning, technology integration, and use of visual aids.

In addition, data were coded for resources utilized by the participants in their observed lesson, listed in their weekly lesson plans, or stated during interviews. These data were coded under the first order category- resources- and under the second order categories- digital

presentations, field trips, online sources, primary sources, textbook, trade book, weekly magazine, and workbook.

Teacher A. In reviewing both Teacher A's schedule, and the six weeks of weekly lesson plans she provided, no isolated time was designated exclusively for the subject of social studies. Stated on her posted schedule, which was available on her website at the time the research was conducted, social studies was integrated into the subject of language arts. When asked to explain what social studies looked like in her classroom, Teacher A shared what she and a colleague did one summer to address the teaching of social studies in their third grade classrooms,

> …her and I one summer we looked at our Wonders curriculum, which is our reading series, and our Social Studies Weeklies that we get. We don't get textbooks. Um, those are the two, um, like things that we teach out of- the curriculum's resources. Um, we looked at each Social Studies Weekly that would match with what the skills and strategies we were teaching in, um, reading that week so we kind of integrated it. So each week, what my social studies block looks like is it's integrated within a reading literacy center…

Teacher A shared that if time permitted; the students would use the weekly social studies newspaper with a partner and complete a graphic organizer, or perhaps watch a short video. As she explained, "… if time, that key word *if* (emphasis added) … on Thursday or Friday we will open that Social Studies Weekly…".

Teacher A expressed that teaching the subject of social studies left her with a feeling of being "inexperienced". She also drew comparisons between her preparation for social studies and her preparation for language arts, "So it's not anything awesome and fun like I try to plan for reading and writing." She expressed a desire to make it more engaging for her students,

> And I wish, like, I wish I could do these fun things, like, in every subject. And I wish that I could really get into social studies and, you know, prepare these extravagant lessons because really the kids like… I mean they read the newspapers, but they don't love it. You know?

When asked what her ideal social studies lesson would look like, Teacher A referenced a lesson she had taught during her internship, in which her cooperating teacher handed her the weekly social studies magazine, giving her free reign and a week to plan,

> So what I did is basically took, um, everything from that Social Studies Weekly and I typed up a scavenger hunt dealing with all of that information. Um, and then I prearranged partners for the students, and just gave them like a little envelope full of information, kind of like the *Amazing Race*, and where they had to pop around, um, and each little, um, article that they read dealt with what the Social Studies Weekly was teaching. So instead of sitting at a desk and reading through the Social Studies Weekly, they were going around the room and experiencing it and being able to talk through with a partner. Um, and it was a race so of course, like, music is playing in the background, and they, um, have a little outline that they are filling in as they go and really getting to work with someone else and experience, um, that.

When asked if this type of lesson had been conducted since internship, Teacher A stated, "But have I done that in my classroom this year in social studies? No. It's not really… that's the thing."

During her interviews, Teacher A addressed the use of three instructional practices in her social studies classroom on a regular basis: discussion, independent seatwork, and the practice of researching. Both discussion and the practice of researching were present in the observed social

studies lesson. However, in this lesson the instructional practices of collaborate and cooperative learning techniques, questioning, and technology integration were present as well.

In Teacher A's observed social studies lesson, students discussed in small groups in a think-pair-share format, and worked together in groups of two and three using a Chromebook to gather information on a teacher-selected website about the producers and consumers from the state in which they reside. Teacher A also organized a virtual field trip to a co-op via Facetime where students were able to direct questions to Mrs. M., an employee of the co-op. In Teacher A's weekly lesson plans, this lesson was the most detailed lesson by far. For example, in the weekly lesson plans for the weeks of August 28th – September 1st, and September 4th – September 8th the integrated social studies plans read, "Social Studies: *The Lemonade War*" for all five days. Whereas, on the day of the observed lesson, the weekly social studies plans indicate it as, "Social Studies Weekly: Week 24- Facetime with Mrs. M. to discuss producers vs. consumers, research groups on what [state] produces and consumes from other places".

Teacher A's weekly lesson plans also indicated the materials she primarily used in teaching social studies. According to the six weeks of plans provided, Teacher A utilized the weekly social studies magazine and a trade book, *The Lemonade War* (Davies, 2007), consistently as her major resources. During the observed lesson, however, in addition to the weekly social studies magazine, Teacher A also included the use of a digital presentation, online sources, and two primary sources (a map and a virtual presenter from a local co-op). Field trips were addressed in Teacher A's interviews. However, at the time this research was being conducted, none of the three scheduled field trips pertained to the subject of social studies and were all related to science.

Teacher B. In exploring her own practice of teaching the subject of social studies, Teacher B contrasted the two experiences she had had thus far: her first year, in which she taught third grade in a Title 1 school, in an inner city school system, and the present school year, in which she taught fourth grade in a resource rich environment. During the focus group interview, she shared that social studies was the subject she enjoyed to teach most, but that was not necessarily the circumstance currently. She stated, "Last year it was my favorite thing I taught." When asked, "And now?" She continued, "I'm trying to put it into words… I mean, I like it. I like teaching social studies I just feel… it's like incomplete almost. I mean, I'm not serving them fully with it. Whereas last year I felt like I was, for whatever reason." To summarize her typical social studies lesson in her fourth grade classroom she stated, "Today we looked at the textbook, for sure, and sat and talked about it for 20 minutes, and that was social studies today." Teacher B's instructional practices used in teaching social studies during the time the research was conducted were shaped by two things: first and foremost, the influence of her colleagues, and second, the fourth grade state standards for social studies. In respect to the influence of her colleagues, she stated,

> … the ones that I'm, like, mainly working with and planning with, like my team teacher it's kind of just, like, okay get this done, get this done, and we'll move onto this. And we'll do this chapter and this chapter, and we'll move onto this. And I'm like, I wish we could just kind of, like, pause and, like, really delve deeper into some of it. I feel like we're covering it, but it's a surface level coverage. There's not… we're not really digging into the rigor of any of it.

The second factor that influenced her instructional practices were the fourth grade state standards for social studies, which have a heavy emphasis on the state's own history, and made it

a challenge for her to find a variety of resources, "But it's tough with [state] history. I mean, it's just so specific…. I mean, so it's really narrowed down, which makes it harder." In reviewing Teacher B's weekly lesson plans and her responses to questions during interviews, she listed the use of digital presentations, field trips, online sources, primary sources, the textbook, and various workbooks in order to teach social studies. Like many fourth grade students in the state, the fourth graders at her school would all be traveling to the state capital at the end of the year, which is roughly an hour and a half drive from the school. She explained that this field trip was a "…culminating, end-of-the-year thing for social studies", in which the students would need to have learned about the state's government, the state's history, and the native people to the state. In addition to this field trip, a trip to an environmental center had a small focus on social studies, although it was primarily a science-based field trip. As she explained, "…a lot of it also related back to Native Americans, which is one of our standards. So that was another big social studies based trip too. It was kind of a mix between social studies and science."

Primary sources were not used in the observed lesson, and evidence of their use in her lesson plans was only through the listing of maps. However, the use of primary sources was addressed by Teacher B during the initial focus group interview as having a profound impact on her social studies teaching practice when she was able to take a unit she created during her undergraduate social studies methods course and share it on Teachers-Pay-Teachers. The resources that Teacher B did rely heavily on were the textbook and two workbooks, as she explained in both her interviews and the observed social studies lesson. Of the two workbooks used, one was a teacher reproducible book, in which students read short biographies each day and answered literal questions from the reading. The other was a student workbook that accompanied the textbook.

The instructional practices that Teacher B used in her observed lesson and what was shared in her interviews were different. The observed lesson relied heavily on independent seatwork and lecture. The students read silently to themselves from the text, and Teacher B reviewed what was read and asked recall-level questions. For example, after students read a section of the text entitled *The Declaration of Independence Gave Birth* (Bower, 2014), Teacher B asked the following questions: "What'd we learn? Who was the young guy that they talked about? What'd he do? What is the main idea of the Declaration of Independence?" In her after-observation interview, Teacher B shared some of the seatwork the students had done on early exploration, "…we're doing graphic organizers to help us keep the different explorers separated…. And we've been kind of been filling that in as we read and kind of just talking about it, and making connections between the different explorers…"

In the interviews, Teacher B mentioned the use of discussion, inquiry, and project-based discovery on the part of the students, and questioning. Student-created regional maps were hung on the wall outside the classroom and were mentioned when Teacher B explained how important project-based learning was to her practice, as she wished social studies could be hands-on, "… we've made, like, this five regions… technically there's seven, to be more specific. We've made, like, a map and it was just, like, the more hands-on I can make it the more into it they are." From what Teacher B recalled, her own social studies experiences as a student relied heavily on projects, and thus was what she strived to use in her own social studies classroom.

In her previous year of teaching, Teacher B explained that she was able to make it more project-based as compared to the current year, the year in which this research was conducted,

> I would like to do a little more projects. Last year I did all projects. I didn't do any tests. We didn't have a textbook. I just strictly did third grade projects, and it was a lot of, like, economics and things like that in third grade, and we had a blast and I loved it…

In addition, when asked to explain her ideal social studies lesson, Teacher B stressed the importance of it being project based,

> …definitely something that's project based, but with primary sources.... I really enjoy having the students use primary sources, and analyzing them where there's, like, pictures, or documents, or whatever, that they can read and understand. I really think that that's important for them to see what it was like then. And then having them build some sort of project out of, like, either them making a presentation and presenting it, or them putting on, like, a little skit to represent something, or then building something to represent what happened in the past… definitely some sort of primary source that leads to some sort of project.

In her after-observation interview, Teacher B did note an upcoming social studies and language arts project where students would write about a famous individual from the state in which they reside. However, it was a language arts project, and when asked what social studies standard would be met specifically, Teacher B explained, "I don't think it is a social studies standard. I think it's just a writing standard, and we just pull in the social studies. So it's not necessarily a standard for fourth grade."

Teacher C. For Teacher C, who like Teacher B taught fourth grade at the time this study was conducted, making social studies a priority is important. She taught social studies each day for 45 minutes, and credited her level of comfort in teaching the subject to a lot of personal research and practice. As she stated, "… this is my second year with fourth grade, so last year

we did a lot of note-taking just through the chapters and we would talk. But now I know the history, and so I feel way more confident. I'm not just reading from my notes." In her observed social studies lesson, the instructional practices present were: collaborative learning, use of a game, lecture, note taking, questioning, and integration of technology. Additionally, during her interviews she addressed the use of discussion. For her, allowing her students the opportunity to "… think and form their own opinion" was important, as she herself felt ill-prepared in this area as a student.

Teacher C shared that her observed lesson was typical of her regular routine in teaching the subject of social studies. The students had a teacher-created fill-in-the-blank note sheet to complete as she lectured. Teacher C referred to her lectures as storytelling. She explained storytelling as, "…getting into it and talking about what someone's probably thinking and, like, using our slang and our language now. Just trying to make it more relatable, and ask them 'how do you think it felt?'." When asked what social studies typically looked like in her classroom she explained,

> …right now it looks kind of like me story telling a lot. Um, the kids have notes and there is some fill in the blank. Um, and just kind of talking about what, like, time period we're in. We've got, like, a timeline of events. Kind of, like, as we've started the year and kind of working through the year we'll add to it, just talking about what's been going on…

At her after-observation interview, Teacher C explained that she created the fill-in-the-blank sheets for her students because the previous year the note-taking was done by hand, and for some students this was difficult to keep up with, especially those with learning difficulties. Teacher C believed this approach was effective, but recognized areas for growth. When asked about the

strengths and weaknesses of her observed lesson she stated, "… I think the strengths were the directness of it…. I think the way that I present the information is somewhat engaging, but I think there are better ways to do it than how I did it as well." Her observed lesson also included a collaborative learning game. Teacher C explained that this game was only used a handful of times and, based on the students' reactions, this was considered a special treat. The game consisted of pairs of students receiving large, laminated maps of the state in which they reside. Teacher C selected a mystery location, but did not share it with the students. Students were allowed to ask up to 20 questions that could be answered with yes or no responses from Teacher C. Students could be heard during the two rounds of the game discussing questions that would narrow the focus and, thus, reveal the answer to her mystery location.

The textbook and online sources were Teacher C's primary resources in developing her lessons. As she explained, "… I use the textbook beforehand. Um, like. I know what's in there and so I'm just kind of storytelling what we would be reading." When asked to describe her ideal social studies lesson, she incorporated primary sources. However, when reflecting on the observed lesson that was conducted, she explained that she finds it a challenge to incorporate them on a regular basis. She stated,

> … ideally I would use primary… more primary sources. But I know it would take a couple of class periods for us to even read it, and like dig through, and discuss even what it's saying, cuz it's not written, you know, how we would talk nowadays…

When asked if primary sources existed that could be used for the observed lesson she had taught on how early settlers immigrated to the state, Teacher C shared that she knew of letters where early settlers had written to their family and friends to share travel conditions, or to convince

them to move as well. Teacher C opted not to use these due to time constraints. She explained, "… what time I do use I think, okay, what is the standard, how can I give them information?"

As the case with Teacher B, Teacher C also found it a challenge to find a variety of resources that are applicable to teaching the state social studies standards, which focus on the state in which they reside. During the focus group interview she explained,

> … since it's fourth grade, it's [state in which they reside] specific, and so a lot of stuff on there (the state learning exchange website) doesn't tie into the standard. I mean, sometimes it teaches the content, but, like, if the kids are going to explain the social and economic and the whatever else effects of these things…. I just feel like some of the resources online don't hit the standard.

Teacher C would also be taking her students to the state capital on a field trip near the end of the school year as a culminating activity. In addition, her students would be taking a field trip to see a play about Rosa Parks, a famous activist during the Civil Rights Movement.

Teacher D. At the time this research was conducted, which was approximately a little over a quarter of the way into the school year, Teacher D expressed that she felt "unprepared" in the practice of teaching the subject of social studies to her first grade students. She explained that with the focus on science instruction being so prevalent in her school, she had taught very little of the subject thus far. As explained, her grade level team taught social studies in what were called "Round Robin Days", which occurred twice during the school year. To get a better picture of this special social studies event, she explained what the two "Round Robin Days" encompassed. The first one, taking place at the beginning of the school year, focused on Johnny Appleseed, which she said she did not believe addressed a first grade social studies standard.

The second "Round Robin Day" would take place in the spring, and would cover key information about the state in which they reside. Teacher D summarized,

> …we try to hit a standard, and cover the whole standard…. so, like, if we're doing [state in which they reside] history you might teach me about the state capitol, and you might teach me about the state bird, and you might teach me about famous people in the state, and you might teach me about state landmarks.

She continued, "…but, like, that was that standard and then done, over."

In reviewing Teacher D's weekly lesson plans, 125 minutes were allocated each week for science and social studies, but out of the nine weeks of plans provided, only three indicated social studies instruction, with two of them being a carryover lesson using the weekly social studies magazine. Teacher D explained that the weekly social studies magazine was the only resource she was using currently at the time this research was conducted. She explained what the weekly social studies magazine looked like for her first grade students, "… a very vague pamphlet, um, that might talk about rights and responsibilities. It might talk about, um, monuments. It might talk about state symbols, or our country's symbols." She noted that it was brief and "… might only take 10 minutes as a whole group…" and "…right now it's looking like a 15 minute time slot where we are throwing it in where we can." When she did teach social studies, Teacher D described what this lesson looks like,

> … about a 15 minute lesson possibly weekly or biweekly, um, bringing in prior experience or prior knowledge, and, um, teaching from that prior knowledge or either teacher information based on the studies weekly that we have so far.

In addition to the weekly social studies magazine, the other resource that Teacher D mentioned in her interviews as assessable to her for her social studies instruction was a collection

of trade books. However, she had not used them and was unsure of their whereabouts, "Our grade level has some trade books. I don't know where they are, but I know we have this set of trade books that goes along with our standards, and goes along with our studies weekly."

When asked about her ideal social studies lesson, Teacher D said it would be project-based. She explained,

> It would be something we build on each day. So like, if we were talking about different habitats or different geological places we might, um… some friends might work together doing a plateau, or some friends might work together doing a river. Or if we were making a map, like kind of working in teams and talk about maps, and bring in prior knowledge and have them research it a little bit and then have them create a map…

The researcher was not able to conduct a formal observation of her social studies instruction, as Teacher D did not have it scheduled in her plans until after the New Year.

Marginalization

The four participants cited several reasons why social studies was not allotted the same amount of energy and time as other core subjects they were charged with teaching. Reasons given had overlap and were coded as: administrative support, professional development, resources, integration with other subjects, priorities, self-efficacy, teacher support, and time.

Administrative support. The subject of social studies did not garner the same support from the participants' administrators as other core subjects. Additionally, for one participant, this not only included the core subjects of the language arts, science, and math, but also included recess. In an interview, Teacher B shared what had happened at her school, School B, before she was on staff that has affected her ability to teach social studies,

> … if they hear that their child didn't get to go outside for that certain amount of… or they only went outside for like 10 minutes, then they go to the administration. It was a really big problem before I was there, I think like two years ago. A really big issue, and the administration I think kinda just had it and they were like, 'Whatever, just find time.' And the only time I have it cuts out a little bit of my language and it cuts out a little bit of my social studies. Um, so that's kind of frustrating in a way, but I mean we still… I still get about 20 minutes every day.

Teacher B added,

> I just feel kind of pressured from… my administration. Not that I shouldn't be doing social studies, but almost like make sure they have reading down, then you can get to social studies if you have time.

Both Teacher B and Teacher D, who work at separate schools, had nearly identical comments about the perceived support from their administrators they had in teaching social studies. Teacher B stated, "…I don't think I've ever heard them talk about it ever." And Teacher D stated,

"…I've never heard them talk about that." Teacher C also expressed that her administration did not talk about social studies, and explained a time when she desired to attend a professional development conference put on by the state social studies council and had approached her administrators about it,

> But social studies is never talked about, like admin… we'll go to training, like math and reading training, and you know pd and stuff, but like I mentioned there's some kind of social studies fall thing. I mentioned it to the administration and I was… and I'd already mentioned going to the math and they're like 'well, you've got to pick one'.

Professional development. The school district in which the participants work is rich with resources and provides professional development in the summer, as well as throughout the year both at the district level and at each school. Teacher B, who was new to the school system, had previously taught one year in an urban school system in the same area. Her previous school system had been taken over in the past by the state department of education and was at an economic disadvantage as funding was tight. She explained that previously she had attended "… like one or two P.D. sessions last year, tops." Comparatively, this school year in her new system, she had already attended four the past summer, and had two coming up. She stated that they "… grant a lot of opportunity if you want it, not in social studies." Teacher A stated something of a similar nature when asked about professional development in social studies, "I can never recall going or even hearing about opportunities. It's all science right now, and then math and reading is like the huge emphasis."

During the focus group interview Teacher B, Teacher C, and Teacher D explained what might occur if they expressed an interest in professional development in social studies to their administrators,

> Teacher B: "Maybe if I, like, brought up a social studies and I was, like, hey… I don't know what my administrators…"
>
> Teacher C: "They would probably let you teach it. Or, like, let you come up with… 'I can do a number talks P.D.'. Like, does that make sense?" (All four participants nodded in agreement.)
>
> Teacher D: "Cuz I feel like a lot of the time it's, like, oh you're very good with your behavior management, you know Daily Five, so why don't you get together and you do this pd and you do this pd…. But I don't think they bring anybody in."

Additional questions were asked during the focus group interview about professional development, one being *In what areas would you benefit from more professional development? Why?* Of the four participants, two did not mention a need for social studies; they addressed topics such as technology in small reading groups, higher-order math tasks, and student-led projects. The other two participants, who both taught fourth grade, expressed more of a desire for high-quality social studies resources than for professional development.

Resources. Teacher B and Teacher C both teach fourth grade. The standards for fourth grade focus specifically on the state in which they reside. According to the state's course of study (2010),

> Fourth-grade students apply geographic concepts obtained in Grade 3 to a study of their own state and relate geography to history, economics, and politics in (state). They examine ways economic and political institutions respond to the needs of [people in the state]. Students gain knowledge of economic principles and technological advancements as well as knowledge of past events and present-day practices in the state. They learn specific characteristics regarding the land and its people and analyze diverse groups that contributed to the development of [state], beginning with early American Indians in [state] and continuing to the present. Fourth-graders' enthusiasm for classifying and organizing information may be used for obtaining knowledge about geographic regions in [state]. Students investigate [state's] role in the Civil War, civil rights efforts, and the structure of state and local governments. They compare similarities between contemporary issues and their historical origins and draw parallels among historical events in [state], other states, and the world (p. 25).

Being charged with teaching this, both Teacher B and Teacher C expressed a struggle with finding high-quality resources to use. Teacher C explained how she felt the standards were very specific and made it a challenge to find resources online, "… I just feel like the resources, it's hard to find resources." Teacher B expressed a similar struggle, "You can't get on, like, Teachers-Pay-Teachers and find, like, two things come up. So, um, that does make it hard too which I think… also why I rely so much on the textbook, and so much on the workbook." She continued, "I mean, so it's, like, really narrowed down, which makes it harder."

Integrated with other subjects. Of the four teachers, two spoke of integrating social studies and language arts. In order to meet language arts standards, Teacher A used a subscription-based social studies newspaper. She defended the purpose of integrating social studies into the language arts by stating, "…like, I feel like just having them be able to see it's across the subjects. The skills that we're learning in reading can be applied in social studies." She explained how she initially planned this with a colleague one summer,

> …her and I looked at our reading Wonders and our Social Studies Weeklies- those are the two resources with reading and social studies- and we took every Social Studies Weekly that would match with the skill and strategy that was being taught in reading. And so that way we can… if we're teaching, you know, about economics we can tie it with what streamlines with the Wonders unit. Like, if it's, like, ask and answer questions in nonfiction text, then we kind of, like, streamlined it to where we could integrate reading and social studies. And so that way we thought that, you know, even if it's on the backburner, like, the kids are getting exposed to it in reading.

Teacher B also addressed integration of social studies into language arts through a grade level project on famous individuals from the state. She explained that the students would be writing a

three-paragraph essay, by conducting research on an individual that has contributed to society, "… it has to be a person who has really done a lot." During the interview, Teacher B was asked what standards this famous person project addressed. She responded, "Yes, it meets their research standard.… I'm actually not sure what social studies standard…" She proceeded to look it up and found, "I don't think it is a social studies standard; I think it's just a writing standard, and we just pull in the social studies. So it's not necessarily a standard for fourth grade."

Priorities. As addressed previously, Teacher B had to prioritize recess above the teaching of social studies, and expressed that because of this it was "… pushed on the backburner for sure." In an interview she explained,

> Even though we do swap, we are pretty much required to have 20 minutes of recess at least every day, and that 20 minutes of recess is often in the middle of social studies. I mean, it really is, and I hate that cuz, like, every day I feel like I'm struggling to get to everything.

During her individual interview, Teacher A recalled as a student that her own social studies teachers would often struggle to find time to teach social studies. She too experienced a similar struggle, as the other core subjects often took precedence,

> … I think the idea of a beautiful social studies lesson is awesome. But, like, emphasis on reading and math and science now with the new science standards… social studies gets on the back burner every single… every single week.

Teacher A continued, "…but ideally, like, our most amount of time is going to go to reading, and writing, and science, and math, and if we get to social studies, we get to social studies." To explain further in her individual interview, she expounded,

> …reading, when I have about two and a half hours, reading and language arts in itself is about an hour and forty-five minutes, when you do reading, language arts, grammar, cursive, and writing. And so, to give social studies a little bit of that time every day is just not going to happen.

She continued,

> I mean, we do social studies if we get to it. It's more like we're reading it and then do the crossword puzzle on the back, and do a graphic organizer here and there, because reading, math, and now science with the new standards is such an emphasis and such a push…

In addition to the other core subjects of language arts, math, and science taking priority over social studies, Teacher A also explained that most weeks social studies is pushed aside due to unforeseen events,

> And so just, like, all of these, like, little events… and so of course, and then on Friday the students took longer on their reading test normally. And then with switching classes, just like all these hiccups that throughout the week that I just had to kind of toss social studies.

Teacher D explained that social studies had not been taught in her first grade classroom, and would not be taught until after the holidays, with the exception of one "Round Robin Day". The reason being, she rationalized, was due to "…a push for science right now…". Teacher D clarified that the state department sent kits of science materials to qualifying schools on a rotating basis, for a fixed period of time,

> …but since we have these science kits, this semester we have not pushed social studies this semester.… each of those kits is here for… the first one is here for a semester. The

second one is, I think, is only a nine weeks kit. So right now, since we have the kit, it is a very long duration we have it from beginning of September, or maybe even end of August to beginning of December. So right now we are only focusing on, um, science during our science time.

Self-efficacy. The participants were asked a series of questions during their individual interviews to gauge how confident and competent they perceived themselves to be in teaching the subject of social studies. Teacher A explained that this depended on the discipline she was focusing on,

> … I feel confident. I feel like the branches of social studies that I as a child, um, that I was clearly taught, um, those are the branches, um, I feel like those are a lot of the subject or the branches that I had a lot of exposure to. Um, but then there's some branches of history that I don't understand personally, so I have to do a lot of research and background knowledge in… in order to teach it. So I don't feel confident if that's the case.

Teacher A continued,

> So I would say that I'm confident in certain areas, but then other areas that I have not researched and other areas that I have not a good solid foundation in learning, um, I am not as confident in that.

Teacher B felt confident and competent in teaching the subject of social studies due to her enjoyment and success in learning the subject as a student herself, "… I feel like I'm pretty knowledgeable about a lot of things we talk about… just because I did enjoy social studies as, um, a student."

For Teacher C, who at the time this research was conducted had taught fourth grade two consecutive years, felt that her competency had grown and, thus, so had her confidence. However, although she felt more confident and competent in teaching social studies, Teacher C explained that she would not necessarily welcome others to observe her teach the subject. She explained,

> I feel like if someone were to say, 'Oh I'd love to come in and see your social studies lesson'; I think that would make me uncomfortable. Um, but, I… I enjoy teaching it. I look forward to teaching it, I guess.

When asked, Teacher D placed her confidence and competency on a scale of 1-10. She explained,

> Um, one out of 10, like a six, maybe a seven. It'd be something I'd definitely have to study up on the day before or the week before or the unit before…. I would feel confident in the way to present it. I think my weakness would be not having much experience.

Teacher support. Being novice teachers, the participants found their colleagues' perceptions of social studies impacted their social studies instruction. At the time this research was conducted, Teacher D had not taught social studies to her first grade students, as that was what her grade level team had established. Teacher A explained that while her grade level team does discuss social studies, it is limited to the weekly newspaper, "…the only thing that my grade level really talks about, which is sad, is, like, what Social Studies Weekly are you doing this week?" Teacher A continued,

> The only conversation that we have is, 'you're doing social studies week four this week, right?' It's not ever, like, okay well let's sit down, and let's come up with an activity that

> will go over this topic that we're talking about in social studies. It's never that. That's all for, like, reading and writing that we collaborate and really plan for.

Teacher B, being new to the school and the system, relied heavily on her colleagues for support. She had been assigned a grade level mentor, and had a partner teacher to go to for help. She shared both of their attitudes towards the subject of social studies. Her partner teacher had been teaching for many years and, thus, saw social studies as a series of tasks to check off of a long to-do list. Her mentor teacher expressed even more of a blasé attitude toward the subject,

> … my mentor teacher, I love her, she was like, 'I'm just going to tell you right now…. I'm a boring social studies teacher…. I'm not… you're going to look at my lesson plans and you're going to see textbooks and you're going to see workbook pages, and that's what we do', and I was, like, 'okay'…. cause I, like, always look at her.

When Teacher B had explained about the grade level famous individuals research project that her colleagues had created prior to her working at the school, she addressed that although the project did not meet any state social studies standards, she went along with it because, "So it's, like, an all fourth grade project. So I'm just kind of… and they've done it for a few years. So I'm kind of going off what they've done in the past."

Teacher C, who had the most classroom experience of the four participants, and the only one who at the time of this study had a masters degree, explained that her colleagues actually depended on her for support in teaching social studies,

> Some of them say they really like to teach social studies, but just, like, their preparation maybe doesn't show. But, like, I'm kind of carrying the weight…. Like, I'm kind of creating everything and just passing along.

When asked to give advice for future elementary classroom teachers who would be charged with teaching social studies, Teacher C expressed the limited amount of support they would likely receive, "…you may not have tons of support in teaching this, from coworkers or really anywhere. You're not gonna have much support." Interestingly, when discussing professional development opportunities, Teacher C explained her perception of what her colleagues would think if social studies workshops were offered, "And I feel like if it was, I feel like there would honestly be negativity and pushback from people."

Time. Overwhelmingly, throughout several interviews, the participants all cited time as being a reason why social studies was not taught with the same frequency and duration as the other core subjects they were charged with teaching; time in planning, as well as instructional time in the classroom, were mentioned again and again. Teacher A stated that her biggest weakness overall with the subject was, "… making the time for teaching social studies." She emphasized that the planning of social studies for her was time consuming and, thus, was a "huge weakness" for her. She felt planning social studies lessons needs to be elaborate and labor intensive on her part, and was not something she could do every week. Teacher A shared that this was the process when she was an intern. Her cooperating teacher had charged her with planning social studies. She described how she would be given the topic a week before and that would be her major responsibility for the following week. Here she describes the elaborate lessons she planned,

> I had all week to plan that one lesson. That is not ideal in the classroom now, you know. So I would do these, like, crazy things. I would take the Social Studies Weekly and I would come up… like, I would make a scavenger hunt and, like, it would be, like, you know, American Trade. I remember doing one, and I had this big butcher paper and, like,

> they had a scavenger hunt. Their clues were underneath their desks and they would be on their partner team and *Mission Impossible* music going. It was so fun, and so energetic. But have I done that in my classroom this year in social studies? No. It's not really… that's the thing.

She added, "So I wish that I could really, like, take the time to plan, like, really fun lessons that they are engaged with, and that's what I took away from internship…"

Teacher B explained a similar experience from her internship as Teacher A, in which she was charged with planning social studies,

> …she gave me free reign with social studies and I got to do, like, a whole map skills unit with them that was awesome and I had a great time… never going to be able to do it in my classroom cuz it took so much planning time.

In addition to having more time to plan in internship when social studies was one of her few instructional responsibilities, Teacher B also felt she had more time to plan and teach social studies the previous year, when she was in another district and teaching another grade level. To explain more about the impact of time on her teaching of social studies in her current classroom, Teacher B explained,

> … time is definitely a weakness. Um, time presenting, and also time planning. Like, I definitely don't put as much time into planning social studies as I do the other subjects. Um, so if I put more time into it I definitely think that would be better…

She continued,

> It's just the time frame that I have it in is not great. Like, if I had all the time in the world I think I'd be an excellent social studies teacher, but right now I'm kind of an okay social

studies teacher because I either don't give myself the time or I'm kinda restricted by other things… um, to really dive in as deep as I would like to.

Teacher C was frank in explaining how time does limit her in the quality of her instruction in social studies. She explained,

> …to say that I don't have time I feel, like, is not true. I could make time. So I can't, I can't really… like, I guess maybe procrastinating is the right word. But just myself not making the time to make it better.

In the interview that was conducted after her observation, Teacher C described how using rich resources takes more instructional time for the students and, thus, with the amount of information to cover, makes it a challenge. She would like to use primary sources more, but these "would take a couple class periods for us to even read it", thus making it too time consuming with the amount of material she needs to cover in a school year.

For Teacher D, if she finds the time to teach social studies, she does so when she can. She explained further,

> I think a lot of it is just time.… with first grade, it's such a big push with the whole reading, writing, and math. But a lot of it is a time-specific factor. I mean, we said… we have all the resources in the world and we have opportunities to get resources, but we don't have the time to use them.

Advice

During the interview process, the participants were asked to give advice for future teachers of social studies, as well as instructors of undergraduate social studies methods courses.

To social studies methods professors. When asked to give advice to instructors of undergraduate social studies methods courses, Teacher C professed that much of what she

experienced herself "was great" but that she believed it was important to relay to preservice teachers how marginalized social studies is as a core subject, and the challenges that would likely lay ahead for them in the teaching of the subject. Teacher D expressed that she wished instructors "would be more realistic" at the university level. Both Teacher B and Teacher A shared how much they would have appreciated seeing social studies taught in mini lessons. In addition, both teachers would have liked to receive support in how to integrate social studies with another core subject. As Teacher A explained,

> I feel like I would have loved to have known, um, as a future educator that social studies is yes very important, but if you only get 10 or 15 minutes in your day to teach it, or twice a week, this is what you need to focus on. Or this is what… this is how to teach in that allotted amount of time, or this is how you can integrate across grade levels.

To preservice teachers. Giving advice to those that would soon follow in their footsteps was a bit of a challenge for the participants, especially for Teacher C. She stated, "I feel weird giving advice because what I'm going to say are not things that I always do". During the focus group interview, Teacher C shared that, when it comes to the subject of social studies, teachers should,

> … make teaching it a priority. And, like, using your resources, like, with your librarian or your art teacher can help. I mean, if you've got great ones that are willing to come in, or just to help with things as well… try to keep morale high in your teammates who also teach it. Cuz we've all got different opinions about it…

During her follow-up interview, she not only highlighted the need to make teaching social studies a priority, but also "… if you don't have interest in it, find some interest. Learn about it

because, um, when you are excited about things, kids tend to get more excited about things as well."

Teacher B stressed the need to make social studies project-based and engaging. However, she did express that this was not always possible, and often times difficult to do. Teacher D stressed flexibility, and like Teacher C, the need to make it a priority, " I don't always do it, but just make time for it because the kids usually don't get it and it's something they really enjoy."

Finally, Teacher A expressed a need to find mentors who are strong in teaching the subject of social studies, both during the field placement process and once out in the field on their own. She explained,

> … I would say, during internship, ask around who feels confident and secure in teaching social studies and go watch that person. Go watch how they teach, because I felt like as a substitute and as an intern I learned the most… I learned the most because I was able to get in there on a day, go in as a sub, and get in a lesson plan and teach it. So I feel like seeing… like, I popped into a few classrooms during my internship to see how different teachers taught, and I learned so much just by doing that. So I would say, like, talk to the school and see if you can observe that teacher for a 30-minute duration, and then take notes, and then have a conversation and a follow-up with that teacher.

Chapter V: Conclusion

To be effective, one must be reflective. To confirm that objectives and goals are met, one must partake in regular reflection and evaluate the success of the endeavor. This is especially crucial in the field of education. As Maya Angelou has said, "I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better." ("The Powerful Lesson," 2011). To get to the place of doing better, educators need to be willing to initiate necessary changes to effectively meet the changing needs of our students. Much of the literature on social studies instruction at the elementary level has focused on its marginalization both before and after the passing of the No Child Left Behind initiative (Anderson, 2009; Britt & Howe, 2014; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005; Burstein, Hutton, & Curtis, 2006; Ellington, Leming, & Schug, 2006; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Heafner, Lipscomb, & Rock, 2006; Hinde, 2005; Lintner, 2006; Manzo, 2005; Mathis & Boyd, 2009; McCall, 2006; Vogler, 2011; Vogler et al., 2007; Zamosky, 2008; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Several studies have also drawn attention to the impact this has had on preservice teachers, both in their social studies methods course and in their field placement (Bailey, Shaw, Hollifield, 2006; Bolick, Adams, & Wilcox, 2010; Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2014; Fritzer & Kumar, 2002; Fry, 2009; Gleeson & D'Souza, 2016; Good et al., 2010; Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Martin, 2012; Owens, 1997; Passe, 1994; Passe, 2006; Rock et al., 2006; Slekar, 2005; Tanner, 2008). This study examined the teaching practices of novice elementary social studies teachers, teachers who had been teaching five years or less. By examining the teaching practices of novice elementary social studies teachers, insight was made in three arenas: (1) the level of perceived preparedness of the participants' specific teacher preparation program, with a glimpse into the strengths and weaknesses of it, (2) instructional practices by the participants matched much of what the existing body of research has addressed

and (3) the necessary compulsory support novice teachers should receive from their school system and from their state to be successful in effectively teaching social studies on a regular, consistent basis.

Teacher Preparation Program

As noted, all four participants completed the same teacher preparation program. However, they each graduated at different times and, thus, had slightly different experiences.

Methods course. The importance of a social studies methods course that encompasses both learning content and pedagogy in the elementary social studies classroom cannot be overstated. As Lanahan and Yeager (2008) have explained,

> When preservice teachers have strong social studies methods instruction, they are more likely to see the value of social studies education and thus more likely to teach social studies to their elementary students. The basic understanding and motivation that a good social studies methods course can facilitate may help to ensure the survival of elementary social studies (p. 25).

Interesting to note, the participants' experiences in this study highlight just the opposite was true for them. During the interview process, three of the four participants had very positive memories of what was learned in their social studies methods course, citing specific lessons they found favorable. However, for the most part, none of the participants' lessons matched what was presented in the course, with the exception of one formal lesson one of the primary novice elementary social studies teachers conducted. The teachers in this study folded under external pressures from their colleagues and their administrators. None of the participants stated that they were told to teach social studies one specific way. More so, they used lessons shared from colleagues without question, and placed other academic needs above socials studies. McCall

(2006) believed this is likely the case, even when teachers graduate from high quality programs, "Even those who complete teacher preparation programs that emphasize inquiry and other exemplary elements of a social studies education eventually succumb to pressures and adhere to the traditional teaching practices of their schools" (p. 162).

Field experiences. Like the social studies methods course, field experiences have not been shown to "produce deep internal changes in the belief system of the participants" (Ross, 1987, p. 225). The four participants each had a 16-week internship in the field, as well as two semesters of a laboratory placement. For three of the participants, one of these placements took place in a summer school setting, meaning no social studies instruction was observed, as remediation in math and reading were the only focus in the elementary school during the summer. The laboratory placements during the fall and spring semesters consisted of either two or three full days each week for twelve weeks in the elementary classroom. For those that completed the summer laboratory placement, they attended three full weeks of half-days. Only one of the intermediate novice elementary social studies teacher participants was able to share examples of social studies from her field placement that follow what is considered best practice, and expressed an ongoing appreciation for this cooperating teacher. The other participants either rarely saw social studies in the field, or what they did see consisted of lower level tasks, such as reading weekly newspaper publications or completion of worksheets. Much of the research on the effectiveness of field placements has shown that what preservice teachers see in their field placements does not match what they have learned in their methods courses, if they see social studies at all (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; Bolick, Adams, & Willox, 2010; Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2014; Fry, 2009; Good et al., 2010; Mathis & Boyd, 2009; Owens, 1997). As one of the primary novice elementary social studies teacher participants explained, there was

a disconnect between what she learned in her social studies methods course and what she saw in her field experiences. All of the participants felt their field experiences were positive overall, but with three of the four participants seeing little to no social studies instruction by their cooperating teachers, perhaps the solution would be to select cooperating teachers who first and foremost are actually teaching social studies, and teaching it with the depth and breadth this core subject deserves. However, this is likely easier said than done considering, of the twelve field placements these four novice elementary social studies teachers had, only one of the novice elementary social studies teachers actually had a placement in which she saw social studies taught on a daily basis by a cooperating teacher who was passionate about delivering quality instruction in the subject. This intermediate novice elementary social studies teacher participant spoke in awe of her cooperating teacher as she recounted the professional development opportunities the cooperating teacher had partaken in Washington D.C. as part of a grant she had written.

Although research has shown that field experience does not produce great shifts in one's thinking (Ross, 1987), it likely has an impact on a novice teacher's self-efficacy. According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, a teacher's self-efficacy will impact the effort they put forth, their ability to persevere, and how resilient they are (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003). It also plays a role in the learning environment established in their classroom, thus impacting their students' success,

> People who have a low sense of efficacy in a given domain shy away from difficult tasks, which they perceive as personal threats…. People with high efficacy approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1993, p. 144).

As Hoy (2000) stated, “Some of the most powerful influences on the development of teacher efficacy are mastery experiences during student teaching and the induction year” (p. 2). Seeing social studies taught effectively, and being able to mirror this teaching of social studies in their own lessons during their field experiences, could likely aid preservice teachers in the development of higher self-efficacy in the teaching of social studies.

Practice of Teaching Social Studies

As supported by an extensive body of research, in the state this study was conducted, social studies was not part of the mandated annual assessment cycle, which led to it not being taught with the same frequency and duration as the other core subjects (Fitchett et al., 2014; Heafner et al., 2006; Lintner, 2006). In addition, the two primary novice elementary social studies teachers in this study spent less time teaching social studies than their intermediate peers, which was also supported by the existing body of research in the field that showed the higher the grade level the more likely social studies is taught (Ellington et al., 2006; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Tanner, 2008; VanFossen, 2005; Vogler et al., 2007). Of the two primary novice elementary social studies teachers in the study, one taught social studies erratically through “Round Robin Days” that occurred only twice during the school year, and the other made attempts to integrate social studies into her language arts instruction where the language arts goals were addressed, but the social studies goals were typically nonexistent. The two intermediate novice elementary social studies teachers in the study taught social studies on a more regular and consistent basis, although one placed the priority of recess above social studies due to administrative pressures, thus making the subject dispensable, as existing research has proven (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Heafner et al., 2006; Mathis & Boyd, 2009; Passe, 2006; VanFossen, 2005). In making comparisons between the primary and intermediate novice

elementary social studies teacher participants, it was clear that social studies received more attention at the intermediate level. One of the intermediate novice elementary social studies teacher participants had unique insight into this phenomenon, as she had previously taught third grade the year prior. She had witnessed how little background knowledge her students had in social studies overall at the beginning of the school year, not knowing content she considered fundamental, such as what a continent is.

Instructional strategies. Of the four participants, only one of the intermediate novice elementary social studies teachers felt she had a solid background in social studies as an elementary student herself. Coincidently, she attended school in the same school system that the research study took place. The other three participants recalled very little about social studies as young children, which is typical for most (Martin, 2012). The instructional practices used by all four participants were lacking in historical inquiry and critical thinking, and when social studies was taught as a standalone subject, textbooks, worksheets, weekly student-friendly newspapers, and lectures were the driving force in delivering content to the students. Instructional practices in the participants' weekly lesson plans, observations, and interviews typically did not show best practice, and not a single strategy used in their social studies methods course was present. This is supported by several studies which emphasized that although teachers proclaim to have a desire to imbed critical thinking skills into their social studies lessons, their style of teaching the subject does not match this (Anderson, 2009; Burstein et al., 2006), and instead they rely heavily on the textbook, worksheets, and lecture (Bailey et al., 2006; Burstein et al., 2006; Ensminger & Fry, 2012; McCall, 2006; NCSS, 2009; Shaver, 1989; Tanner, 2008). Essentially, the participants taught social studies in the manner they experienced it as young students themselves, with the exception of one participant. The two primary novice elementary social studies

participants saw little social studies as young students and, although both were charged with teaching it, it is done only when time permits. As one commented, "… we didn't really do it and I'm okay, so maybe…". The intermediate novice elementary social studies teacher participant who had a positive experience as a child in social studies could recall a number of projects, and attempted to imbed this in her own instruction. The other intermediate novice elementary social studies teacher, who witnessed very little social studies in elementary school, made a conscious effort to teach the subject on a regular and consistent basis, unlike what she experienced herself.

Teachers tend to teach the way they were taught. This is believed to be due to how one's subconscious is formed; in witnessing many examples of teaching as a student, a teacher is likely to imitate what she had seen time and time again (Lotie, 1975; Tanner, 2008). Thus, if one has seen numerous examples of poor social studies instruction, one is likely to imitate that when out in the field. When brainstorming the resources used when they were young students in the elementary social studies classroom, the participants all listed textbooks, worksheets, and lecture as a majority of what they recalled of social studies, with a few positive memories of intermittent projects. Of the four participants, three did not feel their elementary social studies education prepared them for the secondary level. In fact, one participant could not successfully pass the graduation exam on her first try. This is supported by Bailey, Shaw, and Hollifield's work in 2006, in which they proposed that, due to lack of preparation in social studies, remediation would be required at the secondary level. Of the four participants, three participants expressed concern over their lack of content knowledge in social studies; the only participant who did not was the one that attended school at the research site. Lack of content knowledge is a problem, and has been for elementary teachers for years (Bailey et al., 2006; Burstein et al., 2006; Fitchett et al., 2014; Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). Lack of content knowledge, and a feeling of too much

content to cover left the participants feeling "inexperienced" and overwhelmed when faced with planning their social studies instruction. When asked about their lesson planning practices in general, all four participants went through in detail their process, and each planned social studies last, if they planned it at all. This lack of sufficient planning time for social studies goes back to the participants' low sense of self-efficacy in teaching social studies in general. As Protheroe (2008) explained, "Teachers with a stronger sense of self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization…" (p. 43). With all four participants planning other core subjects first, investing the majority of their planning time on those subject areas, it is no surprise that they feel more knowledgeable and competent in the other subject areas as compared to social studies.

Teachers new to the field are often experiencing a sink or swim mentality- a temporary paralysis, of sorts. As Corcoran (1981) pointed out, a

> …shift from university to public school is a period of intense shock, a period when beginners are paralyzed by the discovery that they do not know all that they need to know and are unable to draw on either previous training or on the wide range of potentially helpful resources that surround them in the present (p. 23).

Preservice teachers' self-efficacy is higher in the university setting as compared to their first years as novice teachers. Novice teachers "make a shift from seeing themselves as ready for the challenge, to adopting a survival mode" (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011, p. 762). During this phase of survival mode, many novice teachers fall back on what they know best- weak social studies instruction that was erratic, poorly planned, and lacked little to no inquiry on the part of the learner.

Integration. For the primary novice elementary social studies teacher participant that integrated her language arts and social studies instruction, with the exception of the one formally observed lesson, no true social studies goals were evident in her integrated lesson plans. Weekly social studies publications were used to address language arts goals. The existing research in the field has shown that when teachers attempt to integrate the subject of social studies with another core subject, the social studies goals are often lost or nonexistent (Bolick et al., 2010; Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Cayot Serriere, & Stewart, 2008; Burroughs et al., 2005; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). This was also the case for the intermediate novice elementary social studies teacher participant who shared a famous person project that her entire grade level would be taking part in. It showed no evidence of meeting state social studies standards, although it was considered an integrated social studies and language arts project by her teammates.

Resources. This research site was selected due to the fact that access to resources, availability of professional development, and perceived administrative support were high. Research has shown that access to resources is linked to whether or not the subject of social studies is taught. However, this was not the case in this study when examining the four research participants' experiences. It appeared that grade level taught, with the higher the grade level the more likely social studies received instructional time, was more of a factor (Burroughs et al., 2005; Burstein, Hutton, & Curtis, 2006; VanFossen, 2005; Vogler et al., 2007). Availability of resources did not appear to have an effect on the duration and frequency of social studies in their classrooms. For one of the primary novice elementary social studies teacher participants, she explained that she had access to a collection of trade books in her school that had social studies themes, and yet she did not use them. In fact she did not know of their current location. After a formal observation in her classroom, one of the intermediate novice elementary social studies

teacher participants shared that she was aware of primary sources that could be used in the lesson she had taught on how settlers came to the state. She explained there were letters from early settlers to their family members in which they shared the travel conditions, as well as expressed a desire to convince their family to move as well. She expressed that she opted not to use these primary sources due to time constraints.

Professional development. In order to engage and challenge today's students in the social studies classroom, teachers need both strong pedagogical knowledge as well as content knowledge (Martin, 2012). However, according to Fitchett, Heafner, and Lambert (2014) today's social studies teachers severely lack the necessary content knowledge to effectively teach the subject. There is simply too much to know. Research has shown this is not only an issue for those in the classroom, but also for those anxiously eager to set foot in one. Lack of solid content knowledge creates a sense of unease and low self-efficacy in preservice teachers, and this lack of confidence is evident in their limited ability to write quality, standards-based lesson plans (Fragnoli, 2005; Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). The participants in this study expressed the same concern, with one stating she would rather "hit my head against a wall" in order to avoid teaching topics she knew little about, and another completely avoiding teaching the subject altogether. As Hoy (2000) surmised, "The perception that one's performance has been a failure lowers efficacy beliefs, contributing to the expectation that future performances will also be inept" (p. 3), which explained why one of the primary novice elementary social studies teacher participants no longer attempted to teach social studies outside of "Round Robin Days". She did not see herself as a successful social studies teacher, as she lacked strong content knowledge and a desire to change.

Clearly, to build elementary social studies teachers' self-efficacy, content knowledge needs to be built as well. If one feels strong in the subject matter at hand, one may believe they can be successful in specific situations, such as teaching social studies. To address the shortcomings of social studies teachers' content knowledge, ongoing professional development in social studies is clearly the answer (Fritzer & Kumar, 2002; NCSS, 2009; Tanner, 2008; Valli & Stout, 2004; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Professional development has been shown to positively impact teacher self-efficacy (Hawley & Valli, 1999; Jerald, 2007). As professional development will improve instruction, it will also improve student achievement in the subject, and the quality of the field placements preservice teachers experience. Hawley & Valli (1999) pointed out that the most significant factor in student success was the quality of the teacher in the classroom. The elementary school needs to be viewed not simply as a workplace for teachers, but as a learning environment as well. "We will fail… to improve school for children until we acknowledge the importance of schools not only as places for teachers to work but also for teachers to learn" (Smylie, 1995, p. 92). However, professional development in the traditional sense has a reputation of being shallow and fragmented. Typically school systems use their available resources for short-term workshops, which are inconsistent, inadequate, and ineffective (Valli & Stout, 2004). Learning material in a single context will likely not result in a carry over into professional practice. Instead the professional development needs to be school-wide, sustained over a long period of time, and school-based (2004). "Effective professional development must also attempt to change school structures and culture, molding both into collaborative learning organizations that will support teacher change. Without such structural changes, teachers will be unable to sustain transformed teaching practices" (McCall, 2006, p. 166).

The school system in which the participants taught during the time the study was conducted provided ample opportunities for growth in many areas, such as enhancement of the curriculum with technology integration, and how to address new state science standards in the classroom. One of the participants emphasized how much more was available in this environment as compared to her previous school system. However, internally no professional development existed in the subject of social studies. One participant had to seek out external opportunities, and was met with some resistance by her administrator due to fiscal concerns. The remaining participants did not show an interest in pursuing professional development in social studies, as they expressed other obligations for their time, or a disinterest altogether. It is to be noted that in order to bring about an epistemological shift in thinking, one must first be dissatisfied with their current practice (Valli & Stout, 2004), and of the four participants in this research study, only one, the one seeking external professional development opportunities, spoke of a desire to improve her instruction in social studies. Olwell & Raphael (2006) pointed out that this is the norm, "… teachers at the elementary level receive the least training in pedagogical methods and content in social studies" (p. 223). Professional development in social studies is seldom offered, and when it is, teachers tend to not see it as a priority (Passe, 2006). In McCall's (2006) study of four exemplary social studies teachers, he found that they all sought out and took advantage of professional development opportunities, thus improving their content knowledge, and in turn improving their personal efficacy in the subject of social studies.

Recommendations

Intervention is needed and there is no sooner time like the present to prevent the current situation of social studies in the elementary classroom from spiraling further out of control. In the past teachers were able to hide their lack of content knowledge behind an overreliance on the

textbook, now they simply skip teaching the subject altogether (Passe, 2006). So what is the solution? As school districts are in charge of allocating their resources, and typically this does not mean toward social studies (McCall, 2006; Valli & Stout, 2004), professional development should take place in the form of university outreach and state-funded support. In addition, as Russell (1999) eloquently stated, "If genuine change is to occur in schools, then those changes may have to occur FIRST in teacher education" (p. 8).

Professional development. University teacher preparation programs need to build up their school partners by providing ongoing, systematic, building-based professional development on best practice in social studies (Mathis & Boyd, 2009). Through doing so, preservice teachers would benefit from seeing quality social studies instruction during their field placements. In addition, classroom teachers would build their knowledge base both in pedagogy and content, thus having a positive impact on their social studies instruction. Olwell and Raphael (2006) explained, "the core of knowledge we expect students and teachers to master has simply grown in every direction, without the infrastructure of curriculum development, professional learning opportunities, and assessment techniques to create a coherent community" (p. 224). The time for university outreach is now.

The state in which the study was conducted supports local school systems through two separate initiatives. One focuses on reading and supplies classroom teachers with limited professional development and resources on a need basis. The other initiative is widely known and focuses on math, science, and technology. Through this initiative, classroom teachers receive professional development support for two consecutive years and materials that are sent throughout the school year. These "kits" arrive fully stocked with all of the materials needed to teach science through laboratory experiences, and are restocked each year. For math, this

initiative provides classroom teachers with hands-on manipulatives and building-based support. The state in which this study was conducted does not offer any such initiative for teachers of social studies.

In 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act, which in part essentially opened up the door for modest funding opportunities for civics education (Madconald, 2016). This is an opportunity that many states could take advantage of if social studies education was a priority. The message classroom teachers have received up until this point in time is loud and clear- this state will provide, but only in what it deems an important subject area. VanFossen (2005) found that only 7% of the respondents in his study had a definition of social studies close to that of the NCSS. Considering that none of the four novice elementary social studies teacher participants in this study were able to explain the purpose of teaching it when asked during their individual interviews, the current situation for elementary social studies demands ongoing professional development from university partners, and the state.

Teacher preparation programs. The other recommendation would be in the university preparation programs, with two suggestions open for consideration. With preservice teachers lacking the necessary content knowledge in social studies (Fritzer & Kumar, 2002), required coursework in history, economics, geography, and political science prior to the social studies methods course would help to build upon their existing knowledge base. In most current situations, the courses preservice teachers take prior to their social studies methods course are not geared towards social studies and thus do not offer the necessary content they need to comprehend the material in social studies methods (Bolick et al., 2010). As Brown (2009) has addressed, it is "irresponsible to discuss pedagogy without ensuring that strong content knowledge exists" (p. 193). As both strong content knowledge and strong pedagogical

knowledge are needed to be an effective social studies teacher, it is clear the need for additional coursework would provide preservice teachers with a better opportunity to be successful in teaching this core subject to their future elementary students.

In the social studies methods course itself, the importance of a high quality teacher educator is crucial, and one should not make the assumption that a good teacher will be a good teacher educator. Clearly, teaching children is different from teaching adults. Many teacher educators are "more concerned with proficiency in a specific subject and experiences as a teacher rather than their knowledge, skills or ability as a teacher of teaching" (Korthagen, Loughran, & Lunenberg, 2005, p. 110). In a methods course, the teacher educator is not only delivering the material, but is also an example of what constitutes good teaching; how one teaches is the message (Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Swennen, 2007). What makes a good educator? The answer may lie in their ability to effectively model best practices. "When the teacher educator models certain behavior, student teachers not only hear and read about teaching, they experience it" (Lunenberg et al., 2007, p. 589). Preservice teachers look for desirable qualities in their teacher educator role models that, once in the field, they too can emulate (Ross, 1987). Although modeling in the university classroom is under-researched (Lunenberg et al., 2007; Ritter, 2012), poor modeling practices have been shown to graduate preservice teachers who are disinterested and lack the ability to teach effectively, thus teaching the way they were taught as young students (Good et al., 2010). Many teacher educators find modeling to be challenging as "it implies vulnerability, and this is something which teacher educators, who are often seen as experts, find quite difficult" (Lunenberg et al., 2007, p. 598).

What constitutes good modeling of one's teaching practice? Not all modeling practices are created equal. "Do as I say", or implicit modeling, which does not draw attention to why

choices were made (Ritter, 2012) has been shown to provide no significant change in the way preservice teachers teach, as they are likely not even aware of what they have experienced (Lunenberg et al., 2007). However, in explicit modeling, the teacher educator makes clear the choices, goals, and reasoning behind their practice. Questions are asked of preservice teachers about the usefulness, and transferability of the experiences into their future classrooms. In addition, what is modeled is deliberately and transparently connected to the theory behind it (Lunenberg et al., 2007; Ritter, 2012). Explicit modeling, where practice is connected to theory, is crucial, as "dismissal of public theory can be dangerous if student teachers start reinventing the wheel, on the basis of a limited theoretical framework" (Lunenberg et al., 2007, p. 592). The responsibility of the teacher educator in training future teachers is distinct from other fields of study,

> Teacher educators not only have the role of supporting student teachers' learning about teaching, but in doing so, through their own teaching, model the role of the teacher. In this respect, the teacher education profession is unique, differing from, say doctors who teach medicine. During their teaching, doctors do not serve as role models for the actual practice of the profession, i.e. they do not treat their students. Teacher educators, conversely, whether intentionally or not, teach their students as well as teach about teaching (Korthagen et al., 2005, p. 111).

Vulnerability on the part of novice teachers as they dog paddle their way through the shock of transitioning into their own classroom, and vulnerability on the part of teacher educators as they struggle to put into words the pedagogical practices and theory in what they are modeling, can be combated with transparency. There is strength in this. Be clear. Be clear about how past experiences will impact existing belief structures (Ross, 1987). Be clear about

the process of developing a teaching identity in the early stages of one's career, and the challenges one will likely face (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Be clear that in order to teach social studies to elementary students, one must be a lifetime student of social studies themselves (Martin, 2012).

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Appendix A

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Program Questions

1. What do you recall about your teacher preparation program?
2. How prepared did you feel when you graduated from your teacher preparation program?
3. What do you view were the strengths of your teacher preparation program?
4. What do you view were the weaknesses of your teacher preparation program?
5. What else would you like to share about your teacher preparation program?

Social Studies Methods Questions

1. What do you recall about your social studies methods course?
2. What do you view were the strengths of your social studies methods course?
3. What do you view were the weaknesses of your social studies methods course?
4. What else would you like to share about your social studies methods course?

Field Experience Questions

1. What do you recall about teaching social studies during your field placements?
2. What message did your cooperating teachers share about teaching social studies?

Social Studies Questions

1. How do you think children learn social studies best?
2. What advice would you give future elementary teachers of social studies?
3. What factors affect how you design and implement social studies in your classroom? Why?
4. If you could change anything about your social studies instruction what would it be?

5. How does teaching social studies make you feel?
6. What message do your colleagues give you about teaching social studies?
7. What message does your administration give you about teaching social studies?

Professional Development Questions

1. What does professional development look like in your district?
2. How does social studies fit in to it (professional development)?
3. In what areas would you benefit from more professional development? Why?
4. What resources are available at your school for your social studies lesson planning?

Appendix B

Individual Interview Protocol

Past Experiences Questions

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
2. What grades have you taught?
3. What subjects have you taught?
4. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
5. What do you recall about social studies as a student?
6. Describe your best memory of social studies as a student.
7. Describe your worst memory of social studies as a student.
8. How would you describe yourself as a student?

Social Studies Perception Questions

1. What is your definition of social studies?
2. How do you feel about social studies in general?
3. How do you feel about teaching social studies?
4. What does social studies look like in your classroom?
5. What does the ideal social studies lesson look like to you?
6. What do you think the role of the teacher is in teaching social studies?
7. Describe how confident you feel in teaching social studies?
8. Describe how competent you feel in teaching social studies?
9. What do you think your strengths and weaknesses are as a social studies teacher? Why?
10. How prepared are your students in social studies when they start the school year?

Instructional Approach Questions

1. Explain your style of teaching. What is your approach?
2. What is your personal planning routine? Where do you plan? How often?
3. Do you collaborate with anyone when planning social studies lessons?
4. What resources do you find most helpful in planning social studies lessons? Why?
5. How has your personal experience with social studies as a student influenced your social studies instruction?

Appendix C

Follow-Up Interview Protocol

Setting

1. Describe the school district in which you work.
2. Describe the school in which you work.

Social Studies Methods Course

3. What advice would you give to instructors/professors of undergraduate social studies methods courses?
4. What do you wish your social studies methods professor knew about teaching in the elementary classroom?
5. What advice would you give to future elementary classroom teachers of social studies?

Resources

6. Describe the field trips you will take this school year. Are any of them related to social studies?

Appendix D

Analysis of Weekly Lesson Plan Rubric

Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning

Meaningful

Frequency & duration:		
Age Appropriate	Yes	No
Presence of higher order thinking	Yes	No
Presence of student construction of arguments in order to make informed decisions	Yes	No
Limited emphasis on memorization of facts	Yes	No

Integrative

List instructional materials/resources used (i.e. primary/secondary sources)		
Diverse use of instructional materials/resources (i.e. primary/secondary sources)	Yes	No
Circle social studies concepts present: Economics Geography History Political Science		
Presence of inquiry and analysis by students	Yes	No

Value-Based

Emphasis on critical thinking	Yes	No
Emphasis on value-based decisions	Yes	No
Emphasis of democratic principals and concepts by teacher	Yes	No
Presence of multiple viewpoints	Yes	No
Presence of awareness of social problems/dilemmas	Yes	No

Challenging

Presence of reflective thinking and discussion	Yes	No
Students formulate answers both orally and in writing	Yes	No

Active

List of activities/tasks		
Diverse range of activities/tasks	Yes	No
List of technology/media used		

Diverse range of technology/media used	Yes	No
Presence of student organization and analysis of data	Yes	No
Presence of service learning	Yes	No
Presence of variety of grouping methods (individual, small, and whole)	Yes	No

*Developed from the *NCSS Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning*

(NCSS, 2008).

Appendix E

Codes and Codebook

First Order Category	Second Order Category	Numeric Code	Description
Advice	From Other Teachers	1.1	The code family Advice dealt with recommendations the participants would give to future preservice teachers, and suggestions they had received from other teachers.
	To Preservice Teachers	1.2	
Experience-Childhood	As a Student	2.1	The code family Experience-Childhood dealt with the participants' memories of being a student and of the their recollection of social studies in the classroom.
	In Social Studies	2.2	
Experience-University	Field Experience	3.1	The code family Experience-University dealt with what the participants encountered in their field placements, their social studies methods course, and the teacher preparation program as a whole. In this study the novice teachers had, under supervision during their undergraduate experience, participated in lab placements, and internships in the elementary classroom in a variety of settings. The social studies methods course was part of the teacher preparation program.
	Social Studies Methods Course	3.2	
	Teacher Preparation Program	3.3	
Experience-Professional		4.1	The code Experience-Professional included the participants' years of experience in the classroom, grades taught, and degrees earned.
Instructional Practices	Collaborative Learning	5.1	The code family Instructional Practices dealt with what the novice teachers experienced as students, what they were having
	Cooperative Learning	5.2	
	Debate	5.3	
	Differentiation	5.4	

	Discussion	5.5	their own students do in their social studies lessons, and what they desired to have them do under ideal conditions.
	Games	5.6	
	Independent Seatwork	5.7	
	Inquiry Based	5.8	
	Lecture	5.9	
	Note Taking	5.10	
	Presentations	5.11	
	Productive Struggle	5.12	
	Project Based	5.13	
	Questioning	5.14	
	Technology Integration	5.15	
	Use of Visual Aids	5.16	
Marginalization	Administrative Support	6.1	The code family Marginalization covered reasons why social studies was not taught, or not taught with the frequency and/or duration as other core subjects.
	Integrated with Other Subjects	6.2	
	Priorities	6.3	
	Professional Development	6.4	
	Resources	6.5	
	Self-Efficacy	6.6	
	Teacher Support	6.7	
	Time	6.8	
Perception of Social Studies	As a Student	7.1	The code family Perception of Social Studies consisted of participants' views of the subject of social studies as students and now as teachers. This code family also included participants' personal definitions of the subject.
	As a Teacher	7.2	
	Personal Definition	7.3	
Practice of Teaching	Lesson Planning	8.1	The code family Practice of Teaching painted a picture of each participant's personal teaching style including her instructional planning, and how she taught the subject of social studies.
	Social Studies	8.2	
	Standards	8.3	
	Teaching Style	8.4	
Resources	Digital Presentations	9.1	The code family Resources consisted of materials that each participant used, or wished to use with their own students or as students themselves in the elementary social studies classroom.
	Field Trip	9.2	
	Online Sources	9.3	
	Primary Sources	9.4	
	Textbook	9.5	
	Tradebooks	9.6	
	Weekly Magazines	9.7	
	Workbook	9.8	
Setting	School District	10.1	The code family Setting encompassed data that
	School A	10.2	

	School B	10.3	described the research site.
Teacher Perception of Students'	Attitudes Towards Social Studies	11.1	The code family Teacher Perception of Students' consisted of how each participant viewed their students' attitudes and abilities in the subject of social studies.
	Ability in Social Studies	11.2	

Appendix F

After Observation Interview Protocol

1. What were your overarching goals for the social studies lesson?
2. What do you think were the strengths?
3. What do you think were the weaknesses?
4. What would you have done differently, if anything?
5. Have you taught this lesson before?
6. Where did you find the resources for your lesson?

Appendix G

Auburn University Institutional Review Board Approval

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM
FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED

For Information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966 **e-mail:** IRBAdmin@auburn.edu **Web Address:** http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm

Revised 2.1.2014 **Submit completed form to IRBsubmit@auburn.edu or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.**

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: August 1, 2017

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one): ☐ **FULL BOARD** ☑ **EXPEDITED**

SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one): ☑ **NEW** ☐ **REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)**

2. PROJECT TITLE: Novice Teachers' Instructional Practices in Elementary Social Studies

3. Kristin Zimbelman	Doctoral Student	Curriculum & Teaching	kaz0002@tigermail.auburn.edu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	**TITLE**	**DEPT**	**AU E-MAIL**
607 Linden Lane/Prattville, Alabama/36066		334-595-2525	kristink5@yahoo.com
MAILING ADDRESS		**PHONE**	**ALTERNATE E-MAIL**

4. FUNDING SUPPORT: ☑ N/A ☐ Internal ☐ External Agency: _____ ☐ Pending ☐ Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available). N/A

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:

N/A

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.):

N/A

PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

☑ **Research Protocol Review Form** (All signatures included and all sections completed)
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

☑ **CITI Training Certificates** for all Key Personnel.

☑ **Consent Form or Information Letter** and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.

☑ **Appendix A**, "Reference List"

☑ **Appendix B** if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.

☑ **Appendix C** if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.

☐ **Appendix D** if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).

☑ **Appendix E** if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A **permission letter** from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of **IRB approval** from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.

☐ **Appendix F** - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: _____ by _____ **PROTO**
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: _____ by _____ **APPRO**
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ by _____ **INTERV**
COMMENTS:

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from
09/05/2017 to 09/04/2018
Protocol # 17-276 EP 1709

6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s): ☑ New Data ☐ Existing Data

Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Data collection will involve the use of:

- Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Observation
- Location or Tracking Measures
- Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)
- Surveys / Questionnaires
- Internet / Electronic
- ✓ Audio
- Video
- Photos
- Digital images
- Private records or files
- ✓ Other: Teacher Lesson Plans

6B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.

☑ Males ☑ Females ☐ AU students

Vulnerable Populations

☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ☐ Prisoners ☐ Institutionalized

☐ Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)

Persons with:

☐ Economic Disadvantages ☐ Physical Disabilities

☐ Educational Disadvantages ☐ Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants? ☐ Yes ☑ No

6C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

☑ Breach of Confidentiality* ☐ Coercion

☐ Deception ☐ Physical

☐ Psychological ☐ Social

☐ None

☐ Other:

*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- **Do you need IBC Approval for this study?**
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  If yes, BUA #_____ Expiration date _____

- **Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?**
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  If yes, PRN #_____ Expiration date _____

- **Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?**
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)
  ☐ 3T ☐ 7T

  Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  Signature of MRI Center Representative: _____
  Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

  Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:
  Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center
  Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES Novice Teachers' Instructional Practices in Elementary Social Studies

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
    a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
    b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
    c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
    d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Kristin Zimbelman	Kristin Zimbelman Digitally signed by Kristin Zimbelman DN: cn=Kristin Zimbelman, o=Auburn University, ou=CAT, email=kaz0002@tigermail.auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2017.06.06 15:35:18 -05'00'	6/13/17
Printed name of Principal Investigator	**Principal Investigator's Signature**	**Date**

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Theresa M. McCormick	Theresa M. Mccormick Digitally signed by Theresa M. Mccormick Date: 2017.06.23 10:56:59 -05'00'	6/23/2017
Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor	**Faculty Advisor's Signature**	**Date**

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

David C. Virtue	Dr. David C. Virtue Digitally signed by Dr. David C. Virtue Date: 2017.06.26 11:56:41 -05'00'	6/25/2017
Printed name of Department Head	**Department Head's Signature**	**Date**

8. **PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**
(**350** word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

a) **A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:**
(*Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)*
b) **A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest**

a.
Research in the field of elementary education has shown that although social studies is a core subject, it has been marginalized as a byproduct of mandated assessment, lack of administrative support, limited resources, and inaccurate background knowledge on the part of the classroom teacher (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; VanFossen, 2005; Vogler, 2011; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). This marginalization has led to preservice teachers who are poorly prepared for university coursework in the area of social studies (Passe, 2006). In addition to lacking necessary background knowledge, these preservice teachers do not observe environments that are rich in social studies in their field placements in the elementary school setting (Lanahan & Yeager, 2008; Owens, 1997; Passe, 2006). For most university teacher preparation programs, social studies is taught in one methods course. Researchers have questioned whether or not these future elementary teachers are able to bring what they have learned in their social studies methods course into their own future classrooms (Ellington, Leming, & Schug, 2006; Good, Heafner, Rock, O'Connor, Passe, & Byrd, 2010; Martin, 2012; Mathis & Boyd, 2009; Slekar, 2005; Turner-Bisset, 2001).

b.
The research study will employ a qualitative design. Data will be collected in three phases. The first phase will consist of semi-structured interviews, one focus group interview for all participants and one individual interview for each participant. The second phase of data collection will consist of analysis of weekly lesson plans. These lesson plans will be analyzed with a rubric designed by the researcher using the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning (National Council for the Social Studies, 2008). Finally, the last phase of data collection will be in the form of classroom observations. Each participant will be observed teaching a social studies lesson twice. The participant population for the study will include no less than three novice elementary social studies teachers in grades kindergarten through sixth. For the purpose of this study, novice teachers are defined as having taught less than five years.

9. **PURPOSE.**
a. **Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.**

The purpose of this study is to investigate what instructional practices novice elementary teachers implement in their social studies instruction in the classroom. The study will also investigate what potential factors may influence their instructional practices. By identifying both the instructional practices and the external factors in the field that impact novice teachers' instruction, future social studies methods courses for undergraduate students can be tailored to fit their needs.

The research questions that will guide this study are:
What instructional practices do novice teachers use when teaching social studies?
What factors influence novice teachers' instructional practices in social studies?

b. **How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

The results of this project will be used to write a dissertation. The results may also be used in presentations at professional conferences as well as for publication for articles in professional journals.

10. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. **CITI is required. Be as specific as possible.** (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) *All key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.*

Principle Investigator Kristin Zimbelman **Title:** Doctoral Student **E-mail address** kaz0002@tigermail.auburn.edu

Dept / Affiliation: Curriculum & Teaching

Roles / Responsibilities:

To participate in the consent of participants, the research design, data collection, transcription, coding, and data analysis.

Individual: Theresa McCormick **Title:** Associate Dea **E-mail address** mccortm@auburn.edu

Dept / Affiliation: Curriculum & Teaching

Roles / Responsibilities:

To oversee all aspects of the research project.

Individual: _____ **Title:** _____ **E-mail address** _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ **Title:** _____ **E-mail address** _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ **Title:** _____ **E-mail address** _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ **Title:** _____ **E-mail address** _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH. List all locations where data collection will take place.** (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) **Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E.**
(See sample letters at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

Data collection will take place in the Vestavia City Schools system.

12. **PARTICIPANTS.**

a. **Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.**

☐ **Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.**

The participants for this study will include novice elementary teachers that graduated from Auburn University's elementary education program in the past five years. Participants will be selected based on employment, i.e. whether or not they have been hired to teach in a self-contained classroom in a public school system in the state of Alabama for the 2017-2018 school year.

b. **Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants.** *Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm.)*

Participants will be recruited through purposeful sampling. A meeting will be held with elementary social studies teachers in grades kindergarten through sixth to discuss the research study. During the meeting it will be explained that participation is voluntary and any persons expressing initial interest in the possibility of participation will be fully informed of their rights as a research participant and asked to sign an Informed Consent Form.

c. **What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study?** 3

How many participants do you expect to recruit? 7

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study? ☐ **No** ☑ **Yes – the # is** 5

d. **Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.**

(If no compensation will be given, check here: ☑)

Select the type of compensation: ☐ Monetary ☐ Incentives

- ☐ Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)
- ☐ Extra Credit (State the value)
- ☐ Other

Description:

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

a. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants. If a waiver is being requested, check each waiver you are requesting, describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

- ☐ **Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)**
- ☐ **Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)**
- ☐ **Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)**

1. Potential teachers will attend a 30 minute information session provided at the end of the school day, in which they will receive an overview of the study and an opportunity to ask questions.
2. The researcher will give each interested teacher a manilla envelope with two copies of the IRB approved Informed Consent letter. Teachers will be instructed to read the letter carefully and to choose whether they want to participate or not. If teachers want to particate, they will be instructed to sign one copy of the form and place it in the envelope. If they choose not to participate, they should not sign the letter and return one copy in the envelope. Teachers will be directed to keep one copy of the letter and return the manilla envelope to the researcher sealed.

b. Describe the research design and methods you will use to address your purpose. Include a clear description of when, where and how you will collect all data for this project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (*NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol.* ***If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 7 of this form.***)

The research study will employ a case study design. Data will be collected in three phases. The first phase will consist of semi-structured interviews in the form of one focus group interview with all participants, and one-on-one interviews with each participant at an agreed upon, offsite location. The researcher will use a list of questions to guide the interview process so that similar questions will be asked of each participant and comparisons can be made across interviews. The interviews will last approximately 20-40 minutes each and will be audio taped to enable the researcher to create accurate transcriptions of the session for data collection. Upon completion of the transcription, the audio files will be deleted.

The second phase of the data collection will be analysis of weekly lesson plans using a rubric designed by the researcher using the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning (National Council for the Social Studies, 2008).

The third phase of data collection is through observation. The observations will last up to one hour, the duration of the social studies lesson. The researcher will take notes during the observations to compare the data with the weekly lesson plans provided by the teacher.

13. **PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.** *Continued*

c. **List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C.**
(e.g., surveys and questionnaires **in the format that will be presented to participants,** educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

1. Focus Group Interview Protocol
2. Individual Interview Protocol
3. Analysis of Weekly Lesson Plan Rubric
4. After Observation Interview Protocol

d. **Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.**

The data from the semi-structured interviews and observations will be analyzed using grounded theory. Following the procedures established by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the data will first be analyzed individually, and then collectively. Using Atlas.ti, open coding will be utilized which will help in identifying, naming, categorizing, and describing the phenomena. Axial coding will then be used to develop themes across the data.

14. **RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research.** ***If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D.*** *(Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)*

There is a risk of breech of confidentiality. There are no other forseeable risks or discomforts anticipated for participants in this study.

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. ***Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Samples can be found online at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions)***

A potential risk present in this study is breach of confidentiality. To reduce this risk, all identifiable data will be redacted and given a code number. Redacted data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's personal residence. All audio files of interviews will be played for transcription purposes at the researcher's personal residence with no other individuals present in the room. All audio files will be erased after data transcription.

All participants will be briefed on the purpose, rationale, and the methodology of the study. Each participant will sign an Informed Consent Form. Participants will be informed that their interviews will be audio taped at the beginning of each session for transcription purposes and data analysis. Any participant that objects to being recorded will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym at the beginning of the study. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's personal office, in the researcher's personal residence. Audio files of individual interviews will be erased immediately after transcription has occurred by the researcher. All hard copies will be destroyed by use of a crosscut shredder.

If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

No data will be collected via the internet or other electronic devices.

16. **BENEFITS.**

a. **List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.**
(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d.) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants. ☑

There are no direct benefits to the participants.

b. **List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.**

There are no realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

17. **PROTECTION OF DATA.**

a. **Data are collected:**

☐ **Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)**

☐ **Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)**

☑ **Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information**

b. **If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.**

Participant data will be linked to pseudonyms. The list of pseudonyms will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office and will be destroyed using a cross-cut shredder after data coding is complete.

c. **Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.**

Coding will allow the researcher to collate and analyze multiple pieces of information pertaining to one participant.

d. **Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored.** (Building, room number?) **Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.**

The identifying data/code list and the IRB-approved participant signed documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's personal residence (607 Linden Lane/Prattville, AL/36066).

e. **Describe how and where the data will be stored** (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.)**, and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security**

All data collected, including both hard copy and audio, will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's personal residence. All audio files will be erased once transcription is completed.

f. **Who will have access to participants' data?**
(*The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.*)

The researcher and faculty advisor will have access to participants' data.

g. **When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed?**
(Check here if only anonymous data will be retained ☐)

All identifying information will be retained until August 2018. All identifying information will be shredded at this time.

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(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT
For a Research Study entitled
"Instructional Practices Used by Novice Teachers in Teaching Elementary Social Studies"

You are invited to participate in a research study to determine what instructional practices novice teachers use in teaching elementary social studies. The study is being conducted by Kristin Zimbelman, doctoral student, under the direction of Dr. Theresa McCormick, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Certification Officer in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching. You were selected as a possible participant because you graduated from Auburn University, and are a teacher of elementary social studies who is 19 years of age or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to partake in one focus group interview, and at least one semi-structured individual interview. Interviews will be recorded for transcription purposes only. You will also be asked to share your weekly social studies lesson plans. No more than two prearranged observations will be conducted, in which the researcher will take notes on observed teaching practices during social studies instruction. Your total time commitment will be approximately five hours.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risk associated with participating in this study is the potential for breach of confidentiality. To minimize these risks, all identifiable data will be coded and the master code list will be kept in a folder in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's personal residence. All audio files of interviews will be played for transcription purposes at the researcher's personal residence with no other individuals present in the room. All audio files will be erased after data transcription. All hard copies will be destroyed by use of a crosscut shredder.

Participant's initials _____

5040 HALEY CENTER
AUBURN, AL 36849-5212

TELEPHONE:
334-844-4434

FAX:
334-844-6789

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Are there any benefits to yourself or others? There is no direct benefit to you as a participant in this study.

Will you receive compensation for participating? No compensation for participating will be given to participants.

Are there any costs? There will be no cost involved for participating in the research study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Curriculum and Teaching or the Vestavia Hills City Schools Board of Education.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, publish in a professional journal, or present at a professional conference or meeting.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Kristin Zimbelman at 334-595-2525 or Dr. Theresa McCormick at 334-844-4448. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or email at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

5040 HALEY CENTER
AUBURN, AL 36849-5212

TELEPHONE:
334-844-4434

FAX:
334-844-6789

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from 09/05/2017 to 09/04/2018
Protocol # 17-276 EP 1709

Participant's initials _____

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HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

_____ _____
PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE DATE

_____
PRINTED NAME

_____ _____
INVESTIGATOR OBTAINING CONSENT DATE

_____
PRINTED NAME

5040 HALEY CENTER
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TELEPHONE:
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