

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION: DOCUMENTING
TEACHERS' PERCEIVED USE OF INTEGRATIVE PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This study utilizes qualitative methodologies, specifically interpretive case study inquiry through interviews, observations, and lesson plans to investigate how and whether four sample elementary teachers used integrative teaching methods in social studies instruction. The problems guiding this research were the (1) absence of comprehensive research and data findings investigating teaching methods elementary teachers practice in social studies instruction and (2) how teachers determine their use of those teaching methods.

The purpose of the study was to add to available research, scholarship, and empirical studies related to teaching social studies in Kindergarten-5 education in light of the major deficit existing in this area of research. The research questions investigated teachers' described and demonstrated instructional teaching methods for implementing social studies education and the criteria teachers employed to determine their use of those teaching methods.

Data collected from participants were transcribed, coded, and analyzed while applying within-case and across-case analysis. Research findings noted across cases revealed four themes: (1) incorporating literacy using social studies topics, (2) discussion strategies, (3) technology in social studies, and (4) read alouds. Findings noted across cases indicated four criteria teachers' employed to determine their use of strategies: (1) The cultural climate of College Career and Readiness standards, (2) teaching English language arts, (3) social studies topics used to implement reading, and (4) the impact of standardized testing and accountability on social

studies instruction. Recommendations for future research call for investigating how teacher education programs are addressing some of the potential barriers teachers encounter when attempting to use integrative instructional methods to teach social studies. Researchers might further explore experimental research in social studies and the impact of teaching methods on student perceptions and engagement in social studies.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, two of the most important people in my life. To my parents, David C. Ross Jr. and Sarah Ann Ross, thanks for your unwavering support, love and encouragement throughout this personal journey. Dad, your confidence in me that I had the capability required to earn this doctoral degree assured me to be confident every step of the way. Your commitment to me that you would assist in any way you could help, all the way to graduation, has meant and means a great deal to me. I look forward to you and I celebrating “our” accomplishment at UA’s commencement exercise. Mom, you are my inspiration in all things that require strength and grit in tackling problems and “getting-it-done” in order to attain your personal goals. You reported years earlier I would earn a PhD, going so far as to write down this information and post it on the office bulletin board. Your message of resilience and trust in God were personal reminders that motivated me to persist and keep the faith while conquering this feat. I love you both, am honored to call you my parents, and hope I have made you proud!

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background

The social studies curriculum in elementary classrooms initially included religious instruction, history, and government lessons. Social sciences such as geography, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology and psychology were formally added to the elementary social studies curriculum around 1900 as the focus of students' social studies education aimed to increase his or her social knowledge and awareness of distant and complex environments.

Reportedly the scope and sequence approach is predominately utilized to organize the elementary social studies curriculum. This approach outlines the content studied at each grade level, as well as assumes students' readiness to learn social studies content (Hoge, 1996). Determining the curriculum goals of social studies education and deciding on what content to include in the elementary curriculum has evolved over time (Farris, 2001; Hoge; Kaltsounis, 1987; Michaelis & Rushdoony, 1987).

The purpose for social studies education, however, continues to be commonly cited as preparation for citizenship (Chapin, 2006; Hoge; Kaltsounis; Obenchain & Morris, 2011; Parker, 2012; Parker & Jarolimek, 1984; Sunal & Haas, 2011; Zarillo, 2012). Social studies is considered to be the discipline in which students are equipped with important social knowledge, develop inquiry skills for investigating the social world, and develop appropriate democratic values and attitudes needed to socially participate in both local and global communities (Chapin;

Chapin & Messick, 1989; Farris, 2001; National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2010; Sunal & Haas). The literature consistently acknowledges the vital role social studies has in cultivating informed citizens, who participate in our democratic society (Chapin & Messick; Farris; Hoge).

The NCSS defines social studies as 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, and mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose according to NCSS 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 (p. 1).

Despite urgent pleas from the social studies community to increase powerful social studies instruction as a means of educating future citizens, the marginalization of social studies in elementary classrooms continues with federal mandates often cited as the most significant factor influencing marginalization (Anderson, 2009; Lintner, 2006; McGuire, 2007; O’Conner, Heafner, & Groce, 2007; Pace, 2007; Rock, Heafner, O’Conner, Passe, Oldendorf, Good, & Byrd, 2003; Tanner, 2008; Wills, 2007). Social studies aimed at involving students in citizenship in a democratic society, therefore, is much limited in its ability to accomplish its aim by the marginalization documented in recent literature (Burroughs, 2002; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Howard, 2003; Manzo, 2005; McGuire; Winstead, 2011).

The literature details much description about which instructional teaching methods and strategies are purposeful and meaningful for teaching social studies. Furthermore, the discussion

identifying instructional approaches considered more appropriate for addressing social studies education saturate the body of literature related to this phenomenon (Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere, & Stewart, 2008; Field, Bauml, & Ledbetter, 2011; McCall, Janssen, & Riederer, 2008; Ohn & Wade, 2009; Seif, 2003; Thomas-Brown, 2010; Zamosky, 2008).

There is a great deal of discussion in the body of research explaining what practices educators should be implementing when teaching social studies curriculum; however, a significant gap in the literature investigating which teaching methods are actually being practiced to teach social studies curricula exists. There are few recent studies that qualitatively describe how teachers plan, implement, and practice teaching elementary social studies through the use of observation and in-depth interview data collection methods.

Instructional Teaching Methods in the Social Studies Curriculum

Over time, social studies instructional practices employed by elementary teachers in American schools have traditionally reflected teacher-centered instruction with a minimal amount of student-centered instruction (Cuban, 1993). Amid the sparse empirical research studies currently describing elementary teachers' instructional practices in the classroom, there are recurring messages suggesting teacher-centered activities and instructional practices are the main strategies used to involve students in learning about social studies.

Some of the similarities found by researchers are traditional extensive teacher talk, lecturing, clarifying, explaining, recitation, and seatwork, interspersed with occasional use of audiovisual aids and field trips (Cuban; McCall, 2006). One explanation for the perceived overuse of traditional teaching practices is elementary school organization that usually places teachers in self-contained classrooms, making them responsible for teaching a comprehensive

curriculum that can include as many as eight different subjects. Because of the school organizational structure, many elementary teachers consider themselves subject-matter generalists, who have knowledge about all the subject areas, but lack a specialty in any single subject. This generalist claim is supported by Bailey, Shaw, and Hollifield (2006), who asserted teachers may “lack knowledge of the social sciences subject matters” and reported this is “another reason that elementary teachers are not addressing social studies” (p. 19). Also supporting the claim, Thornton (2001) wrote,

Many elementary teachers have limited acquaintance with the social sciences in college, perhaps a few courses. Moreover, different elementary teachers will have studied different aspects of the social sciences. In other words, there appears to be scant social science subject matter knowledge that American elementary teachers hold in common, and what they have studied is unlikely to have been in depth. (pp. 72-73)

Both novice and veteran elementary teachers often experience the reality of being under-prepared with specialized knowledge for the multiple subjects they teach, yet they are required to cover the entire curriculum. Because of this requirement, an intense pressure is created, causing matters that are already complex to become further complicated. It is these challenges that make finding examples of powerful social studies instruction in the elementary classroom more difficult (McCall). When teachers lack specialized knowledge in any specific subject but are given a responsibility for teaching an overloaded curriculum, they find themselves falling back on the prepackaged curricula available from textbook companies as the primary approach to carrying out social studies instruction (Anderson, 2009; McGuire, 2007; Pianta, Belsky, Houts, & Morrison, 2007; Tanner, 2008; Winstead, 2011).

Requiring teachers to teach a cluttered curriculum, for which they are sometimes unprepared, is an institutional challenge that can influence teachers’ instructional practice. There also are external pressures contributing to how instructional practices take shape. The 2001

implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) created a detrimental effect on elementary social studies instruction. The high-stakes testing associated with NCLB essentially determines how teachers' instructional days are organized. As a result of the testing, teachers are required to spend more time teaching mathematics and reading, and are asked to limit how much instructional time they spend teaching social studies (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; McMurrer, 2008). As indicated by Lintner (2005), "With tremendous emphasis being placed on reading, writing, and math, social studies has to fight for instructional time" (p. 3).

The pressure for schools to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), another external demand, creates an intense scrutiny of teachers and the schools in which they work. In response to the 2001 NCLB Act and the resulting AYP demands, teachers scurry to help prepare their students to meet the "adequate yearly progress goals" in reading and mathematics, usually the only subjects tested, and, as a result, social studies has progressively fallen by the wayside (Burroughs; Manzo; McCall; McGuire, 2007).

Because the NCLB Act excluded social studies as one of the curricular areas for which elementary teachers are held accountable, researchers report that some teachers are deemphasizing the importance of social studies. Those who deemphasize its importance also tend to neglect its integration with core subjects, usually relying on weak strategies focusing on reading the textbook and recalling facts through completion of worksheets as a means to carry out social studies instruction (Karp & Christensen, 2003).

Curriculum Integration as an Instructional Approach for Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School

Curriculum integration is not a recent trend in elementary school classrooms. Over several years, a number of researchers have noted the benefits of integrating social studies across

the elementary curriculum. According to Park (2008), the body of literature examining curriculum integration as an instructional approach is extensive, with the majority of the research calling for more curriculum integration and research focusing on the extent to which integrated approaches to teaching and learning can be beneficial or consequential for students. Out of 6,400 articles retrieved from a literature search of the ERIC system, Park reported, “less than 8 percent were empirical research studies, and even fewer focused on teachers’ actual experiences in implementing curriculum integration” (p. 308). Much of the literature suggests that effective curriculum integration may have positive effects on students’ motivation, may demonstrate academic gains in a variety of subject areas, and may develop their skills for confronting real-world problems.

However, because of the limited empirical research base, further investigation is needed to begin to document such effects (Hinde; McBee, 2000; Moye, 2011). Hinde (2009) stated,

Integration is about creating modes of thinking and not the ability to access facts-- integrated curriculum will help students to fully integrate the disciplines in their own thinking processes in order to confront issues and problems in a democratic society. (p. 119)

Reporting a natural fit among subjects that draws on “connections between subject areas and between school life and life outside of the classroom,” Lapp and Flood (1994) encouraged teachers to facilitate naturally integrated instruction so “students can begin to see the connections and are able to reach a better understanding of themselves and the world around them” (p. 419).

Given the potential strengths of integrated curricula, Lapp and Flood offered 10 reasons providing a rationale for developing an integrated curriculum in the classroom:

- (1) Students see relationships among ideas,
- (2) Relationships between in-and out-of school topics become obvious to students,
- (3) Communication processes become authentic as students engage in thematic activities,
- (4) Students are encouraged to share ideas,
- (5) Respect and cooperation among peers are expanded,
- (6) Students become more responsible,
- (7) The teacher assumes the role of facilitator,
- (8) A sense of community

develops, (9) many grouping patterns naturally emerge, (10) and Assessment is continuous and related to learning endeavors. (p. 418)

In 2002, Calogero explored the benefits of combining music and literature through curriculum integration indicating music helps students express themselves in a variety of creative modes as well as representing the same ideas through different mediums. In their collaborative action research project, Trent and Riley (2009) similarly integrated visual arts with a social studies unit about defining the role of privacy in a democracy in a fourth grade classroom. At the completion of the unit, the art-integrated lessons resulted in most of the students scoring at or above proficient levels on teacher-made summative assessments. The study also showed students were able to articulate, with a high degree of demonstration, how privacy as a foundation of democracy related to their everyday lives. The students were involved in using multiple mediums to express their ideas, and reported positive reactions to having a variety of options to display their understanding. These reported advantages support the notion that curriculum integration may be an effective and viable instructional approach for teaching social studies education.

Educators and instructional experts have identified effective curriculum integration as a means of engaging students in meaningful social studies instruction. Recognizing curriculum integration as the instructional approach focusing on developing students' learning of the skills and content that can help them solve real world problems, social studies experts and researchers espouse this approach as an appropriate way to teach social studies (Calogero; Hinde; Lapp & Flood).

Researchers claim curriculum integration helps students connect concepts and apply them to everyday life while increasing responsibility for their own learning (McBee; Moye; Snyder, 2001). Stating that curriculum integration is a "powerful way to advocate for the social studies" (p. 1), Sanchez (2007) spoke from this perspective and further considered this teaching approach

to be necessary to help sustain a place for social studies in the elementary curriculum. There is minimal research describing the extent to which elementary teachers' determine their instructional decisions when planning the use of integrative teaching methods to teach social studies curricula. To shed insight on what teaching methods occur during social studies instruction, it is necessary that additional empirical research be conducted in order to add to the existing data findings in this area of research.

Constructivism as a Conceptual Theory Underlying Integrative Teaching

Constructivism, as defined by cognitive and socio-cultural constructivist theorists, focuses on a learner's ability to mentally construct meaning from his or her own environment and to create his or her own knowledge (Blaik-Hourani, 2011; Forrester & Jantzie, 1998; Gray, 1997; Green & Gredler, 2002; McKay & Gibson, 2004). Cognitive and social constructivist theorists offer a conceptual framework for integration as an instructional approach to teaching that moves the focus of instruction from transmission to transaction.

The constructivist theory of learning implies that students assume responsibility for their own learning, and, as Gray points out, students must take an active role in creating their own understanding as a way to learn. In turn, social constructivists describe students' knowledge acquisition as based on how they construct knowledge from their social surroundings. Specifically, students' interactions with the world around them, cultural backgrounds, and prior experiences in knowing help them create personal knowledge (Jaramillo, 1996).

The constructivist theory implies the teacher's role is that of a facilitator of learning, rather than as the expert or the holder of knowledge that unlocks learning for students (Kumar, 2011). As Gray (1997) suggested, "knowledge isn't a thing that can be simply given by the

teacher at the front of the room to students in their desks” (p. 3). The teacher’s role as facilitator involves providing experiences that allow for hypothesizing, predicting, manipulating objects, posing questions, researching, investigating, imagining, and inventing, as part of the student’s mental processes in developing his or her own thoughts.

Curriculum integration as a curricular design for social studies instruction provides a teaching approach that considers the importance of acquiring concepts and skills instead of the intake of facts and recall. As McKay and Gibson (2004) reported, recognizing the extent to which learning is interrelated and not fragmented into various discrete skills and topics is key when considering an integrated approach to instruction and applying the use of integrative teaching methods.

Statement of the Problem

The research literature supports the notion of elementary school teachers’ mostly relying on teacher-centered instructional methods, such as emphasizing memorization or traditional pen and paper exercises, rather than incorporating more student-centered and hands-on instructional strategies to promote higher-order thinking. In tandem, it must be recognized that not all teachers are teacher-centered or student-centered in their instructional approaches to teaching social studies as a continuum exists. To identify where along that continuum teachers work, we must first understand their professional experiences in planning, implementing, and practicing social studies instruction.

The problem guiding this study was the absence in literature of comprehensive research and data findings verifying teachers’ use of teaching methods during the teaching of social studies. Although a substantial amount of literature documents what is recommended as best

practices and appropriate instructional strategies for teaching elementary social studies, researchers have not extensively examined what teaching methods are occurring in social studies. Further empirical research is needed to investigate the following: (1) what instructional methods teachers are using to teach elementary social studies and (2) how teachers determine their use of teaching methods practiced during social studies instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how and whether teachers utilized integrative teaching methods for implementing elementary social studies instruction. This research also investigated how teachers determined their use of teaching methods applied in social studies instruction. This study has the potential to add to the existing body of research examining teachers' use of teaching methods in social studies and the criteria they employ to determine their use of instructional strategies.

Significance of the Study

With restrictive classroom schedules allocating a limited amount of time for each subject, teaching social studies through an integrative approach may be appropriate and necessary for sustaining social studies within the elementary curriculum. Several researchers advocate a curriculum that functions holistically rather than in a fragmented or compartmentalized manner and see curriculum integration as a viable option for teaching at the elementary level. There is extensive research to account for the advantages and disadvantages of employing an integrated approach for social studies instructional purposes. In contrast, there is minimal research describing how elementary teachers practice instruction that integrates social studies curricula.

In her observation of the effects of marginalization of social studies on low performing schools and minority groups, Pace (2007) acknowledged there are few qualitative studies. After surveying teachers to determine what motivated them to invest time and effort in integrating their instruction, McBee (2000) called for more research that systematically explores teachers' experiences and hopefully provides teacher insight. In a discussion with congressional advisors in Washington D.C. (O'Conner et al., 2007), researchers discussed their concerns, noting congressional advisors "emphasized the importance of hearing more about teacher experiences," "understood the challenges that teachers face because of the "curriculum squeeze," and urged that more qualitative research be conducted (p. 3).

It is necessary to investigate how and whether teachers are using integrative teaching methods and add to the existing empirical data confirming teachers' instructional practices used to teach elementary social studies because this area of research is mainly omitted and increasingly deemphasized within the literature base (Ellis & Fouts, 2001). This study investigated the typical teaching methods elementary teachers practiced in second through fifth grade classrooms, as well as investigated what criteria teachers' employed when determining their use of instructional methods used for teaching social studies. It is possible the findings from this study could benefit both novice and veteran teachers who struggle to meet curriculum requirements while juggling multiple subject areas. Teacher education programs and instructors who teach social studies methods courses at the university level may also benefit in relating subject matter to instructional teaching methods and resources used to teach social studies in order to increase their knowledge of some of the concerns and issues involved in teaching elementary social studies.

Research Questions

One overarching research question guided this interpretive case study design, “What instructional strategies do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education?” One sub-question was identified to structure the investigation of the overarching question. “What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies in social studies education?”

Overview of Research Design

This qualitative case study investigates how teachers implemented their social studies instruction as reported in their lesson plans and carried out through their instructional actions. The case study approach was chosen for this study in order to gain an intensive, holistic, description and analysis of a bounded unit that examines a process rather than outcomes. Qualitative case study design is an appropriate social science approach because it relies on multiple methods to confirm emergent findings and is used to examine implementation processes.

Emergent findings gained from this case study research will attempt to offer new meaning, confirm what is known, and expand readers’ understanding of teachers use of instructional teaching methods applied in elementary social studies and how teachers determine their use of those teaching methods. Data collection methods involved conducting formal semi-structured pre-interviews, observing teacher lessons, and analyzing lesson plans with the participation of a small purposeful teacher sample.

Definitions of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)--status used to measure whether a school has obtained all goals for the current school year (NCLB, 2001).

Common Core standards (CCS)--The Common Core standards are national curriculum standards resulting from an initiative led by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The standards are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states . . . to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school (Altoff & Golston, 2012; NCSS, 2012).

Cognitive Constructivist Theory--Jean Piaget theorized cognitive development occurred through mental processes that span from biological maturation to experience with an individual's physical and social environment to equilibration. The equilibration principle is a key tenant undergirding Piaget's theory of cognitive development. This principle suggests an individual's cognitive development is dependent on whether they reach an optimal state of balance or "equilibrium" between their internal mental structures and external environmental reality (Piaget, 1952, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Bruning et al., 2004).

Constructivist theory (constructivism)--states that each person must construct his or her own reality. "This means that experience is the key to meaningful learning--not some else's experience abstracted and condensed into textbook form, but one's own direct experience" (Ellis & Fouts, 2001, p. 24). The term constructivism is linked to cognitive and social constructivism, each having a different emphasis, but they share many common perspectives about teaching and learning (Piaget, 1952, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Bruning et al., 2004; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987, 1997).

Sociocultural Theory--Lev Vygotsky's theory is also a constructivist theory, however, the focus or emphasis is on the learner and their social environment. Vygotsky's theory stresses the interaction of interpersonal (social), cultural-historical, and individual factors as the key to human development. Some of key assertions reflected in Vygotsky's theory are: (1) social interactions are critical, (2) knowledge is co-constructed between two or more people, and (3) human development occurs through the cultural transmission of tools including language and symbols (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987, 1997; Piaget, 1973; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969).

Curriculum integration/integrated curriculum--an approach that purposefully draws together knowledge, perspectives, and methods of inquiry from more than one discipline to develop a more powerful understanding of an issue, person, event, or big idea. Parker (2012) instilled the "purpose is not to eliminate individual disciplines but to use them in combination" (p. 397).

Educational Technology Integration--Integration of technology can be achieved when students learn with computers in ways that include: using computers efficiently and effectively in the general content areas to allow students to learn how to apply computer skills in a meaningful way; using real life software applications that will help students learn to use computers flexibly, purposefully and creatively; having the curriculum drive technology as opposed to technology driving the curriculum; and, organizing the goals of curriculum and technology into a coordinated, harmonious whole (T. H. E. Journal, 1999). Technology in education is commonly defined as a technical device or tool used to enhance instruction (Ashburn & Floden, 2006; Bottino & Robotti, 2007; Cuban, 2001). According to Lever-Duffy, McDonald, and Mizell (2005) educational technology "might include media, models, projected and non-projected visual, as well as audio, video and digital media." (Okojie, Olinzock, & Okojie-Boulder, 2006, p.

66). Specifically, technology integration should incorporate the technological skill and ability to use pedagogical knowledge as a base for integrating technology into teaching and learning (Ashburn & Floden, 2006; Bottino & Robotti, 2007; Cuban, 2001).

Expanding Environments Scope and Sequence Model Approach--“Originating in the early 1900s, this approach to organizing the social learning experiences of young children is based upon the presumptions that a typical child’s sphere of awareness and readiness to learn expands grade by grade. The focus of social learning should, then, expand to increasingly distant and complex environments as the child becomes capable of such study” (Hoge, 1996, p.19).

Integrative Practices--are methods or instructional strategies that intentionally draw connections between knowledge, concepts, or ideas from multiple disciplines; integrated instructional methods/strategies consider multiples sources and resources for teaching subject matter; and integrative methods/strategies aim to connect various subject matter holistically and means to relate learning objectives to students’ personal experiences (Drake, 1998; Etim, 2005; Parker,2012; Sunal et al., 2004).

Meaningful teaching--“focuses on a few important ideas useful to students both in and outside of school. It connects content to student interest as well as local history, cultures, and issues” (McCall, 2006, p.162).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)--The NCLB act of 2001 was a U.S. Act of Congress authorizing several federal education programs that were administered by the states. This law was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) requiring states to develop their own state academic standards and a state testing system based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measureable goals could improve individual outcomes in

education. In return for their participation in establishing individual state academic standards and an individual state testing system school districts received federal school funding.

Powerful instruction--assumes that social studies teaching integrates the necessary disciplines and connects knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes to practical action. This form of curriculum integration must advance important social studies ideas and goals without focusing on trivial content (McCall, 2006).

Social constructivism--theorizes that we, as individuals, construct our own interpretations and therefore knowledge of the world within a group context, rather than accept a universally imposed scheme. "In this way, each learner's conception of reality varies, based on his/her interpretative experiences" (Jaramillo, 1996, p. 135).

Social Studies--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. (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2010).

Value-based instruction--is an approach to social studies instruction that requires teachers to address the ethical dimensions of topics and to consider controversial issues that will promote students' concern for the common good (McCall, 2006).

Assumptions

My epistemological and ontological assumptions about designing and conducting research can be metaphorically described as a disclaimer to my readers. Cresswell (2007)

explained that a researcher's positionality displays the researcher's honesty about their stand or position in relation to the research. As the primary investigator, my researcher's positionality and theoretical assumptions acknowledge my biases and identify the lens through which I view the world. My positionality is helpful to understanding me in relation to the overall research design previously described.

My position is reflective of, and mostly influenced by, my socio-cultural experiences, a construction of my own ideas and opinions, and my personal/professional interactions with those who surround me. All of these unique experiences and characteristics ultimately shaped how I conducted my research study and provided an understanding for how I analyze results and draw conclusions.

Drawing from Halpern's (2003) definition of assumption, the term assumption is a statement for which no proof or evidence is offered. In research, an assumption can be based on the idea that one believes something to be true based on prior experiences or one's belief system. My assumptions were as follows:

1. Teachers were implementing social studies instructional strategies that move along a continuum from teacher-centered strategies to student-centered strategies.
2. Teachers were employing integrative strategies, but may be sacrificing the integrity of social studies topics.
3. Teachers were familiar with constructivist teaching strategies.
4. Integrating social studies with math or science was often not implemented.
5. Teachers were mainly integrating social studies with literacy curricula.
6. A gap existed in the instructional decisions and practices that teachers' employed when incorporating integrative strategies.

7. When teachers integrated social studies curricula, students were given opportunities to be responsible for their learning.

8. Integrated teaching means moving away from depending on one source for ideas, whether it is the textbook, a trade book, a guest speaker, or a “hands-on” science lesson. Instead the teacher recognized that both the guest speaker and the “hands-on” science lesson offer pieces that can be put together into a whole picture (Sunal et al., 2004, p. 2).

Limitations

All research designs have limitations, and there is no such thing as a perfect design (Cresswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 1990). Researchers are encouraged to identify potential weaknesses of their study. In doing so, the researcher acknowledges that making outrageous claims of generalizations or conclusiveness about his or her findings in a study is inappropriate in the field of research. Marshall and Rossman advised that limitations “reminds the reader of what the study is and is not, its boundaries, and how its results can and cannot contribute to understanding” (p. 76). The following study focused on four sample elementary teachers in two elementary schools that teach Grades 2 through 5. The participants were not randomly chosen, but purposefully selected, based on their years of teaching experience, and their recommendation by various gatekeepers, including two school principals. All of the participants chosen for the study had the opportunity to volunteer or simply decline the request to participate. The findings from the case study design did the following:

1. Reflected *subjectivity and researcher bias*--The interviews and observations proposed in this study called for the researcher as the primary instrument. For this reason, subjectivity and

researcher bias were inherent and played a part in the findings and conclusions drawn by the researcher.

2. Identified the *role of gatekeeping* in this research design. The gatekeeper's role was evident and was seen through the principal's recommendation of elementary teachers based on specific criteria including their number of years of teaching experience and the teachers' experience level regarding the use of integrated teaching approaches.

3. Demonstrated the *limitations* in conducting research and collecting data at two different research sites. This manner of data collection may or may not have proven to be a significant or insignificant limitation. Data were collected from two different elementary schools. School A is a Title 1 school, serving Grades Kindergarten- 5. School B is a non-Title 1 program serving grades Kindergarten-5. Both schools were located in a large metropolitan city in the southeastern portion of the United States.

4. This research involved *limitations* in *data collecting* procedures of observational data related to teachers' lessons. Each teacher was asked to voluntarily submit a unit with a minimum of two lesson plans. The teachers units were submitted with the understanding they would serve as the lessons the researcher would observe. The researcher conducted two 30-minute observations with each participant (n = 4) with data collection taking place over the course of several weeks during participants' social studies instruction. Because the researcher did not know beforehand which days were devoted to social studies instruction, it was impossible to know on which days these observations would take place. Mandated standardized testing days, assemblies, etc. influenced the classroom observation schedule. The sample teacher participants established a time convenient for their schedule in which the researcher could visit their classrooms to conduct observations. Formal semi-structured pre-study interviews were

conducted prior to all the lesson observations. This limitation in the study should be noted since it is possible these scheduled lesson observations impacted the data collection and research findings. For example, if the researcher had come on different days other than the days the sample participants indicated, perhaps the data findings would look very different. It is also possible the sample teacher participants made arrangements to teach lessons or utilize instructional methods not typically practiced because they were influenced by the idea a perceived official or outsider visited their classrooms. It is impossible to know how the researcher's presence impacted them one way or another, however it is important to mention this limitation as the data findings are read and interpreted.

Organization of the Study

The dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter I provides background information on elementary schooling and the social studies curriculum in US public schools and classrooms, social studies instructional practices in the elementary classroom, curriculum integration as an instructional approach for teaching social studies in the elementary school, and constructivism as a conceptual theory underlying curriculum integration. Additionally, Chapter 1 includes a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, key research questions, an overview of the research design, assumptions, and limitations, and definitions and terms used in this study. Chapter II explores a review of relevant literature related to the status of elementary social studies, educational legislation and its impact on social studies instruction, Common Core standards, a theoretical framework for using integrative teaching methods, forms of integration, defining integration, and practical studies involving integrative teaching and instruction. Chapter III explains the research methodology that guided this study, including the

research design and analysis methods used. Chapter IV discusses the results of all the data collected throughout the four cases from lesson plans, interviews (pre-post formal and informal interviews, pre-observational CoRe and PaP-eR, informal and unstructured), and observations. The results include descriptions of the teacher backgrounds, classroom settings, teachers' perceived instructional approach to teaching social studies, and social studies lesson observations. Further, a within-case analysis is included examining all of the themes that emerged for each case separated by research questions and sub-questions. Chapter V discusses the across-case analysis and notes the themes found in each case as is related to each research question. Chapter VI discusses the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research in this final chapter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A multitude of researchers has provided an abundance of articles and reviews that illustrate the use of integrated instructional strategies within the elementary school curriculum (Christensen, 2006; Field et al., 2011; Grosenick, 2009; Kornfeld & Leyden, 2005; McBee, 2000; Miller, 2003; Palmer & Burroughs, 2002; Park, 2008; Rose & Schuncke, 1997; Shafer, Stearns, & Kallo; 2006; Trent & Riley, 2009). Building on this wealth of research literature, this study focused on how elementary teachers practice integrated teaching methods while teaching social studies education, as well as how teachers determine their instructional choices. One overarching research question guides this interpretive case study design, “What instructional strategies do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education?” One sub-question is identified to structure the investigation of the overarching question. “What criteria do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education?”

This review of related literature begins by addressing the status of social studies education and elementary social studies instruction within the context of the current educational climate. The researcher discusses pressing issues and concerns such as federal legislation, standardized curriculum, and accountability requirements that help to situate social studies instruction’s current status and determine how social studies instruction is carried out. Next, the theoretical framework section of this literature review presents the following learning theories

that influence integrative teaching strategies: Progressivism, Cognitive Constructivist Theory, and Social Constructivist Theory.

This chapter, then, reviews various forms of integrated models as well as discusses multiple definitions of curriculum integration. The advantages and disadvantages to implementing integrative strategies in elementary social studies instruction requires special emphasis in order to place data in the appropriate context. This chapter concludes with a critique of related studies, examining teachers' instructional practices that involve integrative strategies and situates this study.

Status of Elementary Social Studies

National Commission on Excellence in Education--A Nation at Risk

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) stated that all students should possess a minimal level of content knowledge and called for higher expectations for students' academic achievement. In their report, *A Nation at Risk* the Commission proposed a basic curriculum for all students, with a strongly emphasized recommendation to implement measurable standards. The NCEE's initial request to school districts was deliberate. The NCEE recommended "state and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened, and that, at a minimum, all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New Basics" (1983, p. 123). This recommendation for requirements said all students should take 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies, and .50 year of computer science before graduating from high school. The NCEE recommended additional coursework for college-bound students including 2 years of foreign language and said, "Whatever the student's educational or work objectives, knowledge of the New Basics is the

foundation or success for the after-school years and, therefore, forms the core of the modern curriculum” (p. 124). The National Commission on Excellence in Education warned that our society lost sight of the basic purpose of schooling and the necessary efforts for maintaining high expectations within our educational institutions

It is essential that all U.S. citizens possess a high level of shared education in a democratic society. For our country to function, citizens must be able to reach some common understandings on complex issues, often on short notice and on the basis of conflicting or incomplete evidence. (p. 114)

The Commission’s report acknowledged social studies is one of five basic content knowledge areas in which students should possess a minimum level of understanding suggesting that students acquire at least 3 years of social studies course credit before graduating from high school. The report indicated that social studies is designed to accomplish the following:

(A) Enable students to fix their places and possibilities within the larger social and cultural structure (B) understand the broad sweep of both ancient and contemporary ideas that have shaped our world (C) understand the fundamentals of how our political system functions; and (D) grasp the difference between free and repressive societies. (p. 124)

The purpose of the NCEE’s report was a call to mobilize the efforts of the federal government, along with the state and local school districts, to raise the competence level of American students in core academic areas. The Commission’s report ushered in the ongoing era of the standards-based reform in U.S. school districts and classrooms. This powerful and symbolic report mostly influenced how states and various school districts implement standardized curriculums, and to what degree individual schools implement high-stakes testing. The most likely unintentional result of the Commission’s report was the reported detrimental effects on social studies curricula and social studies instruction at the elementary grade level.

Educational Legislation: The Impact on Social Studies Instruction

American students are graduating from high school with little basic knowledge of history, civics, economics, and geography (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Lemig, Ellington, & Schug, 2006) an increasingly troublesome trend for social studies educators, academics, policymakers, and the general public. Lemig et al. (2006) suggested the implication of the trend is that “the very future of the American Republic could be at stake” (p. 322). Curriculum standardization, accountability, and high-stakes testing have contributed to the adverse effects on time allocated for social studies instruction in comparison to tested subjects (Anderson, 2009; Burstein et al., 2006; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005; Center on Educational Policy, 2008; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Howard, 2003; Pace, 2007; Lemig et al., 2006; Tanner, 2008).

Although NCEE’s composed report communicates the rationale for social studies at the high school level and identifies a purpose for social studies instruction the national legislative policies of the 1990s do not mention social studies as a core subject. Heafner and Fitchett (2012) remind us of this marginalization noting the omission of social studies in the national legislative policies in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act 1993 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, 2001. Lack of inclusion in national policies encourages social studies’ loss of credibility as an important discipline. Over time social studies has diminished in its status as a priority in the elementary curriculum (Heafner & Fitchett). The contemporary policy efforts of the Common Core State Standards Initiative 2010 reportedly marginalize social studies even further, explaining the discipline as an enrichment or topic for mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) integration (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Winstead, 2011).

Common Core

In 2009 the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, argued for rigorous and more strenuous standards. Mr. Duncan explained that in several instances, and throughout far too many states, students were short changed because various state leaders were operating independently, by setting academic standards too low (p.46). In response to the call for more rigorous academic standards that aimed to offer a consistent set of national standards throughout the United States, members of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), the Council of Chief School Officers (CCSSO), governors, and state commissioners of education assembled a committee to establish a new set of standards.

With representation from 48 states, these individual governors and state school chiefs developed and structured the Common Core State Standards “to ensure that all students have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life upon graduation from High School, regardless of where they live” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, Frequently Asked Questions section, para. 5). The purpose of Common Core State Standards was to “lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the 21st century,” according to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) *Teaching reading with the social studies standards: Elementary units that integrate great books, social studies, and the common core standards* (2012, p. 5).

Although the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) strongly emphasizes English Language Arts (ELA) in its document, the authors note the source of literacy development is not limited to (ELA) subject content. The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers (2010) argued that students must learn to write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas; therefore, the standards

encourage the teaching of literacy skills and concepts, required for college and career readiness, in multiple disciplines. The Common Core State Standards expressed its recommendation for the teaching of literacy standards across English Language Arts (ELA), literacy, history, social studies, science, and technical subjects.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have important implications for social studies teachers. First, the CCSS offers a vision of 21st century literacy. Secondly, social studies classrooms play a significant role in the development of certain kinds of literacy skills, especially those that require critical reading, the ability to evaluate information, the broadening of worldview, and the ability to reason and use evidence (Common Core State Standards, 2010).

Specific expectations and suggestions for literacy instruction with the use of history and social studies subjects regarding secondary students are explicitly reported in the Common Core State Standards. The expectations for the teaching of literacy with social studies subjects in a Kindergarten-5 setting, however, are not explicit and “it is assumed that the teacher will teach history and other social studies subjects at the elementary level through the thoughtful selection of literature and informational texts” (Altoff & Golston, 2012, p. 6).

At these grade levels, the reading standards identify targets and expectations for literature, informational text, and foundational skills. Standards are also provided for language, writing, speaking, and listening. The reading standards offer exemplars that include stories, poetry, and informational texts, as well as read-aloud texts in kindergarten through grade 3. (p. 6)

The Common Core State Standards recommend reading, writing, listening, and language standards at the elementary level. Expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language are applicable to a range of subjects at the elementary level that include but are not limited to, English language arts. Children’s literature and also informational texts play an important role in social studies instruction at the elementary level (Altoff & Golston, 2012).

Consequences and Benefits as a Result of Accountability

In 2003, Robert Howard argued that the “squeeze” on social studies was shrinking the discipline as standards-based reform gained traction (p. 285). Social studies “has been treated as a second-class subject,” according to Howard, who recognized social studies as one of the essential academic disciplines (p. 225). The impact resulting from requirements based on the NCLB 2001 legislation has been mostly negative for social studies instruction according to Howard who contended that elementary social studies instruction has drastically diminished due to the changes made to instructional requirements associated with high-stakes testing and a standardized curriculum. High-stakes testing is a significant factor in determining how schools are rewarded or penalized, an unforgiving measure for the schools and school districts that do not experience positive results on their achievement tests (Anderson, 2009; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Grant, 2007; Knighton, 2003). In some states, Howard reported that positive incentives, including financial rewards, are given to teachers and administrators in schools experiencing success in achieving their curriculum standards through high-stakes testing (Howard). Schools falling short in successfully accomplishing their academic goals and having insufficient results on their achievement tests, face punitive consequences that sometimes involve restructuring particular schools by removing educational staff and replacing them with new faculty and administrators (Howard).

Marginalization of Social Studies in the Elementary Curriculum

The challenges created by standards-based reform efforts continue to make it difficult to maintain social studies as a priority in the elementary curriculum. The assertions and opinions of various social studies researchers and social studies advocates who argue that current educational

reforms are cause for much of the marginalization of social studies instruction throughout various U.S. elementary classrooms are evidenced and well documented throughout the research literature (Anderson, 2009; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Lemig et al., 2006; Winstead, 2011; Zamosky, 2008). Howard (2003) stated, “Citizens with strong knowledge, skills, and democratic dispositions help to advance public dialogue and deliberation especially on major policy issues” (p. 286). Social studies advocates were asked to plead the case for social studies and remind legislators about the critical role that social studies plays in sustaining our democracy Howard (2003). Howard also urged social studies educators to integrate social studies with other academic disciplines and encouraged school districts to consider requiring their teachers to teach social studies through service learning or to incorporate social studies as a graduation project. These alternative pathways were considered necessary to combat the marginalization of social studies issue. Furthermore, Howard maintained that if stakeholders decide not to act, or simply dismiss these alternatives for sustaining social studies education, they compromise the informed citizenry that our democracy demands and our public discussion requires.

Diminished Social Studies Instructional Time

Expanding on the scope of earlier studies conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), Fitchett and Heafner (2010) worked with 17 years of national datasets from NCES. A comparative analysis was used to determine the amount of instructional time spent teaching elementary social studies education as compared to the instructional time spent teaching language arts, mathematics, and science in classrooms across the United States. The researcher made comparisons across grade levels as well. Results from Fitchett and Heafner’s research indicated that, when compared with English/language arts (ELA) and

mathematics instructional time, elementary social studies remained minimal with approximately 2.9 hours each week. Social studies received slightly more instructional time than science, which averaged 2.75 hours per week. Overall, social studies and science instructional time remained consistently lower than the mathematics and ELA instruction over the last 17 years. When analyzing the differences in instructional time across grade levels by content areas, the results indicated that more subject-specific instructional time was spent teaching social studies in the intermediate grades (3-5) than the lower grades (K-2), with an average of 39 minutes per week of instructional time spent teaching social studies in intermediate grades as compared to 24 minutes for primary grades, over the last 17 years. A significant decrease in the instructional time for social studies was discovered at the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Study findings also showed the impact of NCLB legislation on instructional time for elementary social studies were more detrimental than prior national policies (Fitchett & Heafner).

In a similar study conducted by Burstein et al. (2006), in which the researchers surveyed elementary teachers (n = 172) about the amount of time they spent teaching social studies, how they chose to approach social studies teaching, and the types of strategies they used to teach social studies, teachers reported they spent the majority of their instructional day teaching subjects tested by standardized measures. Findings revealed half of the research participants spent less than 1 hour per week teaching social studies, and less than 5% of the total research sample spent 4-6 hours or more per week teaching social studies. Results indicated that over 50% of the participants surveyed alternated between teaching social studies and science, with 48% of them stating they taught social studies 1-2 times per week.

While Fitchett and Heafner's (2010) research investigated the differences of instructional time spent teaching social studies with the remaining core subjects, Burstein et al. (2006)

investigated whether social studies instruction was being neglected altogether and tried to document possible reasons for the neglect. The teacher participants varied in the grade levels they were teaching including 93 teaching various lower elementary grade levels and 65 teaching upper elementary grades. The participants were from different geographic regions in a large urban school district. The teacher participants addressed multiple question items throughout the survey. The survey questions were organized around particular constructs including (1) how well-prepared teachers feel to teach social studies, (2) what curriculum and materials are being utilized, (3) what methods and activities teachers are employing, (4) what aspects of social studies are considered important. When asked whether or not they were satisfied teaching social studies, the majority of the teachers (69%) stated they were dissatisfied. Teachers noted that having very little instructional time to teach social studies because of requirements to prioritize the mandated curriculum was their reason for being mostly dissatisfied with teaching social studies. The results of one related item from the survey revealed that 67% of teachers felt well prepared to teach social studies; however, more than half indicated they simply assigned reading the textbook and incorporated completing worksheets 1-2 times per week as their method of instruction to facilitate their social studies lesson. Survey participants described the importance of teaching critical thinking skills to students, and overwhelmingly agreed that teaching critical thinking skills is a powerful strategy to employ with social studies content. The teaching strategies consistently noted in practice, however, mainly consisted of textbook reading followed by filling out coordinated worksheets. Incorporating meaningful strategies and providing hands-on, minds-on instruction such as showing films, participating in simulations, and constructing projects accounted for less than 20% of the time spent each school year.

The current state of social studies has reportedly left teachers with diminished instructional time for teaching social studies curricula giving the impression that social studies is unimportant. In fact, the instructional minutes spent teaching social studies education has drastically decreased around the nation with social studies and science instruction being reduced by an average of 75 to 90 minutes per week in elementary classrooms (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). These current trends make the job of teaching quality social studies lessons more difficult, since social studies is often relegated to a thirty-five minute instructional period due to time constraints. With less time to teach quality lessons, the tendency is for teachers to incorporate fragmented social studies curriculum, and the overuse of teacher-centered methods are consistently used. Teachers recognize that it takes more time for students to develop in-depth knowledge of social studies content in order to increase their understanding, and they want to provide more creative student-centered social studies lessons, but the reality is the reduction in time allotted for social studies instruction make it less likely that teachers will do so.

Further research is required to evaluate how legislative mandates have impacted social studies instruction according to Burstein et al. (2006). The researchers contended that quantitative surveys limit the scope of discovery and can offer only so much insight. They contend future research that addresses teachers' social studies instructional practices will require more qualitative research, which indicates there is a need for additional research that examines and documents elementary teachers' instructional practices of social studies education conducted through in-depth interviews and observations.

Theoretical Framework for an Integrated Curriculum Approach

John Dewey and Progressive Education Views

Child-centered education is at the core of John Dewey's philosophy. Dewey's philosophies of teaching and learning, which extend and build upon the ideas theorized by notable philosophers Edward Sheldon and Francis Parker, are significant in characterizing the period of the Progressive Education Era and reflect the progressive teaching practices that were implemented in the classrooms of 19th century America (Dewey, 1896, 1900, 1933, 1980; Cuban, 1993; Hansen, 2006; Simpson, Jackson, & Aycock, 2005; Zarillo, 2012). Recognizing the uniqueness of every child, John Dewey ascertained that teaching should be individually relevant and personally connected to students' own experiences and learning processes. Dewey's theories about the learning environment suggested that lessons should be activity-based, allowing students to build, manipulate, and create (Dewey, 1896, 1900, 1933, 1980; Cuban, 1993). Dewey reasoned that students should be engaged in quality learning and that schools should be viewed as a "microcosm of and preparation for life in a democratic society" (Sherman, 2009, p. 43). John Dewey stated, "Children will receive the best education if they are given choices over what they learn and when they learn it" (Zarillo, 2012, p. 7). Although evidence shows progressive practices were implemented until the mid-1940s, especially in small schools and private schools, teacher-centered or more traditional teaching practices continued to prevail in most classrooms (Dewey, 1896, 1900, 1933, 1980; Cuban, 1993; Sherman, 2009; Zarillo, 2012). Progressive education and the influence of progressive theories of teaching and learning steadily weakened over time, and eventually yielded to traditional educational practices associated with today's standardized curriculum. Calling on 21st century teachers, Zarillo (2012) has urged them to revisit and to be encouraged by the theories that significantly influenced the practice of teaching

and learning during the Progressive Education Movement. Four basic principles of Progressive serve as a foundation for carrying out social studies instruction:

1. Social studies is more than the memorization of facts. It is a discipline in which students learn to think, to make hypotheses, and to find answers.
2. Social studies should be activity-based. Learning requires firsthand experiences. Children need to act, sing, build, dance, take field trips, and have hands-on experiences.
3. Social studies requires the use of many instructional materials. Textbooks can play an important role in social studies teaching, but many other learning resources must be used.
4. Social studies instruction should incorporate the interests of children. To put this in practical terms, every instructional unit should be structured so that children select some of their learning activities. (Zarillo, p. 7)

Cognitive Constructivist Theory

The theories of John Dewey and Jean Piaget are considered to be a cornerstone for cognitive constructivist ideas. Constructivism is considered “a psychological and philosophical perspective contending individuals form or construct much of what they learn and understand” (Piaget, 1952, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Bruning et al., 2004). “The core idea of constructivism is that students develop new knowledge through a process of active construction . . . they do not merely passively receive or copy input from teachers or textbooks” (Good & Brophy, 2008, p. 337). Commonly defined as a theory of learning (Blaik-Hourani, 2011; Green & Gredler, 2002; Piaget, 1952,1970, 1973; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969 Iran-Nejad, 2001; Schunk, 2012; Wadsworth, 1996) that considers how individuals acquire knowledge, “Piaget’s view is that new construction is always built on prior construction and that, with disequilibrium, advancing prior constructions is always possible” (Wadsworth, 1996, p.10). For Piaget, constructing new knowledge is a process of inventing the model, rather than recreating what’s seen through the model; therefore, he believed that “interaction with peers and adults (particularly peers) and criticism and discussion in its various forms is a source of necessary

disequilibrium” (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 12). Piaget asserted cognitive conflict is responsible for the qualitative changes that occur in reasoning abilities, thus, relating new content to the knowledge that an individual already possesses purely lies within that individual (Wadsworth, 1996). Wadsworth outlined seven qualitative changes in reasoning abilities:

1. Each advance, each new construction or reconstruction, is characterized by capability for qualitatively different reasoning.
2. Each reconstruction or improvement in reasoning permeates a child’s total reasoning rather than only affecting reasoning about a particular event.
3. Each new advance involves an integration and extension of the knowledge and reasoning of the previous level into ‘new’ knowledge.
4. The course of development is invariant.
5. Each advance in reasoning is accompanied by egocentrism in the initial use of new reasoning.
6. Intellectual development is self-regulated.
7. Intellectual development depends on social interaction and social experience. (p. 140)

Constructivist theory is further distinguished from other learning theories in that maturation, active experience, social interaction, and equilibration are essential factors in cognitive development (Piaget, 1952,1970, 1973; Piaget & Inhelder,1969). Piaget “viewed each of these factors and their interaction as necessary conditions for cognitive development, but none alone is sufficient to ensure cognitive development” (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 28). The learner will move within and between these stages of development as the function of these factors interact (Wadsworth, 1996).

Social Constructivist Theory

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s social view of constructivism provides a theoretical perspective undergirding social constructivist ideas. “For Vygotsky, social factors play a fundamental role in intellectual development” (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 11). Vygotsky took his interest in cognitive development a step further than Piaget when he considered how intellectual

development was impacted by both social and cultural engagement. At the center of the sociocultural constructivist theory, Lev Vygotsky reasoned learners thinking is transformed or impacted by their interaction with the world, people, and the cultural aspects of life around them. Vygotsky considered how and whether individuals internalized or made new meaning when socially engaging with others in his or her cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987, 1997). Vygotsky believed that learning could take place if the appropriate modeling of cultural concepts were enacted. Unlike Piaget, who asserted the individual constructs knowledge for himself, Vygotsky argued, “learning through others was the driving force of intellectual development” (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 10). Social constructivist theorists emphasize knowledge construction based on social interactions (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987, 1997; Wadsworth, 1996). Some of the key features of social constructivist approaches to teaching and learning were theorized as:

1. Knowledge is viewed as developing interpretations co-constructed through discussion;
2. Everyone has expertise to contribute;
3. Everyone in the group shares responsibility for initiating and guiding learning efforts;
4. One person acts as a discussion leader (facilitator) to pose questions, seek clarification, promote dialogue, assist in recognizing consensus and disagreement;
5. Individuals make sense of new information by connecting it to their prior knowledge and collaborate in shared dialogue with group members to co-construct shared understandings;
6. Discourse emphasizes reflective discussion, questions develop understanding of powerful ideas, and the focus is on thinking;
7. Activities are authentic and focus on higher-order thinking; and
8. The group collaborated as a learning community, sharing understandings through sustained dialogue. (Good & Brophy, 2008, p. 341)

Vygotsky and Piaget both recognized that social interaction was necessary in the classroom environment in order for learning to occur, but their reasoning was different (Piaget, 1952, 1970, 1973; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987, 1997; Wadsworth, 1996). “For Vygotsky, the social environment is the source of models of what constructions

should look like--- It is the source of socially constructed knowledge that models for and mediates the child's constructions" (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 12). Vygotsky believed that individuals internalized knowledge from the outside in (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987, 1997). Supporting that perspective, Gibson and McKay (2001) posited that knowledge is co-constructed through social and cultural contexts, rendering reality non-objective.

Forms of Integration

Researchers and educators have articulated different forms of integration; therefore, the goal and instructional design of integrated models vary in their elements (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; Beane, 1997; Burton, 2001; Case, 1991; Drake, 1998; Etim, 2005; Ellis & Fouts, 2013; Hinde, 2005; Miller, 1996; Park, 2008; Snyder, 2001). Because forms of integration differ in how they are instructionally implemented, integrative strategies and methods also vary, meaning there are many possibilities in how integration can be reflected through instructional practice (Beane, 1997; Drake, 1998; Etim, 2005; Parker, 2012; Sunal et al., 2004). Various integration forms are documented in the research literature and they span a continuum from simplistic approaches to more difficult or abstract approaches. These integration forms are key to determining the design type of integrated instruction and they reportedly drive decision making for instructional choices to be applied in practice (Beane; 1997 Drake; 1998 Etim; 2005; Snyder, 2013). Burton (2001) noted that curriculum integration is commonly associated with interdisciplinary curriculum design and explained curriculum integration approaches as organized in three levels of integration: thematic, knowledge, and learner-initiated. Thematic integration, Burton explained, occurs when teachers choose a theme, such as safety. They then select and teach knowledge and skills from various subject areas in an effort to support their

students' understanding of that specific theme. "Themes become the curriculum organizers, and a potpourri approach--random samplings of knowledge and skills--is used to drive the development of a curriculum design" (Burton, 2001, p. 20). In order for authentic knowledge integration to occur, Burton (2001) said there is a high level of connectedness, or linkage, between knowledge and skills in two or more subject areas. He stated, "knowledge integration is attempted only when logical and direct linkages to knowledge in other disciplines or subjects can be established" (p. 21). Burton (2001) explained that knowledge integration promotes a higher level of achievement because of the interactive nature required between knowledge and skills in one or more subjects. He admitted teachers can face difficulty in practicing interdisciplinary curriculum strategies mainly because they lack the required knowledge in specific subject areas that are imperative when attempting to "present knowledge and skills unique to disciplines in which they have little or no expertise" (p. 21). The third and most complicated level of integration is learner-initiated, which according to Burton (2001), is the most significant form of integration. Learner-initiated integration requires students to develop higher-level thinking skills and to apply these critical thinking skills into real life. This level of integration aims to structure lessons so that discovery learning independent of formal instruction is possible for students (Burton, 2001).

Describing integration as an assortment of connections ranging from concrete to abstract, Miller (2003) claimed that integration is neither sequential nor hierarchical, but instead can be accessed in any order or can be combined with one or more categories. At one end of the continuum is topical integration. Topical integration, much like the thematic integration described by Burton (2001), is based on the teacher selecting a certain topic and then using that theme as a guide to teaching knowledge and skills through that specific topic. An additional

category of integration identified by Miller (2003) focused on integration of related skills. This form of integration requires the teacher to select and teach a common skill with the intended goal of helping students draw connections among different subject areas. Conceptual integration is another type of integration identified which concentrates on the selection of particular concepts as a guide for instruction; teachers then use these concepts to help students understand many subject areas, making this category of integration more abstract from the student's point of view. The fourth type of integration is higher-order thinking integration. This form of integration centers around the strategies selected in order to promote higher-level thinking skills. The fifth and final of Miller's types of integration is pedagogical integration. Miller described this type of integration as abstract, and he considered this level of integration to be an intangible category for students, because it involves the use of integration that explores teachers' pedagogical decisions and concerns as a guide for instructional practices. In addition to the above strategies, Badley (cited in Case, 1991) defined four modes of integration including Fusion, Insertion, Correlation and Harmonization that help to identify strategies for making connections.

1. Fusion refers to forming a new, single entity, from curricula elements previously taught separately. Meshing English and social studies into Humanities exemplifies fusion.
2. Insertion refers to adding or absorbing one curricular element into a constellation of other curricular elements, such as introducing into a social studies course a few lessons on reading historical documents or on interpreting the art of an historical period.
3. Correlation implies drawing connections and noting parallels between elements that remain separately taught. Reference to concepts or skills acquired in another subject or timing topics so the history and literature of a particular period are taught concurrently are examples of correlation.
4. In harmonization, another mode of integrating, disparate elements are made compatible with or promotive of each other. Although harmonization involves some changes, the elements are not fused with or inserted into other elements. Harmonization is a principal mode of holistic integration, although it is also appropriate with other forms of integration. For example, transfer of skills to other subject areas may be enhanced if teachers agree on a common way to carry out inquiries in various subjects. (pp. 64-77)

Apart from the continuum models described earlier, Snyder (2001) identified three approaches to developing an integrated curriculum. Described as one of the most popular but least meaningful ways to link disciplines, Snyders' first approach, the Connection curriculum design, requires the selection of materials or concepts from one discipline to be used as instructional practices to teach or reinforce a concept in another curricular area. For example, students are learning about a topic through art, but they are not learning in or studying about the art discipline of art at that time. Snyder argued that although this type of design is commonly cited as an example of integrating curricula, it is not considered an integrated nor interdisciplinary instructional approach. A correlation design of instruction is made when two or more disciplines share materials or activities, according to Snyder. Despite teachers' cooperation in using the same materials or in teaching the same topics at the same time, this curriculum design does not require teachers to intentionally plan their development of important ideas in order to teach across the disciplines. Snyder (2001) suggested the integrated curriculum design is the route to change calling for more assimilation in curriculum design. He explained that integration cuts across the disciplines such that a central idea can be investigated through various content areas or multiple disciplines. "Application and synthesis of ideas from one discipline to another are encouraged, leading students to develop deeper understanding and critical thinking through the comparing and contrasting of ideas" (Snyder, 2001, p. 36).

Various types of integration and their instructional design for organizing integrated curriculum approaches are well documented within the research base. These models of integration mean to serve as a guide or provide a theoretical framework for teachers who select integrated instruction as an appropriate instructional approach for teaching elementary curricula. The key ideas of these various models including their purpose, and the elements that characterize

different forms of integration design, as well as examples that illustrate how these approaches could be applied in a classroom were discussed earlier. The integrated models presented here reflect a continuum that ranges in its implementation of the most simplistic instructional techniques to more complex techniques (Drake, 1998).

Defining Curriculum Integration

Scholars have debated how to define curriculum integration, which has evolved into an amalgam of sorts within the research literature. According to Vars (1991), efforts to integrate the curriculum have a long history (Vars, 1991) whose origins can be traced to many influential theorists such as John Dewey, William Kilpatrick, Johann Friedrich Herbart, and James Beane. Among such notable theorists, John Dewey and the integrated approaches to education associated with the Progressive Education Movement during the 1930s are commonly referenced as having influenced contemporary approaches to curriculum integration. In the 1980s and early 1990s, advocates for integrated instructional strategies took a closer look at curriculum integration as a powerful instructional approach because the growing interest in new brain-based research called for more student-centered instruction. Student-centered instruction entails learning that places the student in control of his or her own learning; this meaningful instruction considers how the educational content relates the individual student's life. In response to federal mandates and school district requirements to spend more time teaching tested subjects, curriculum integration is being revisited as a practical instructional approach to reducing the marginalization of social studies instruction at the elementary level (Etim, 2005).

No single definition speaks for curriculum integration. Researchers identify several definitions of curriculum integration within the research literature. As a result, different

understandings about how to individually define curriculum integration are developed by different teachers (Parker, 2012). Because there is no single definition to determine curriculum integration, it is difficult to identify when, how, and why to apply effective curriculum integration strategies in classroom instruction (Parker). Assuming that curriculum integration is a strategy rather than a goal, Parker argued that approaching curriculum integration as a goal is one of the greatest pitfalls involving integrated instruction.

In contrast to discipline-based instruction, many key terms commonly identified as integrated curriculum within the literature are used interchangeably. A sample of the terminology reported in the literature includes interdisciplinary education, integrated education, multidisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, concept-based learning, and thematic approach. Curriculum integration was conceptualized as a continuum of integrated approaches that moves from traditional to fusion to within one subject to multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary to trans-disciplinary (Drake, 1998, p. 19). In her work with classroom teachers, Drake noticed that as the teachers made more connections, they moved toward degrees of integration (See Figure 1).

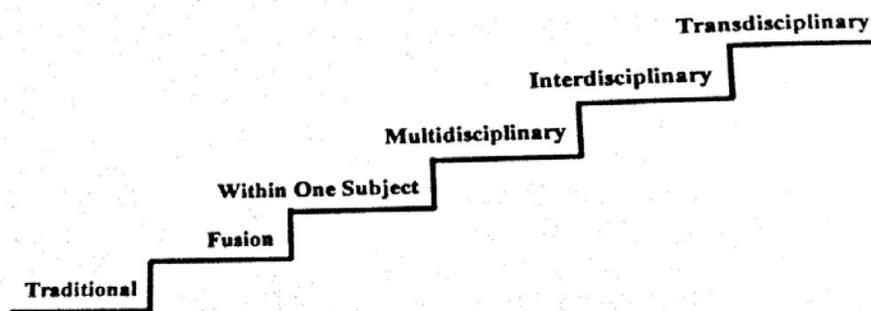


Figure 1.2. Continuum of Integration

Figure 1. Continuum of integration. (Source: Drake, 1998).

Neither approach along the continuum is considered the best: “one position is not superior to another; rather, different approaches are more appropriate than others according to the context in which they are used” (Drake, p. 19). This message was reiterated by Parker (2012) who reasoned curriculum integration is a concert of disciplines that works together in a synchronous nature. He reported “integrated curriculum is an approach that purposefully draws together knowledge, perspectives, and methods of inquiry from more than one discipline to develop a more powerful understanding of an issue, person, event, or big idea” (p. 397). Curriculum integration does not ignore or eliminate other disciplines, but instead encourages disciplines to work together.

Wise teachers do not hide the disciplines from students any more than farmers hide their seeds, shovels, and plows from their apprentices. Quite the opposite, they call the disciplines by their proper names and teach children about them--their ideas and methods of inquiry. (Parker, p. 397)

Some advocates for integrated instruction share an alternative perspective to viewing curriculum integration as a continuum. Curriculum integration was described by Beane (1997) as mostly concerned with curriculum design. An integrative curriculum design, thus, should promote opportunities for students and teachers to identify problems or issues, working collaboratively without regard for subject-area boundaries (Beane, p. xi). Defining curriculum integration as a curriculum design, Beane explained that students should generate questions as a strategy to guide what curricula are covered.

Other notable social studies scholars have offered additional definitions and perspectives to further define curriculum integration. Curriculum integration was described as a pedagogical teaching tool that uses integrated academic units as a strategy for teaching social studies education by Sunal et al. (2004). Curriculum integration, according to Sunal et al. is defined as a teaching approach guided by and based on a constructivist theory framework. Because learning is not focused on separate ideas, issues, and skills, students can focus on holistic subject matters

rather than fragmented parts (Sunal et al, 2004). Curriculum integration “involves planning and organizing curriculum and instruction to ensure the subject matter disciplines are related to one another in a design matching the developmental needs of the students and connecting their learning in meaningful ways to their experiences” (p. 2). Teachers should move away from relying solely on one source:

Integrated teaching means moving away from depending on one source for ideas, whether it is the textbook, a trade book, a guest speaker, or a “hands-on” science lesson. Instead the teacher recognizes that both the guest speaker and the “hands-on” science lesson offer pieces that can be put together into a whole picture. (Sunal et al., p. 2)

Based on the ideas and perspectives from Sunal et al. and Parker (2012), a working definition of curriculum integration is as an integrated approach to instruction and learning. Viewed as holistic the curriculum is designed to cross disciplines that share meaningful connections; and, certain ideas, skills, or questions that can transfer to all core subjects in a unifying manner. In the context of this study, the definition for curriculum integration will commonly reference the suggestions and ideas discussed by Sunal et al. (2004) and Parker (2012) describing the organization of curriculum and instruction in a way that connects subject matter and disciplines, requires that learning is meaningful, considers multiple sources for instruction, and matches the developmental needs of students.

Discipline-based or Integrated Approaches in Social Studies Instruction

Instructional specialists and proponents who advocate for integrated instruction consider curriculum integration to be a powerful instructional approach for teaching social studies education (Burstein & Knotts, 2010; Calogero, 2002; Field et al., 2011; Grosenick, 2009; Kornfeld & Leyden, 2005; Palmer & Burroughs, 2002). Researchers Kinniburgh and Byrd (2008) emphasized the critical need for elementary teachers to find creative ways to integrate

social studies with reading and mathematics curricula citing these subjects as the two disciplines receiving the highest priority as a result of the NCLB Act. In their article, they admit that mathematics is usually a difficult subject for teachers to integrate with other core subjects, and from their experiences in working with teachers indicate this is especially the case when working with upper elementary grades. Simple mathematical concepts taught in the primary grades are more easily integrated with other content areas while the complex and abstract mathematical concepts associated with upper elementary grades can be more difficult to integrate (Kinniburgh & Byrd). Criticizing high-stakes testing requirements enacted as a result of NCLB, Kinniburgh and Byrd argued “teachers must practice teaching smarter rather than harder” (p. 36), so integrating the curriculum is more than ever before the sensible and practical instructional strategy for covering important content that might be overlooked in today’s classroom environment.

Integrating the disciplines is a powerful way to secure a place for social studies content within a busy school day (Sanchez, 2007). In her recent work with interdisciplinary instruction, Sanchez incorporated historical and cultural artifacts in a social studies lesson as a strategy to support students while they offered insights into their cultural and individual backgrounds. Students often experience difficulty in relating to historical and cultural concepts presented in textbooks according to Sanchez; however, through the use of sharing personal artifacts as teaching strategy, students were able to share their linguistic and cultural traditions as well as contribute their valuable assets to the classroom culture. Sanchez’s integrative technique reportedly works well for all students, and she considered the instructional strategy to be appropriate for students of all ages and of any socioeconomic background. Every student is afforded the opportunity to participate in a discussion that involves sharing artifacts; as a result,

students are sharpening their literacy skills within the realm of a social studies lesson. Teacher planning and implementation of integrated language arts curricula that involves the use of cultural artifacts allows students the ability to demonstrate their understanding of meaningful social studies content that draws on their personal backgrounds and relates to their everyday lives (Sanchez, 2007).

In 2007, Morris discussed the work of Mr. Kuhn, a science coordinator and local community blacksmith who planned and implemented an integrated lesson for young students that incorporated ideas about blacksmithing and metallurgy. Integrating meaningful content with applications found in the local community allowed Mr. Kuhn to merge science and social studies content enabling students to draw connections between school knowledge and their lives outside the school. In his description of how Mr. Kuhn worked across the curriculum incorporating social studies knowledge (the historical role of blacksmiths in the community) and scientific knowledge (the demonstrations of working with a blacksmith's tools), Morris noted the significance in how Mr. Kuhn touched on economical, geographical, and sociological content as well. Mr. Kuhn employed integrated instructional strategies within his lesson in a manner that helped students to link content to direct experience. He also encouraged students to make comparisons between the economic role of previous blacksmiths from earlier communities and the role of contemporary metal workers in present day communities. According to Morris, Mr. Kuhn experienced success in using integrative strategies to teach students about the role of blacksmiths. He indicated that there were drawbacks to demonstrating blacksmithing with a classroom of students. The most significant drawbacks noted were that only a small number of students work with the instructor as once, the set-up of the materials for the lesson presented a challenge, and the lesson required the instructor to have specialized knowledge.

A review of the literature indicates that some researchers deem traditional or discipline-based instructional strategies as a more appropriate method for teaching social studies curricula. Social studies scholars discuss the disadvantages of incorporating an integrated curriculum as opposed to applying a single-subject approach, and they point out the possible challenges teachers can experience when employing integrative strategies in order to carry out social studies instruction (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; Drake, 1998; McKay & Gibson, 2004; Parker, 2012; Rose & Schuncke, 1997; Schug & Cross, 1998; Whitin, 2002). Discipline-based approaches assumed each discipline comprises a basic structure of concepts and processes adaptable for study at all grade levels. According to McKay and Gibson (2004) acknowledging there are basic structures embedded within each discipline is what guides planning instructional strategies for teaching social studies content. “Critics of this approach, to scope and sequence, contend that this is a very narrow and confining way of studying the world that ignores the holistic manner in which children observe their world” (McKay & Gibson, 2004, p. 23). Given this rationale, social studies experts claim it is necessary that content knowledge should be scaffolded, implying that students should know some ideas before knowing others. According to some instructional experts, this scope and sequence approach directly relate to how young students are prepared for understanding difficult social studies concepts (McKay & Gibson, 2004).

Integrative strategies may be impractical when trying to teach complex social studies concepts, which leads some social studies experts to argue that integrative instruction is ineffective for students when they are learning new concepts. This is especially the case when teachers attempt to go beyond the surface of social studies topics that require a deeper investigation (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; McKay & Gibson, 2004). Social studies experts who remain cautious of integrated instruction claim integrative strategies can be problematic

(Alleman & Brophy, 1993), and report when teachers use these forms of integration that are not inherent in the topic they are “integrating for integration’s sake.” When using inappropriate forms of integration, the intended goal for integrating social studies is neither meaningful nor purposeful (Alleman & Brophy, 1993). Drake (1998) acknowledged that many problems arise when teachers lack the necessary skills to implement a sound interdisciplinary curriculum, and she argued that all subject areas are short-changed in the process. Consequently, an integrative curriculum becomes a superficial curriculum with social studies being taught from a surface level instead of a substantive level (Drake).

Although several instructional experts and social studies researchers acknowledge the benefits to practicing integrative strategies when teaching social studies content, they contend that when integrated instruction is used in a form that incorporates “watered down” or less than authentic social studies topics and issues, these circumstances can be problematic (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; Drake, 1998; Schug & Cross, 1998). Integrative teaching is a powerful pedagogical tool and Hinde (2005) imagined the application of curriculum integration being used as an innovative technique that will facilitate a blending of subjects. Teachers who develop a rich knowledge base about appropriate integrative techniques are better prepared and more effective in presenting elementary-level integrated social studies lessons (Hinde). Curriculum integration provides an opportunity for teachers to meet state and federal mandates without taking classroom time away from other subjects. Hinde acknowledged that having expertise in separate disciplines is fundamental to effectively teaching interdisciplinary knowledge, so she challenged teachers to see both sides of the argument, stating, “A balance between the two strategies is necessary because both are effective means of increasing student achievement” (p. 107).

Like most educational debates, discussing which instructional approach is more appropriate for teaching social studies, curriculum integration or the discipline-based approach, will continue to be a topic for further examination and future discussion. Advocates for curriculum integration conceptualize a holistic approach, claiming social studies is naturally integrative. Social studies experts who provide a rationale for a discipline-based instructional approach to teaching social studies imagine teachers employing instructional strategies that reflect specific subject knowledge expertise. Despite the opposing viewpoints held by various researchers and experts in the social studies field about which instructional approach is more appropriate, many agree that when curriculum integration is used appropriately students gain a better understanding of abstract concepts, increase their ability to critically think, and make valuable connections between various content knowledge for themselves. Advocates on both sides of the argument, however, still express concern over the effectiveness of relying solely on integration, and they question the reality of how well curriculum integration is practiced in today's classrooms. Thus, further investigation and research to examine and document the teacher's use of instructional practices that involve curriculum integration in elementary classrooms is necessary.

Similar Practical Studies Involving Integrative Instruction

Investigating ways in which integrative instructional practices were used to integrate music curricula throughout the elementary curriculum, Miller (2003) examined the instructional practices of four whole language first grade classrooms in a collaborative action research study. Because the teacher-researcher was a music instructor servicing the entire student body within her school, she was able to conveniently work with classroom teachers in planning music

instruction that involved both integrated units of study and non-integrated units of study. According to Miller, integrating music instruction with other elementary curricula could possibly jeopardize the integrity of music education goals. She was concerned that consistently teaching musical knowledge in sequential order might be impossible to implement. Despite her apprehension about achieving consistency in planning musical content, and her concerns that the quality of the music education goals would be compromised, Miller wanted to explore ways to integrate elementary general music instruction within the total curriculum of a first grade classroom while maintaining the integrity of the music education program.

Procedures for data collection and analysis consisted of a two year-long series (28 lessons each) of 25-minute sessions taught once a week to four classes of first grade students, including three controls and one research class. Throughout the course of the study, means of data collection involved videotaping lessons as well as conducting observations of lessons taught. Teachers took the time to share their thoughts through journaling, and toward the end of the study questionnaires were distributed to ascertain teachers' and students' opinions regarding their attitudes about music instruction.

The teachers who participated in Miller's investigation reported a positive view of using integrative instructional practices. Teachers also noted the steps taken to plan and implement curriculum integration was a valuable experience. Because they remained in the classroom during music instruction, the teachers became more knowledgeable about their students' strengths and weaknesses and attitudes toward learning; consequently, the teachers reported they were better prepared in meeting their students' academic needs while having them in their own classrooms. While sitting with one classroom teacher named Mrs. Thompson, the researcher discovered Mrs. Thompson had taught a unit on the science of sound for many years, Miller

revealed to Mrs. Thompson she had always introduced musical concepts timbre and tone color through her course outline each year. Before the research took place, the two teachers had not previously planned nor discussed curricula together and they were unaware of what content the other was teaching. With their collaboration in this study, the teacher-researcher and classroom teachers indicated that they felt they were allowed an opportunity to work together in comparing notes, which helped them discover they had very similar goals.

Results from Miller's study revealed students in the assigned integrated classes who participated in music instruction were more enthusiastic about learning musical content than students who received music instruction in the non-integrated class. The researcher learned there were various incidences of integration occurring throughout the study, and determined these incidences could not all be characterized in the same way (Miller, 2003). This discovery helped her to identify the various shifts in integration, enabling her to organize the shifts into categories. She identified integration based on (1) topical integration, (2) integration of related skills, (3) conceptual integration, (4) higher-order thinking, and (5) pedagogical integration. Miller wrote, "I began to stop thinking of integration as a single entity and began to see it as a varied assortment of connections, ranging from concrete to abstract" (p. 54). The researcher posited that integrating musical content with the general elementary curriculum was beneficial in many ways for the teachers who participated in this action research study. Teachers should incorporate integrating throughout the curriculum as much as possible (Miller).

In a research study designed to ascertain whether parents were satisfied with a middle-school integrated curriculum unit involving social studies, language arts, and art content, Bailey (2000) discovered that parents characterized integrated-curriculum learning as an enjoyable teaching style for students. Parents also reported that integrated curriculum learning allows

students to gain more understanding about any particular subject. In order to explore her research questions, Bailey issued 118 surveys to the parents of eighth grade students in the 1999-2000 school year. Of the 118 surveys distributed to parents, a small number totaling 40 were completed and returned to the researcher. Parents provided *yes/no* responses to survey questions and were given an opportunity to provide qualitative comments in a section of the survey as well. Follow-up interviews were conducted with four parents who agreed to volunteer. The results of the study indicated that parents were appreciative of the learning process associated with integrated-curriculum, and believed students benefit more by seeing a holistic view of the educational process. Parents communicated another benefit, more teacher collaboration and they indicated that they were satisfied in knowing teachers were working as a team; they agreed this was important to academically managing students and holding students accountable throughout the academic day. The findings emerging from follow-up interviews with parents were a serious limitation in this study, since only 4 out of 118 participants volunteered. This meager number of research participants and interview data suggests the responses of parents who did participate in follow-up discussion are mostly useless. Despite that fact that some parents gave positive feedback regarding integrated-curriculum and the impact it made on their child's ability to learn, and called for more integrated instruction to be implemented throughout the curriculum, some parents did not feel their children enjoyed integrated learning; citing confusion among students and students being unable to keep track of assignments that involved the same content.

In a study conducted by Park (2008), in which he interviewed three Korean elementary teachers regarding their attitudes and understandings of the integrative approach and its implementation, analysis found teachers lack the theoretical frameworks for curriculum integration, they adopt a pragmatic approach to curriculum integration, and there are limitations

to implementing curriculum integration. A qualitative research interview method was employed to gain insight about the three teachers and how they experienced planning and implementing integration. The data collection methods and data analysis provided rich descriptions and in-depth understanding of those experiences. Document analysis was applied in this study for the purpose of providing secondary data to confirm/refute interview results and to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study. The researcher took field-notes as a method for outlining his notions and discovering themes to be addressed while reading the transcripts. For Park (2008), the field-notes importantly assisted him when interpreting the data.

Although the literature base offers multiple theoretical models of curriculum integration, the teachers in Park's study reported they were unaware of them and did not recognize the significance in using these sources. Park's discovery confirmed the teachers were relying on their professional knowledge alone to guide them in how they planned and taught integrated knowledge. The teachers spoke for the benefits of applying integrated instruction in practice. For example, they were able to achieve a balance in their instruction by combining both integrative and discipline-based instructional strategies. The teachers' complaints, however, revealed they were frustrated with some of the practical obstacles associated with curriculum integration.

Park's study provided an up-close examination of integrated instruction, and Korean teachers' use of integrated strategies within their classroom lessons. Park conducted his research by incorporating in-depth interviews, and he applied field-note taking while reading the transcripts. Although the qualitative design Park (2008) employed is appropriate for the research topic under examination in my study, more information can be gathered and deeper insights are possible. This implies that there is a strong need for an additional research design structured to compliment both in-depth interviews and observations to investigate this topic.

Previous Research in Elementary Social Studies

A considerable body of research is substantiated in terms of constructivism as a conceptual theory underlying curriculum integration (Blaik-Hourani, 2011; Forrester & Jantzie, 1998; Gray, 1997; Green & Gredler, 2002; Iran-Nejad, 2001; Jaramillo, 1996; Kumar, 2011; McKay & Gibson, 2004; Schunk, 2012) and the history of the social studies curriculum in elementary schooling (Chapin, 2006; Chapin & Messick, 1989; Farris, 2001; Hoge; Kaltsounis, 1987; Michaelis & Rushdoony, 1987). Further, there exists a great deal of research related to the significance of social studies education in preparing citizens for living in our U.S. democracy (Chapin, 2006; Hoge; Kaltsounis; Obenchain & Morris, 2011; Parker, 2012; Parker & Jarolimek, 1984; Sunal & Haas, 2011; Zarillo, 2012) and much description and discussion about appropriate instructional methods that teachers should be using in social studies (Anderson, 2009; Bailey; Shaw; & Hollifield, 2006; Cuban, 1993; Cuban; McCall, 2006; McGuire, 2007; Pianta, Belsky, Houts, & Morrison, 2007; Tanner, 2008; Thornton, 2001; Winstead, 2011).

The recognition of multiple barriers to the teaching of social studies are documented including social studies marginalization (Anderson, 2009; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Howard, 2003; Lemig et al., 2006; Winstead, 2011; Zamosky, 2008), the impact of *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (Anderson, 2009; Burstein et al., 2006; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005; Center on Educational Policy, 2008; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Howard, 2003; Pace, 2007; Lemig et al., 2006; Tanner, 2008), the neglect of social studies in the Common Core State standards (Altoff & Golston, 2012; Common Core State Standards, 2010; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), and standardized testing (Anderson, 2009; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Grant, 2007; Knighton, 2003). Curriculum integration as an approach for teaching social studies (Hinde; Lapp

& Flood; 1994; McBee, 2000; Moye, 2011; Park, 2008; Trent & Riley; 2009), defining curriculum integration (Etim, 2005; Drake, 1998; Parker, 2012; Vars, 1991), and various formats and curricular models informing an integrative teaching design (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; Beane, 1997; Burton, 2001; Case, 1991; Drake, 1998; Etim, 2005; Ellis & Fouts, 2013; Hinde, 2005; Miller, 1996; Park, 2008; Snyder, 2001) are likewise all evident and profound in the literature available regarding the teaching of social studies.

There are relevant practical studies that investigated teachers' use of integrative teaching methods used in practice. For example, Miller (2003) examined teachers' use of instructional practices in four first grade classrooms in a collaborative action research study. Procedures for data collection and analysis consisted of a two-year-long series (28 lessons each) of 25-minute sessions taught once a week to four classes of first grade students, including three controls and one research class. Throughout the course of the study, means of data collection involved videotaping lessons as well as conducting observations of lessons taught. The intentions of this research hoped to identify what instructional methods teachers were using when they integrated musical curricula within the elementary curriculum and whether these methods compromised the integrity of music content when taught using an integrative teaching approach. Results from Miller's study revealed students in the assigned integrated classes who participated in music instruction were more enthusiastic about learning musical content than students who received music instruction in the non-integrated class.

Park (2008) conducted a qualitative research study to investigate teachers' attitudes regarding curriculum integration and using integrative teaching methods to convey elementary curricula. The data collection methods and data analysis provided rich descriptions and in-depth understanding of those experiences. Document analysis was applied in this study for the purpose

of providing secondary data to confirm/refute interview results and to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study. The results of the study indicated teachers lacked any knowledge of theoretical frameworks underlying curriculum integration and teachers were pragmatic in their approach to implementing integrative teaching methods. Park conducted his research by incorporating in-depth interviews, and he applied field-note taking while reading the transcripts. Although the qualitative design Park (2008) employed is appropriate for the research topic under examination in my study, more information can be gathered and deeper insights are possible. This implies that there is a strong need for an additional research design structured to compliment both in-depth interviews and observations to investigate this topic.

After working through a substantial body of literature in relation to social studies curriculum and the instructional methods teachers use in practicing social studies instruction, there are many capacities in which studies of this topic in elementary social studies education would be helpful for clarification and analysis. Thus, this research presented here was essential for growth in those areas.

Chapter Summary

The research literature has documented the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating integrative strategies throughout the elementary curriculum (Bailey, 2000; Boyle-Baise et al.; 2008; Burstein & Knotts; 2010; Cologero, 2002; McBee, 2000; Miller, 1996; Park, 2008), however less is known about what instructional methods teachers are actually using in their social studies instruction. Based on the review of literature, there appears to be a great deal of research pertaining to the theoretical models describing what curriculum integration is, while many other reviews and articles relate to instructional examples of how curricula was integrated

through various lessons. In contrast, the research base examining how elementary teachers practice integrative strategies when teaching social studies education is limited, thus, a need for a research design that includes in-depth interviews and observations was pertinent.

This chapter presented a theoretical context for this study by reviewing the status of elementary social studies teaching and the impact of educational legislation on social studies instruction. A review of learning theories that influence integrative teaching strategies, Progressivism, Cognitive Constructivist Theory, and Social Constructivist Theory provide a theoretical framework. The chapter concluded with scholars' asserting their theoretical models in *determining the definition of curriculum integration. Finally, a review of studies that are similar* to what this proposed study seeks to investigate were presented. Chapter III will present the proposed methodology for this study as well as methods of data collection, analysis, and issues of trustworthiness.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this case study of four elementary teachers' instructional practices of integration. The cases investigated (1) how teachers *plan* their social studies instruction, and (2) how they *incorporate integrative teaching* within practice. One overarching research question guided this qualitative case study design, "What instructional strategies do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education?" "What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies in social studies education?" Chapter III begins by examining the utility of qualitative research, then explains the characteristics of qualitative inquiry, to clarify and help situate the use of qualitative inquiry as an appropriate research design for this study. A description of the case study approach and the purpose of using multiple cases will be highlighted. Boundaries of the case study, setting, population, and sample will be described. Methods of data analysis and qualitative methods of data collection--interviews, observations, and teachers' lesson plans--will be examined. This chapter will close by addressing validity and reliability, establishing the trustworthiness throughout this case study, and summarizing the proposed methodology.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative inquiry is a systematic research process by which researchers investigate a phenomenon and attempt to understand more about the meaning of the phenomenon for those

involved (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990; Yin, 2009). “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences,” so they are often concerned with the lived experiences and the social interactions of people (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). The premise of qualitative research seeks to move beyond a cause and effect relationship or the simple descriptions of the distributions of some attribute among a population; instead, the goal of qualitative research relies on the participants’ perspective of the situation, and researchers often address the processes of interaction among individuals (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Because qualitative researchers delve into the nature of human problems in a way that scrutinizes real life experiences and social interactions of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2009), qualitative research is usually situated in a natural setting; data collection comes from various sources; findings are inductively analyzed; contextual consideration is critical; and it’s considered interpretive research (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

This research investigated the instructional methods elementary teachers practiced when teaching social studies curricula and the criteria they employed to determine their use of teaching methods as reported in their daily plans and carried out in their social studies lessons. One advantage to using qualitative inquiry methods, the researcher has the opportunity to understand the complexity of selected issues regarding how teachers teach social studies content through holistic, meaningful, real-life experiences that would not be quantifiable. The information found from this study could potentially be more concrete and contextual in that findings were based on sensory experience and explored process. This research study means to provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of a bounded case study through purposeful detailed data collection and analysis.

Case Study Research

Case study research “is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). Creswell (2007) considered case study research as “a methodology, a type of design in qualitative research, or an object of study, as well as a product of the inquiry” (p. 73). Refuting the opinions of various authors, Stake (1995) argued that case study research is about the selection of what is to be studied, rather than a methodological choice or inquiry strategy. Yin (2009) affirmed Creswell’s explanation, arguing case study is a methodological choice that seeks to understand a lived phenomenon in its natural setting with considerate attention given to contextual conditions.

The nature of the research problem and research question being asked determines which methodologies are appropriate when deciding to conduct an investigation; as a result, thoughtful consideration should be given to these two criteria when selecting a specific design of qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). Case study approach is appropriate to use when “how” questions need answered because case studies explain a process, such as how do teachers incorporate integration when teaching social studies education, and how do teachers determine their use of integrative strategies for instructional purposes (Yin, 2009). There are additional matters to consider once case study is selected as a research design; for example, will the study investigate one case or multiple cases? What issue will be used to organize the study? And what data are necessary to collect from the study? These additional matters make researchers’ selection of case study a challenge for both novice and seasoned researchers (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Many times, case study approach is chosen as social inquiry because it aims to “discern and pursue understanding of issues intrinsic to the case itself,” for example, how does

the application of teachers' specific instructional practices occur in different schools, and what do teachers involved in the process of planning and implementing social studies education think about the advantages and disadvantages of using integration to teach social studies? The qualitative case study allows the researcher to examine the intricacy in particular contexts that would be impossible to uncover if only quantitative research methods were applied. By practicing qualitative research methods, researchers can examine real-life situations through a multi-dimensional framework; this type of research is multi-faceted and offers richer insights about the research topic, allowing readers to expand their experiences (Merriam, 2009).

Multi-site or collective case studies, involve the exploration of a phenomenon with one or more cases under investigation (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The context for each case is different within multiple cases; therefore, a collective case study allows the researcher to analyze the cases both within each setting and across settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). By looking across several cases within various contexts and through multiple data representations, researchers can build a stronger and more robust argument that compares and contrasts the findings from their individual cases. Readers can examine the results and conclusions of the study from a critical perspective.

One advantage to collective case study is its research design is categorically bounded, meaning the individual cases that comprise the collective case share similarities across cases. It illuminates meaningful, holistic, and real-life experiences. Data analysis is more rigorous when comparing results within and across cases, and the reliability of research findings are further strengthened (Merriam, 2009, p. 50). The disadvantage to qualitative case study is that findings from the study cannot be generalized to other contexts, but can be generalized to theoretical propositions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990; Swanborn, 2010; Yin, 2009).

Boundaries

This research study sought to explore an issue that was investigated through multiple cases within a bounded context including participants, research sites, and time. Research participants involved in this study included four Kindergarten-5 elementary teachers. Two elementary schools served as research sites for data collection. Data (observations, interviews, and document content analysis of lesson plans) were collected from four elementary teachers. This collective case study was bounded within one semester.

Settings

Travel School District (pseudonym)

The two elementary schools serving as research sites in this study were located in a large metropolitan area in the southeast region of the United States. The area represents a lower middle class, moderately educated city. The area has a typical age distribution compared to the rest of the country. A typical school in the Travel School district is made up of 51.6% African American students. The two schools in this study were represented in the same school system (Travel School district), were located within two different communities, and were within eight miles of one another. These two schools, Brown Elementary (pseudonym) and Smith Elementary (pseudonym), were selected because of the following:

1. *Area of research underrepresented in educational research.* There is sufficient research to support the marginalization of social studies instruction in elementary classrooms. The research literature indicates a lack of comprehensive research examining social studies instruction and the teaching methods used by teachers to help students acquire knowledge. It is important to attain more evidence of new findings investigating social studies instruction in the

21st century. The settings and participants in this study were significant to this investigation because they represented educators working in a public school teaching social studies education.

2. *Significance in investigating how teachers practice instruction in public schools.* There are several new developments in the type of schools students are enrolled in. The diversity in the type of schools students are found participating include: (1) proprietary private schools, (2) charter schools, (3) magnet schools, (4) church schools, (5) parochial schools, (6) home schools, (7) public school choice programs, (8) on-line educational programs, (9) independent non-profit schools, (10) international baccalaureate schools, (11) technical schools, and (12) alternative schools. In spite of these new developments describing the various school choices students are found participating, most students are enrolled in the nation's public schools in grades Kindergarten-12. It is important to understand how social studies is being taught in public schools so that students experience a growth in their knowledge and skill development. This investigation of four teachers will add to the existing research findings describing elementary teachers and their experiences in carrying out social studies instruction with their students. The participants selected for this study were purposefully selected because they represent teachers in public schools working with a predominately African American student population from a lower middle class background. The schools represented in this study were members of a public school district located in a large metropolitan area of the southeast region of the United States.

3. *The Silencing of Public School Teachers' Voices in Educational Research.* In educational research and practice teachers serve as academic resources. The research literature demonstrates there is minimal research describing how elementary teachers practice instruction social studies instruction. Finding strong empirical data that examines how teachers practice integrative teaching practices in social studies is mainly omitted and increasingly deemphasized

within the literature base (Ellis & Fouts, 2001). This research aimed to provide a voice in four cases involving 21st century public school teachers and their instructional experiences involving teaching methods and resources used to teach social studies.

4. *Research Project has Personal Relevance for Researcher.* The researcher was a former elementary teacher employed with the Travel School district (pseudonym) so this research project was symbolic and was personally meaningful. The researcher was personally invested in the research project because the study investigated four teachers who are employees of the same school district where the researcher served as a former elementary teachers. Furthermore, the two research sites and school district involved in this study were located in the hometown where the researcher resided.

The following demographic data were reported by Travel School System and reflected the statistics for the 2014-2015 school year. The school system employed 1,942 full-time certified personnel for its 31,316 students. The district represented a total of 66 schools. Out of those 66 schools, 27 were identified as traditional elementary schools.

Smith School (pseudonym)

Smith Elementary School is a Kindergarten-5 program serving a population of approximately 583 students in 2012-2013. The K-5 program serving a predominately African American student population is a non-Title 1 school. The school's population for the 2012-2013 school year by racial makeup was 85% African American, 8% White, 3% Multi-Race, 2% Asian, and 2% Hispanic. Smith Elementary School was not identified as a Title I school. Approximately 68% of students participated in the free or reduced lunch program during 2012-2013. Smith Elementary School met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2012-2013. Additional school

demographics indicate a total of 31 homeroom teachers. There is one Special Education teacher assigned to one Language Impaired classroom, one ELL teacher, one Counselor, one Music Teacher, one Instructional Coach, one Media Specialist, one Physical Education teacher, one Inclusion and Resource Teacher, and one Speech Pathologist. The breakdown in certified faculty and staff according to race and gender for 2012- 2013 was 31% Black, 67% White, and 2% other (5% male and 95% female).

Brown School (pseudonym)

Brown Elementary School was a small Grades Kindergarten-5 program serving a population of approximately 408 students in 2012-2013. This Title 1 School served a predominately African American student population. The student demographics for 2012-2013 by racial makeup were 79% Black, 1% Hispanic, 5% White, and 3% other. Approximately 99% of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch during the 2012-2013 school year. Other school demographics include 18 homeroom teachers with one assistant teacher. There are two Special Education teachers, one Counselor, one Media Specialist, one Physical Education Teacher, one Music Teacher, one Reading Coach, and one Teacher Tutor. Brown Elementary School is a Title I school with additional support staff, including a Speech Therapist for half a day per week, one Parent Liaison, two English Language Learner Teachers, one Paraprofessional, one Secretary, four Lunchroom Staff, and three Custodial Staff.

Participants

The selection of participants occurred through purposeful sampling, as the aim of the study was to select cases that were likely to be “information-rich” with respect to investigating

how elementary teachers practice social studies instruction that integrates curriculum (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p.178). The researcher enlisted the assistance of two school principals, from two Kindergarten-5 elementary schools, as gatekeepers to identify participants for this case study. The participants also represented a convenient sample, based on their willingness to participate in this case study. Further, the research sites were located in the city where the researcher resided full time. This convenient accessibility to the research sites allowed the researcher stronger feasibility in meeting the needs of research participants and their availability for being formally and informally interviewed as well as their availability to be observed during social studies instruction for data collection purposes. At the time of this study, the researcher was not employed with any school district; however, she was formerly employed by the school district where the case study was conducted. The researcher acknowledged both principals, who have been identified as gatekeepers, were former professional colleagues.

The selection of participants was based on a convenient sample that was willing to participate, but also considered participants who taught social studies in Grades 2 through 5. The researcher made initial contact with the elementary school principals at the targeted schools requesting permission to conduct research at their respective schools. Both principals granted the researcher verbal permission to conduct research and each confirmed willingness to serve as gatekeepers to help the researcher gain access to participants. The principals were given a set of criteria to guide their recommendations of teachers as participants for this research (see Appendix F). The criteria principals were supplied with required them to consider the following:(1) teacher is responsible for teaching elementary social studies, (2) teacher is responsible for planning elementary social studies lessons, (3) teacher is more likely to volunteer to be observed while teaching a social studies lesson, and (4) teacher will most likely provide

thoughtful reflection about their practices. The principals also were asked to indicate to what extent the teachers demonstrated each criterion by indicating a score of 1-5 (1-Almost Never to 5-Always), and were asked to rank the teachers in terms of their willingness to participate in the research. A final selection of participants was decided by the researcher based on how strong each teacher scored on five criteria, and the ranking of teachers based on their willingness to participate in the study.

Once the two principals finalized the selection of participants, these school administrators were asked to sign a consent form giving their permission to conduct a case study that investigates elementary teachers from their particular schools (see Appendix D). A similar letter of consent was sent to the superintendent requesting permission to conduct the case study (see Appendix D). The two principals worked for the same school district; therefore, only one letter of request to the superintendent's position was required for this study. A signed letter of consent from the four sample teacher participants and two principals accompanied the letter of request for consent submitted to the superintendent.

Methods for Data Collection

Qualitative techniques were used in collecting data to investigate instructional methods elementary teachers used to teach social studies curricula and the criteria they employed to determine their use of teaching methods as reported used in practice. This data collection sought to capture a range and variation of patterns relevant to closely understanding teachers' accounts of experiences in teaching social studies. Therefore, observations, interviews, and teachers' lesson plans provided participants' voice, in hopes that more was revealed about their instructional acts while teaching social studies curricula, and how those interactions occur within

the context of their classroom environment. For these purposes, selecting multiple data sources and utilizing various data analysis methods were critical for constructing the case. A sequence of data collection methods, which coordinate research questions with associated data sources are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Sequence of Data Collection: Research Questions and Associated Data Sources and Analyses

Research Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Analyses	Participants
What instructional strategies do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Pre-study Interviews • Observations • Lesson Plans • CoRe & PaPeRs adapted interviews • Field Notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptions; Themes • CoRe and PaPeRs adapted interviews; • Content Analysis Lesson Plans • Field Notes 	4 (K-5) Elementary Teachers Lesson Plans
What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies in social studies education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Pre-study Interviews • Field Notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptions • Themes • Field Notes 	4 (K-4) Elementary Teachers

Data Collection Procedures

Three data sources represent data collection methods to investigate the four cases for this intended research: observations, interviews, and teachers’ lesson plans. The four teachers selected as research participants were asked to participate in two lesson observations for data collection purposes. With the consent of research participants in place, as well as the Institutional Review Board’s (IRB) permission to conduct the research study, the researcher observed the

participants teaching two social studies lessons. The lesson plan data collection served two purposes; for one, data analysis using a content analysis approach to support the findings was implemented. Two, teachers submitted lesson plans they wanted observed by the researcher for data collection analysis. The researcher needed to employ a variety of qualitative methods and procedures to construct an in-depth portrait of the case so participants were asked to participate in two CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interviews, with one interview conducted prior to observing participants' teach social studies lesson 1 and a second CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interview conducted prior to observing participants' teach lesson 2. Attempting to address the research questions, the participants also interviewed twice using a semi-structured interview approach. The interview protocol (see Appendix B) helped guide the interview questions as well as provide overall structure for the interview process. A timeline for data collection is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Prospective Timeframe for Administering Data Collection Methods

Week	Method of Data Collection	Number
Early March (Weeks 1-2)	Formal Pre-Study Interviews (semi-structured)	1 per participant (4 total)
March-April (Weeks 3-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Field Notes • Formal & Informal Interviews CoRe and PaP-eRs Instrument 	2 per participant (8 total)
April-May (Weeks 6-7)	Post Interviews (unstructured)	1 per participant (4 total)
Early May (Week 8)	Document Content Analysis of Lesson Plans	2 per participant (8 total)

Observations

Observations were a primary source of data collection for this qualitative research study, and served as one of three main research techniques documenting participants' instructional practices while teaching social studies education. Observations occur in a natural setting where the phenomenon under study is situated. The researcher's analysis of observational data tried to make sense of the teachers' actions during practice including how lesson ideas and subject matter were being taught, how instructional strategies and methods were applied, how activities were facilitated, how sources and resources were utilized. The Content Representation (CoRe) and Personal and Professional experience Repertoire (PaP-eRs) (see Appendix A) research instrument was adapted and utilized in order to conduct two pre-observational adapted interviews with each participant. Observational data served as one of three primary sources of data collection procedures and analyses for this multiple case study.

Merriam stated there is no specified amount of time to observe nor is there one preferred pattern of observation (2009). Observations conducted in this study included two 30-minute sessions per participant and took place over the course of several weeks during participants' social studies instruction. Because the researcher did not know beforehand which days were devoted to social studies instruction, it was impossible to know on which days these observations would take place. Mandated standardized testing days, assemblies, etc. influenced the classroom observation schedule. The researcher and participants determined an observation schedule prior to pre-interviews taking place. While these observations were taking place, field notes were applied, and then analytic memos of these notes were applied in order to generate reactions, hunches, impressions, speculations, and initial interpretations about what is going on in the

setting. The notes were documented extensively through description and were organized and available for easy retrieval, using an observational protocol.

Field Notes

There are two types of field notes that can be employed in research: descriptive and reflective. Descriptive field notes allow the researcher to record a “word-picture” of the setting and environment as observed. Reflective field notes allow the researcher to record a written account of what they see, hear, experience, and think in the course of the observation. While the observations are taking place the researcher will engage in jottings, which will later help in writing a more formal record of the field notes and observations. Field notes are recommended to enhance the quality of data obtained (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Field notes taken during the observations will allow the researcher to maintain a record of the people, setting, actions, and conversations as observed. Field notes should be detailed, nonjudgmental (as much as possible), and concrete descriptions of what is being observed (Creswell, 2007).

Interviews

The purpose of interviewing in qualitative inquiry is to gather information about the phenomenon that is difficult to know or understand through direct observation. One of the most important considerations for determining what type of interview to conduct is the amount of structure preferred by the researcher. Interview structure can range from highly structured questionnaires to unstructured open-ended conversational formats. I determined that a combination of semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) and informal unstructured discussions would be used as part of the data collection procedures for this study. The selection

of semi-structured and informal discussion provided flexibility that expanded the line of questioning and incorporated probing questions so I could enter the participants' thoughts and perspectives in relation to their instructional practices and how they determine those instructional practices for teaching social studies education. Merriam (2009) reminds us that asking good questions is essential for extracting meaningful data that seeks to address the research question. A series of open-ended interview questions was developed for the purpose of yielding descriptive data that addresses the research questions identified earlier. The interview protocol (see Appendix B), outlining the specific interview questions for this study, provided structure for conducting the pre-study interviews. The pre- and post-study interviews were held at the interviewees' individual school sites. The interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes, and they mostly took place during participants' planning periods, before or after school, or were scheduled at the participants' convenience. The researcher observed teachers' social studies instruction; therefore, two CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interviews were administered with participants. One CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interview was conducted prior to observing participants' teach social studies lesson 1, and a second CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interview was conducted prior to observing participants' teach lesson 2. The CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes or less and took place within an 8-week period. A prospective timeframe for administering participants' interviews is presented Table 3.

Table 3

Prospective Timeframe for Administering Participants' Interviews

Week	Method of Data Collection	Number
Early March (Weeks 1-2)	Formal Pre-study Interviews (semi-structured)	1 per participant (4 total)
March-April (Weeks 3-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CoRe) Interview 1; Observation 1 (CoRe) Interview 2; Observation 2 • Field Notes 	2 per participant (8 total)
April-May (Weeks 6-7)	Post Interviews (unstructured)	1 per participant (4 total)
Early May (Week 8)	Content Analysis (Lesson Plans)	2 per participant (8 total)

The scheduling of interviews was organized so that pre-interviews were conducted prior to observations and post-interviews were conducted after the observations had been completed. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed in further detail for analysis and to help assure validity and trustworthiness.

Pre-observational CoRe and PaP-eR Adapted Interview

The CoRe and PaP-eR pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) instrument (Loughran, Mullhall, & Berry, 2004; Mulhall, Berry, & Loughran, 2003) (see Appendix A) was first adapted then, utilized for conducting formal pre-study interviews prior to observations in this study. The pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) instrument was specifically modified for its application to the particular research aspects of this study involving prompts specific to elementary social studies instruction and the teachers' use of teaching methods practiced in teaching social studies units. All four teachers participated in the pre-observational adapted interviews prior to the start of their lesson observations; the CoRe and PaP-eR format thus, was administered on two

separate observations. These data collection methods resulted in eight short pre-observational interviews using the CoRe and PaP-eR research instrument. The premise of the CoRe and PaP-eR research tool aims to examine teachers' actual practices and the rationale behind their instructional choices. Consequently, this research method served to answer the research questions related to elementary teachers' use of instructional methods in social studies and the criteria they employed to determine their use of those teaching methods.

A specific set of questions was constructed and implemented as a method to administer the CoRe and PaP-eR pre-observational interviews with teachers prior to lesson observations taking place. These questions were intended to prompt the teachers' thoughts and discussion of their social studies lessons. Pre-observational interviews took place after the participants had planned their lessons and submitted the artifacts for analysis, but before observations of the lessons occurred. These CoRe and PaP-eR pre-observational interviews lasted 15 to 20 minutes and took place at the schools in which the participants were employed during teachers planning periods or prior to their social studies instruction. The students were not present during the CoRe and PaP-eR pre-observational interviews.

The CoRe and PaP-eR research instrument is two-fold, combining both the Content Representations section (CoRe) and the Pedagogical and Professional Experience Repertoires (PaP-eR) to examine aspects of teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and its application in practice to instructional methods used in the classroom. The CoRe (Content Representation) is an instrument format developed by Loughran, Mulhall, and Berry (2004). The purpose of this pedagogical content knowledge instrument (PCK) is intended to explain the what, how, and why of content instruction. The goal of the CoRe instrument, for this study, was intended to assist the researcher with providing a description detailing the instructional methods

teachers used in social studies and the criteria they employed to determine their use of those instructional methods (Mulhall, Berry & Loughran, 2003).

The CoRe is a generalization of teachers' responses. Taken as a whole, the CoRe represents pedagogical content knowledge because of the reasons it provides which link the how, why and what of the content to be taught with the students who are to learn that content. (p. 6)

The PaP-eR component means to complement the CoRe instrument and is intended to illustrate how knowledge informs instructional methods practiced in teaching content. The PaP-eR component of the CoRe instrument closely examines the complexity in teachers' thinking, reflecting a more in-depth narrative or personal description of the relationship between teaching and learning. The PaP-eR narrative accounts are intended to "offer one way of capturing the holistic nature and complexity of PCK, more than is possible in the CoRe" (Loughran, Mulhall, and Berry, 2004, p. 10).

A PaP-eR must be of a content area; it must allow us to look inside a teaching/learning situation where it is the content that shapes the pedagogy. The PaP-eR's embedded questions (or other links) should help to connect the 'practice' seen, with the explicit body of knowledge about the content central to the particular representation. That link should illuminate the decisions underpinning the teacher's actions that are intended to help the learners make sense of the content.

The PaP-eR component of the instrument was used in the transcription and coding of pre-observational CoRe interviews that isolated differing and particular ideas teachers described as being instructional methods and materials they used to teach elementary social studies curricula. The CoRe interviews were used to help explain the teachers' rationale, that is, the criteria or factors that impacted their decisions to use certain instructional methods and resources.

Associated Documents and Artifacts

The purpose of using documentary materials in qualitative research is to gather data relevant to the research study, and interpret and analyze the data with the hopes it will provide more insight, furnish detailed description, and advance new hypotheses or categories (Cresswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). There are several strengths that determine good use of documents as a source of data collection; for example, in instances where studies involve collecting information on sensitive subject matters or investigations of vulnerable samples, documents may be the best data source. Using documentary material can be stable and unobtrusive because “the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied” (Merriam, 2009, p. 155). The limitations or disadvantages to using documents as data sources are that they are sometimes undeveloped or incomplete from a research perspective, so they might not “afford a continuity of unfolding events in the kind of detail that the theorist requires” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 182). There is a tendency for researchers to overlook what Merriam (2009) termed “built-in biases,” since documentary materials are not typically produced for the purpose of research. This means it’s possible that document data could be inconsistent and incongruent, therefore, unable to confirm, support, or refute emergent findings based in observations and interviews. To help determine the value of documents as relevant data sources or whether or not to use documents as strategies for data collection, Merriam (2009) asked researchers to consider two criteria: (1) Does the information or insights gleaned from the documents relate to the research questions? (2) Is there a practical manner in which the researcher is able to systematically acquire the documents and artifacts? Incorporating associated documents and artifacts as a data source in this case study was appropriately applied as part of the process to inductively build themes that address how teachers plan and carry out their social studies instruction in practice.

Content Analysis of Lesson Plan Data

Content analysis approach, a technique emphasizing, “communication content as a primary subject of the investigation” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.14) served as the procedure for data collection and analysis to examine the documents (lesson plans) of four elementary teachers. The content analysis approach, in the context of this study, did not attempt to quantify available data, but instead considered a qualitative focus for the purpose of data analysis procedures. Document content analysis of lesson plans in this case study means to serve as a documentary data source in order to supplement, enhance, support and/or refute data analysis from interviews and observations. The research participants ($n = 4$) were asked to voluntarily submit copies of one social studies unit plan containing a minimum of two lesson plans. The available social studies units containing teachers’ lesson plans were examined by the researcher to investigate teachers’ instructional planning of social studies content and ideas, strategies and methods, resources, and materials that demonstrated teachers’ use of integrated teaching approaches.

A scoring rubric was applied in order to evaluate and score each lesson plan as well as to assist in document content analyses (see Appendix B). Each lesson plan was evaluated and scored based on whether or not specific integrated teaching strategies were identifiable in teachers’ lesson plans and delivered within their social studies instruction. The instructional strategies documented by the lesson plan rubric included the following: (1) standards covered, (2) connections in multiple subject matter content identified, (3) multiple perspectives presented, (4) multiple sources and resources incorporated, (5) multiple strategies and methods implemented, (6) examples of integration in core activities was indicated, and (7) lesson ideas and instruction are student-centered. Once the lesson plans were examined to document whether or not the instructional strategies mentioned were identifiable within participants’ lesson plans

and delivered through teachers' social studies instruction, a scoring system that rated teachers lesson strategies from 0-2 (0-strategy is not applied in lesson and delivery of lesson, 1-strategy is demonstrated in lesson plan and delivery of lesson, but not fully developed, 2-strategy is clearly demonstrated in lesson plan and delivery of lesson with full development) were applied to help determine the extent to which each instructional strategy was identifiable within the teachers' lesson plan and delivered in his or her specific social studies lesson.

Teachers' lesson content may provide some insight about how they prepare for social studies instruction, the strategies and methods they utilize in order to teach social studies content, the sources and resources they select for teaching the lesson ideas, as well as offer a rationale for how they select and implement certain instructional strategies and methods for the purpose of teaching Social Studies education. The data collection methods and analyses procedures here were intended to address the overarching research question: "What instructional strategies do elementary teachers typically implement when teaching social studies education?" The selection of teachers' lesson plans was negotiated in a cooperative manner between the researcher and the participants. The researcher suggested two criteria for participants to use in their selection of lesson plans to help structure data collection and analysis. The participant was asked to submit one social studies unit containing a minimum of two lesson plans. Participants were asked to consider two examples of instructional planning for social studies content that he or she felt reflected typical delivery of instructional strategies and methods applied during social studies instruction, and to choose two lesson plans they were comfortable teaching for observational purposes. The eight lesson plans selected for document content analysis also served as social studies lessons for observational purposes. The participants' lesson plans were examined in an effort to compare and cross check examples of data found in participants' interviews, and

participants' instructional practices witnessed during observations. This process identified possible areas; consistent with, or contradictory to, what teachers stated in their lesson plans, what they reported through their interviews, and what was actually observed in practice. The intent was to understand whether teachers are consistent in what they report in their lesson plans in terms of how they will teach social studies content and their use of instructional practices during their social studies instruction.

Managing and Analyzing Data during Data Collection

The challenge involved in data analysis was made easier to manage because the researcher analyzed data along the way. There are several limitations to waiting until the end of the data collection to analyze the data including losing reliable and valid data and becoming overwhelmed by the sheer amount of data. Realizing the potential disaster that could result from waiting until the end to perform data analysis, the researcher prepped a system for organizing the data making it easier for her to retrieve any segment of the data as needed (Merriam, 2009). The following steps offer a description of how data collection and analysis were managed in this study.

1. Simultaneous data collection and analysis were performed in and out of the field
2. All data obtained from any of the various interview formats throughout the study were audio-recorded.
3. A mix of manual and computer management was used to transcribe, store, and save the interview and field note data.
4. Transcript data (audio-recorded data) were downloaded from the recording device to the researcher's personal computer and labeled using pseudonyms to protect the sample participants' identity
5. Interview transcripts were immediately transcribed at the researcher's home on her personal computer subsequent to being conducted with sample teacher participants
6. Printer copies of all transcripts were printed in preparation for coding, sorting categories and making sense of the data.
7. Manual copies of the field notes were typed, transcribed, and stored on the researcher's personal computer at the close of each lesson observation.

8. The transcript data were analyzed line-by-line using color-coding. This temporary arranging of certain data allowed for easy retrieval of specific pieces of data.
9. While reading through the interview and observation data the researcher jotted comments, observations, or questions in the margins attempting to establish open coding
10. Data sets (interviews and field notes) were placed side by side on the dining room table and repeatedly read over and over to discover any repetition in categories or themes that answered the research questions through open coding.
11. After working through the entire data sets in search of categories or themes, the researcher revisited the data attempting to detect where categories and themes overlapped through axial coding.
12. This overlap in themes were eventually collapsed into major themes
13. Between interviews, the researcher sat down with the first interview, read and reread the data making notes in the margins and commenting on the data.
14. Upon the completion of the observations with teachers, the researcher read and reread field note data making notes in the margins and commenting on the data.
15. During observations jottings and field notes were recorded in the form of bulleted notes, incomplete sentences, and complete thoughts.
16. All final jottings were fleshed out later into extensive field notes and analytical memos that were further detailed and that extended the comments, thoughts, and annotations from other observations.
17. All field notes were used in the compilation of analytic memos, and all levels of coding during the data analysis process sought to thematize and analyze the field notes for relevant information to answer the study's research questions.
18. Simultaneous analysis was reflected in what is referred to as constant-comparative analysis (Cresswell, 2007, Merriam, 2009) through qualitative case study methods of coding, including open and axial coding (Emerson, et al., 1995).
19. After all data were collected, transcribed, and member checked, a within-case analysis was conducted to establish themes within each case.
20. A cross case analysis was conducted to detect similarities and differences noted across cases.
21. All transcript and observation data were destroyed at the close of data analysis, research findings and reporting, and final dissertation defense.

Without ongoing analysis, the data might have been unfocused, confusing, and overwhelming with the sheer volume of material that needed processing. The data collection and analysis for this study were performed simultaneously making the data findings more reliable and illuminating. This multiple case study offered readers in-depth discussions and “naturalistic generalizations” (Cresswell, 2007) describing teachers use of instructional methods in social studies and how teachers determined their use of those teaching methods.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis refers to a “process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1). Procedures for data collection and data analysis in qualitative research should be processed concurrently, starting analysis at the outset of generating data. According to Cresswell (2007), “The process of data collection, analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process-- they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in the research project” (p. 150). Several authors suggested using a variety of analytical tools to help facilitate the coding and management of data so the sheer volume of information does not become unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Cresswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Because the researcher was unsure about what knowledge would be discovered or what the final analysis would look like in qualitative research, data collection and analysis that accompanied the entire analysis process determined future findings and ultimately shaped the final case. An inductive process (Merriam, 2009) was based upon a constant comparative analysis strategy and consisted of open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). To begin the process of analyzing data generated from transcripts, initial coding took place after the pre-interviews were transcribed and after the observations had begun. After audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher and read thoroughly in order to make sense of the data, the researcher further reflected upon the information gathered trying to understand the overall meaning of the transcripts, field notes, etc. The analysis process for coding data in this case study required the researcher to detect similarities and differences that cut across the data in an effort to organize the codes into categories or themes. The themes were color-coded and extracted from the text to aid in the organization of the data. A list of similar themes was

composed and was clustered together for the purpose of collapsing interrelated categories. After the clustering process was completed, the list of similar categories or themes was compared to the data for a second time in order to detect the emergence of any additional codes. At that point, the codes were rewritten in simple phrases as larger themes.

Pre-interviews, post-interviews, informal interviews, observations, and field notes were revisited and constantly compared as part of data analysis to discover emergent themes or overlapping categories that were possibly overlooked. Eventually, the themes were constructed into detailed descriptions that comprise Chapter IV--describing how teachers teach social studies, how they incorporate integrative strategies in social studies instruction, and how they determine their instructional practices for teaching social studies education. The categories selected were exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and rest on the focus of the research questions. Lessons learned from the data analysis process are included in Chapter V and include a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature presented in Chapter II.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Several different strategies--triangulation, member checking, researcher's position, in-depth description, and peer review--were employed in this qualitative case study to enhance internal validity and help establish trustworthiness. Strategies that promoted credibility for any research project are essential to creating a trust factor among the researcher and reader in order to ensure the study was carried out with integrity and the researcher was ethical in his or her stance (Merriam, 2009). The researcher's position statement is articulated in Chapter I to acknowledge any biases, worldviews, and assumptions that might affect data collection or analysis during investigation. Data analysis involved triangulating multiple data sources (transcripts, CoRe and

PaPeRs adapted interviews, field notes, and document content analysis of lesson plans) and methods (interviews, observations, and document content analysis) to establish internal validity and corroborate emergent findings. Analysis was verified through member checking as well, to help establish internal validity, and to allow participants to inquire about the plausibility of results as well as ascertain the researcher has accurately interpreted their meaning and words. Further, while applying member checking the researcher addressed her biases and misunderstandings of what was seen during observations. Because the dissertation committee read and commented on the emergent findings for the study, peer review was addressed as well as internal validity. To establish external validity and instill trustworthiness, Chapter IV will report an in-depth description that highlights the details of the daily activities of each case. In the final phase of the study, also known as the interpretive phase, the researcher conducted analysis within the cases, hoping to provide meaning for the individual cases as well as incorporate a thematic analysis across cases.

Summary

This chapter presented the proposed methodology for examining teachers' instructional practices of social studies through this case study. An overview of qualitative research was provided as well as an overview of case study. A description of the boundaries encompassing this study, participants, location, and time, provided a background for this study. The chapter presented a description of data collection methods (interviews, observations, CoRe and PaPeRs instruments, field notes, and document content analysis of lesson plans) and comparative analysis (transcripts, CoRe and PaPeRs adapted interviews, field notes, and document content

analysis of lesson plans). The chapter concluded with how issues of validity and trustworthiness were established in order to provide accuracy and credibility of findings for readers.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The researcher constructed four cases, each documenting a different elementary teacher, his or her use of instructional strategies for teaching social studies education, and how use of these instructional strategies was determined. The development of each case involved transcribing, coding, categorizing, and identifying emergent themes from interview data. The researcher systematically collected the various data sets and transcribed the data for this study. All of the data, including interviews, observations, and documents were reviewed repeatedly to identify codes. These codes were placed into categories allowing emerging themes to be derived. The findings are reported by case, with themes based on the two research questions guiding this study. (1) What instructional strategies do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education? (2) What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies in social studies education?

Interview questions were organized with three considerations in mind, (a) planning social studies instruction, (b) the social studies instructional strategies used to teach social studies content, and (c) how those social studies strategies are determined by teachers. The same interview questions were asked of all participants. The results are indicated in the data descriptions for each of the four cases. Data were collected from various sources including interviews with the participants, lesson observations, lesson plans, and comments from the researcher's field notes. Contextual factors relating to each participant, including the

participant's classroom setting, perceived instructional approach, and the social studies lessons submitted for observational purposes for each case will be described to offer a more in-depth portrait of each participant and to provide a context for each case. In order to maintain the participant's confidentiality throughout the entirety of this study, any information that can be used to identify a participant or his or her school will be omitted in the reported findings, as only pseudonyms will be used.

Prior to conducting interviews, teachers were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to establish participant demographics including ethnic background, teaching experience, and current teaching position. The researcher collected pertinent background information to help her gain more insight into the participants and to understand his or her account of specific instructional strategies utilized to teach social studies content and how these are determined.

In addition to background information, the four research participants were asked to voluntarily submit copies of two lesson plans from a social studies unit of their choice. The participants' social studies lessons served as one of five data sets for data analysis examining participants' choices of instructional strategies and methods to teach social studies education. Analysis of the lesson plan data were intended to supplement, enhance, support and/or refute interview and observational data analysis. To sum up, the data sets used were teacher interviews, lesson observations, lesson plan artifacts, CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interviews, pre-observational interviews, and informal and unstructured discussion.

Case 1: Mrs. Long

Teacher Description

Mrs. Long is an African American female, 42 years of age, who was observed to be warm, pleasant, and friendly in her demeanor. She was soft-spoken and neatly dressed. Mrs. Long was married and the mother of two young boys. It appeared Mrs. Long was admired by her students, and, according to the school's principal, she was described as being energetic, passionate, and well-liked and respected by the faculty and parents. Mrs. Long reported she had taught elementary students in second, third, fourth, and sixth grades. Having taught for over 18 years, she was a veteran educator. During our initial introduction, it was easy to establish a friendly rapport with Mrs. Long. Her respectful disposition was demonstrated each time I visited her classroom. I had a positive experience during my time in her classroom and did not feel like I was interrupting the academic day at any time. Mrs. Long made herself readily available to meet with me so I could conduct interviews and have the opportunity to ask any necessary clarifying questions. When I conducted lesson observations, Mrs. Long always made it possible for me to have copies of any lesson activities or handouts related to the lessons being taught, and encouraged me to sit in an area of the classroom where the lessons could be easily observed.

Mrs. Long was certified in Elementary Education, and held highly qualified teacher status according to Alabama's State Department of Education. She attended college in the southeastern region of the United States, held a Bachelor's of Science, a Master's degree, and an Educational Specialist degree all in Elementary Education. When asked if she had been involved in any specialized training or teaching positions or had worked in various other roles besides that of an elementary teacher, Mrs. Long explained that she had not been trained in, or been involved in, practicing any specialized teaching roles such as reading coach or mathematics coach. Mrs. Long

did reveal, however, that she had once been involved in educating adults in training and mentoring teen girls.

When asked which grade level she enjoyed teaching the most, Mrs. Long explained second grade was a good fit for her personality because the students were in their early stages of academic and social development, and they were eager to learn, and were pleasant to work with. Mrs. Long was responsible for teaching core second grade subjects including mathematics, reading, language arts, science, and social studies.

Description of Classroom Setting

Mrs. Long was employed at an urban elementary school built in the late 1950s located in a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. Although the elementary school was considered an old building, the school appeared to be well maintained and, according to the school's principal, renovations to the building occurred over several years. To accommodate the increase in student population, a wing was constructed to house additional classrooms. Several classrooms assigned to lower elementary grades, including Mrs. Long's classroom, were located in this new wing of the school. When the researcher entered Mrs. Long's second grade classroom, she immediately noticed a vibrant teacher-made display of a red and white cutouts depicting Dr. Seuss' hat paired with the caption "Seussisms" adorning the classroom door. Her attention and thought to detail in accessorizing the academic environment in her classroom was impressive. The walls in Mrs. Long's bright classroom were complemented with educational content and designated as academic sources for the purpose of assisting the needs of students and increasing their knowledge.

In addition to the purposeful wall décor, a SmartBoard was located at the front of the classroom, with two large bulletin boards situated on either side of the SmartBoard. Mrs. Long used the two large bulletin boards for displaying specific academic content and organized the content in a manner that supported her daily, weekly, and unit lesson plan ideas. The essential questions associated with the lesson objectives for reading and social studies were highlighted on each bulletin board. The large bulletin board situated to the right of the SmartBoard displayed a concept web used for whole group instruction. Placing the concept web on this large bulletin board allowed every student to clearly see it. The display provided a space where every student participant could easily interact with the concept web during whole group instruction.

Mrs. Long's classroom culture reflected a warm, student-friendly environment. The researcher observed Mrs. Long attending to students' needs with a nurturing and respectful approach at all times. Students were given various tools and supplies with which to work. There were specific areas in Mrs. Long's classroom designated for students to access materials. As part of a technology center, five computers for student and teacher use, including such extras as headphones and a working printer, were observed in use, and all the items appeared to be working properly. Throughout the room many student work samples were on display and they were nicely arranged for students and all stakeholders to see. The students' desks were arranged in pods with easy accessibility for working in cooperative learning groups and positioned in the center of the classroom in a manner that allowed every member of the class to see the SmartBoard. Each student pod was organized as a square, and was arranged to accommodate up to five students.

Mrs. Long's desk did not appear to be a personal workstation; instead literacy baskets were arranged on the desktop in order for students to be able to select various literacy items. To

the side, two small kidney-shaped tables were arranged with one large teacher chair and five to six student chairs designated for small group instruction.

Mrs. Long's second grade classroom, one of four sample settings in this study, indicated a predominately African American student population of mostly male students. The demographic profile in Mrs. Long's classroom indicated 24 students. Of those second grade students, 14 (58%) were male and 10 (4%) were female. The racial demographic for students was 20 students (83%) who were African American, three students (13%) who were Hispanic, and one (4) who was Caucasian.

Teacher's Reported Instructional Approach to Teaching Social Studies

Mrs. Long considered her instructional approach to be student-centered with hands-on, critical thinking techniques for student understanding. She explained she had not applied hands-on, constructivist approaches in her instruction during the early years of her teaching career. Over time, however, she reported she had developed more hands-on, minds-on strategies to support the needs of her students and increase their ability to critically think and apply their knowledge. Some of the techniques she developed over time included incorporating technological instructional strategies to assist her lessons, integrating student projects, inviting guest speakers in support of the elementary curriculum, and applying graphic organizers for student use. Despite her efforts in planning more opportunities for student application, Mrs. Long noted she sometimes incorporated lecturing and clarifying when it was necessary and assigned worksheets, quizzes, and tests for the purpose of giving student grade reporting as required by her local school district.

When asked how she defined curriculum integration, Mrs. Long explained, “I define curriculum integration as teaching the same skill across different disciplines.” She also revealed her conceptual ideas and definition of curriculum integration developed through her educational preparation in college courses and through her experience teaching elementary grades. Mrs. Long clarified she does not intentionally plan integration in her classroom; however, she incorporates curriculum integration when there is a natural occurrence or when integration lends itself to the lesson. Mrs. Long believed that social studies was naturally embedded in the reading curriculum, and mathematics, to a lesser extent. She explained that having taught elementary grades for many years prepared her with knowledge of the specific skills covered across the elementary curriculum thereby allowing her to plan for opportunities where she could integrate skills across the curriculum. Further, she explained,

I have 120 minutes to teach reading and 60 minutes for math. In some instances I will address social studies and science within the reading curriculum. This way, I know that I am addressing those subjects - because whatever we’re reading about -its’ either going to be an embedded skill in science or social studies so, I feel like I’m teaching science and social studies every day.

Mrs. Long thought curriculum integration was an important and viable instructional strategy for maintaining science and social studies in the elementary curriculum. She felt the time allocated for teaching social studies was limited, and noted that merging reading with social studies guaranteed her time for teaching social studies concepts when integrated with the reading curriculum. She was familiar with thematic integration and had planned thematic units for seven years in a previous school district, but she was unaware of any additional theoretical models of integration.

Social Studies Lessons Observed

Lesson 1: Observation. Mrs. Long reported she was required to submit her lesson plans once a week through the InformationalNow (iNow) electronic educational data management software, as required by her state and local school district. For this research study, she decided to submit hand-written lesson plans and also provided copies of any supplemental lesson material including handouts and activity worksheets. Three broad social studies themes guided lesson plan one: “American Heroes,” “Cultural Traditions,” and the “History of Baseball.” Thus, the premise of lesson one focused primarily on the changes that occurred in American baseball over several years. The Alabama Course of Study Standard (ACOS. 2.2) selected for this unit lesson stated, “Identify past and present contributions of a variety of individuals who have overcome difficulties or obstacles to achieve goals.” Each lesson plan in Mrs. Long’s unit highlighted an essential question. Lesson one’s essential question stated, “How is baseball today different from baseball in the past?” Subsequently, the objective for lesson one stated, “Students will be able to compare and contrast how baseball is different today from baseball in the past.”

During the first lesson observation in Mrs. Long’s class, students were initially instructed to read the lesson’s “I Can” statement aloud. As Mrs. Long’s prompted students to do so, they read aloud, “I can compare and contrast how baseball has changed over the years.” After students read the “I Can” statement, Mrs. Long facilitated a think-pair-share strategy with the class for the purpose of getting students involved in a brainstorming strategy that focused on his or her reaction to the lesson’s essential question.

Previously assigned to cooperative learning groups of five, in which each student had a specific role or task, the students were asked to confront their prior knowledge by explaining what they previously knew about how baseball today is different from baseball in the past. As

Ms. Long traveled to each pod with a pen and sticky note pad in hand, she jotted the students' comments on individual sticky notes. After documenting the students' ideas on individual sticky notes, Mrs. Long explained that each group would be required to report the group's ideas through a whole group presentation or a "sharing out" technique, as she commonly referenced it. The previously assigned group reporter was responsible for reporting the group's ideas to the class. After each group reporter shared the group's ideas with the class, Mrs. Long collected the students' sticky notes and posted students' individual written comments to the class concept web on the aforementioned bulletin board. Mrs. Long mentioned the class concept web display was a practical and research-based technique that she often relied on to provide a visual presentation of students' ideas and prior knowledge.

Mrs. Long quickly transitioned the focus of instruction to a mini-lesson within the broader lesson to include a review of reading vocabulary. Mrs. Long adjusted the SmartBoard so the reading vocabulary words highlighted in the *PowerPoint* were visible, and, as she pointed to each vocabulary word, she also encouraged students to confirm the vocabulary as they spelled the words aloud along with her. To emphasize and reinforce students' comprehension, she incorporated picture cues within the *PowerPoint* and provided students with an application of each vocabulary word used within context.

Mrs. Long then prompted a discussion with students by asking them to offer possible descriptions of baseball during the 1940s. Students remained organized as small groups and were instructed to place their leveled readers on their desktop in preparation for reading the story, "Three of the Greats." Before the students began reading, Mrs. Long engaged them in a short discussion where she attempted to challenge their assumptions and tried to identify their pre-conceived ideas about the history of baseball. She also instructed students to study, interpret,

draw inferences, and then discuss the images on the cover of the reader prior to reading “Three of the Greats.” She probed students’ knowledge asking, “How can you tell this picture was taken in the past?” Students then began reading the story, and stopped at various times to answer basic comprehension questions including “What did Satchel Paige like most about playing baseball?” “What date did Satchel Paige win the 1948 World Series?” and “What was Satchel Paige famous for?”

In order to aid fluency, the students were encouraged to track the text with the use of their finger. Mrs. Long offered them assistance as she prompted them to answer comprehension questions about the story by pointing to factual information in the text. Once students had located specific factual information that addressed the comprehension questions, they were encouraged to record these ideas on their T-charts, a strategy suggested in the back of the leveled reader and asked to draw comparisons between the baseball game today to baseball game in the past.

To accompany the reading, Mrs. Long planned a hands-on activity where students were asked to diagram a baseball field using construction paper cutouts and to identify parts of a baseball field by properly arranging pre-printed labels. Mrs. Long reported this activity allowed for a review of terms related to the story, provided students with a contextual example of the terms, offered students an opportunity to participate in diagraming a baseball field, and allowed students to demonstrate understanding of the parts of a baseball field.

Finally, students were asked to reflect on what they had learned from the lesson by explaining one reason the game of baseball today differed from the game of baseball in the past. Students were instructed to write their reflections on an exit slip, a piece of paper to hand Mrs. Long as they left the classroom. The completed exit slip was used to confirm whether the student did (or did not) understand the essential question for the day. Mrs. Long then closed the lesson

by summarizing key points of the story. Students were instructed to finalize their T-chart as well as to accurately complete the construction of the diagram. Mrs. Long traveled to each pod, monitored students' progress, and offered assistance to those who needed additional assistance.

Lesson 2: Observation. Lesson two examined the U.S. flag, an American symbol, and studied the history of the flag and the changes made to the flag over the years. Four broad social studies themes, "American Heroes," "The American Revolution," "Thirteen Colonies/States," and "United States Symbols" supplied in the Social Studies Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) Standards supported lesson two. Of these, Mrs. Long narrowed the lesson and selected the American flag and the changes made to the flag over the years as the focus of lesson two. The Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) Standards for this lesson stated, SS. 2. 3 "Use various primary sources, including calendars and timelines for reconstructing the past." The essential question emphasized in lesson two was "How has the American flag changed over the years?" The "I Can" statement for lesson two read, "I can record events using a timeline." This statement provided the students with an objective for the lesson.

Mrs. Long started the lesson by asking students to read the lesson objective aloud. As a whole group, the students read, "I can record events using a timeline." Students then read the lesson's essential question, "How has the American flag changed through the years?" Mrs. Long asked the students to complete an anticipation guide that outlined five statements regarding the history of the flag. Students were instructed to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements by circling one response on the slip of paper.

Students were then asked to watch a short video clip depicting historical accounts of Betsy Ross and her role in constructing the American flag to help build their content knowledge

and to add to any previously known information about the American flag. Upon the completion of the video clip, a short discussion ensued, with students participating in answering a few simple questions related to Betsy Ross and any changes made to the American flag.

In the lesson activity that followed, students were asked to listen to an audio recording of the story, “Red, White, and Blue” and were instructed to track the text in their leveled readers. While most of the students participated in only listening to the audiotape, several students also practiced tracking the text with their finger. Over the next few minutes, Mrs. Long posed several comprehension questions related to the story and challenged students to locate factual information pertaining to the comprehension questions found in their leveled reader. Mrs. Long paused for a moment to reiterate the difference between fact and opinion, reminding students, “If we don’t have proof, we can’t call a statement a fact.”

Students were given individual timelines and were instructed to record significant events related to the history of the American flag on his or her timeline. The whole group was reminded that this information was located in the reading texts, highlighted on the class SmartBoard, or heard on the story’s audiotape. Mrs. Long was helpful and did not hesitate to assist students struggling with locating and recording the important information on their timelines. She provided additional support to those individuals who were still struggling to find the answers in the text by reiterating comprehension questions, drawing students’ attention to the appropriate information, and offering guided practice.

Mrs. Long concluded the lesson by asking the students to revisit the anticipation guide, re-read the statements outlined, and respond to the statements for a second time by circling whether they still agreed or disagreed with each statement. Students were asked to determine whether his or her response was accurate. If accurate, the students were then asked to justify and

support the response by citing factual evidence. Last, students were asked to notice whether there were any changes in their initial response as opposed to their second response.

Case 2: Ms. Shelly

Teacher Description

Ms. Shelly is an African American female, 37 years of age, who has taught various elementary grades for over 15 years. She studied elementary education earning a Bachelor's of Science and Master's Degree in Elementary Education and then earned an Educational Specialist Degree in reading further into her career. Ms. Shelly immediately welcomed me into her class. She was very thoughtful while participating in the participant interviews, appeared to be comfortable while participating in lesson observations, and was receptive to volunteering her lesson plans. Ms. Shelly is single and has no children of her own, but often referred to her students as her "children." Through observation Ms. Shelly's personal appearance seemed professional, she demonstrated pride in her classroom, and she arranged a well-organized, attractive, classroom environment. It appeared Ms. Shelly had a sincere passion for educating young children, showing patience with her students. She demonstrated high expectations for her students at all times. Ms. Shelly revealed that she enjoyed teaching fifth and sixth grades more than other grade levels because the students were more independent at that age. Additionally, fifth and sixth graders, she thought, also collaborate well with other students, so, she enjoyed that aspect of working with that age group. In the interview, Ms. Shelly indicated she had taught third, fifth, and sixth grades and had previously taught at a junior high school during the summer. As an elementary teacher, she explained she had attended many professional development

workshops during her professional career, but had never served as a reading coach although qualified to do so.

Description of Classroom Setting

The elementary school site at which Ms. Shelly taught was built in an urban setting located in a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. Although the elementary school is considered an old building, built in the late 1950s, the school building and grounds were well maintained, the classrooms were spacious and nicely organized, and the school building itself was clean and orderly. Over the past several years, the school had undergone a few renovation projects, thus, from a structural perspective; the school building appeared to be in good condition. Serving over 400 students, the classrooms at Brown Elementary School were found in two main wings that supported both upper and lower elementary grades. Ms. Shelly's classroom, located in the original school's structure, was situated near the counselor's office and the nurse's station.

Upon entering Ms. Shelly's classroom, I was struck by the beautiful décor and the warm, nurturing environment evident in her classroom. I was impressed with the creativity of her classroom decorations and concluded that Ms. Shelly was thoughtful about how she inspired her students, both academically and socially, based on the various personal touches in the teacher-made decorations displayed.

There were a SmartBoard and dry erase board located in the front of the classroom to assist Ms. Shelly in carrying out her instruction. The dry erase board was where Ms. Shelly wrote important lesson goals so students could read lesson objectives, daily activities, homework assignments, Response to Instruction (RTI) goals, College and Career Ready (CCRS) Standards,

and the lesson's essential questions. Rich examples of science, social studies, mathematics, and reading content and skills were intentionally planned and nicely arranged about the classroom walls. Each bulletin board display served as a reminder for students about the important fifth grade skills and concepts. One bulletin board, in particular, seemed specifically to promote reading content, including a presentation promoting descriptive words, various literature genres, examples of exit words, and the use of various sentences.

In addition, reading and language arts skills including examples of figurative language, paragraph components, and a presentation of the parts of speech strategically arranged throughout the classroom along with other skills such as compare and contrast, drawing conclusions, author's purpose, making predictions, and generalizing were noted. Two separate bulletin boards were designated as writing references for students to refer to when participating in writing exercises. Ms. Shelly used these two bulletin boards to highlight various writing techniques including strategies that involved writing components, and steps to apply writing techniques. One bulletin board covered various types of sentences including interrogative, declarative, imperative and exclamatory, and provided examples for the use of special sentences. The other, a Venn diagram constructed for interactive purposes, was arranged at the front of the classroom where the students and Ms. Shelly could add or remove content when comparing and contrasting content knowledge or for simply applying a visual representation of the students' ideas. Ms. Shelly had assembled a word-wall for the purpose of teaching spelling and reading; however, this instructional tool was not organized for student access, so it did not allow for student interaction.

There were three computers, including one for Ms. Shelly's use and two for student use, organized as part of a classroom technology center. The researcher did not notice an area where

student work samples were featured, but expectations for the instructional schedule, class rules, and instructional routines were posted on organizational charts and other informational displays were set up within the room. Although arranged with easy accessibility for working in groups, the students' desks were neatly organized into rows and were positioned in a way that allowed for all the students to effectively see the board. Ms. Shelly's desk was orderly, and though it appeared to serve as her personal workstation, students seemed comfortable approaching her desk at any time. A small kidney-shaped table, one teacher chair, and four student chairs made up the designated small-group instructional area.

Mrs. Shelly's fifth grade classroom, one of four sample settings for this study, indicated a predominately African American and mostly male student population. The demographic profile in her fifth grade classroom reflected a total of 35 students. Of those fifth grade students, 19 (54%) were male and 16 (46%) were female. The racial demographics for Ms. Shelly's class indicated 33 students (94%) who were African American, and two students (6%) who were Hispanic.

Teacher's Reported Instructional Approach to Teaching Social Studies

Ms. Shelly reported that, at the beginning of her teaching career and for many years after, she considered her approach to instruction as teacher-centered with more emphasis placed on lecturing and traditional methods of delivering instruction. The students Ms. Shelly had previously worked with were involved in listening to her lead one-way discussions, provide explanations, offer clarification, and worked mostly in isolation. She explained that, over time, she has become more confident in her instructional practices and has developed more student-centered, hands-on approaches to instruction including implementing students' use of graphic

organizers, incorporating technology, and requiring more student accountability for his or her own learning through inquiry and participation in collaborative assignments with their peers. If she had to assess her teaching based on a continuum of traditional instructional delivery to instruction guided by constructivist theory practices, Ms. Shelly reported her instruction would now be more student-centered. She explained, if visitors were to enter her classroom today, they would witness the students engaged in hands-on, minds-on activities. She reported her classroom today could be characterized as noisy and busy, but with students working in collaborative pods, completing various tasks, while she facilitates organized chaos.

Ms. Shelly revealed she thinks about social studies integration when planning reading instruction and notes that integration of both reading and social studies specifically is important because it allows her to teach the required reading skills and provides her with a strategy to address social studies concepts at the same time. Ms. Shelly believes integration is defined as curriculum demonstrating common connections among subject matter ideas and curriculum content. She tries to apply the use of integration of reading and social studies at least twice a week. Ms. Shelly reported she is thoughtful in planning the use of skills across multiple subject matter areas and considers how the week's reading material is connected to the social studies concepts. She reported her ideas about integration developed as a result of her classroom teaching experiences and were influenced by the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards and Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) Standards since both documents allow for the integration of reading skills, social studies, and science concepts. While Ms. Shelly easily identified this thematic integration, she was not, however, familiar with any other specific theoretical models of integration. She also indicated she is comfortable planning curriculum integration and believes students would benefit from this instructional approach and would have a deeper understanding

of difficult topics if integration were utilized more and accurately practiced. However, despite the benefits, Ms. Shelly does not elect to implement integrative practices for each lesson because she runs into barriers such as lack of time to plan, students' lack of prior knowledge, and teacher's lack of knowledge about authentic subject matter connections.

Social Studies Lessons Observed

Lesson 1: Observation. Ms. Shelly, like the other teachers who participated in this study, was required to submit one set of lesson plans per week through iNow, as required by her state and local school district. For this research study, Ms. Shelly elected to submit a set of written lesson plans and agreed to offer me copies of any supplemental lesson materials including lesson handouts and instructional aides. One broad social studies theme, The Hindenburg, and two sub-themes, *The Unexpected and what can we learn from encounters with the unexpected?*, guided the first lesson plan. The College and Career Ready (CCRS) Standards for this lesson stated, "Students will make connections about what they already know in relation to the concept," "Students will organize new information about the concept." and "Students will read the text to confirm or disconfirm their original responses." With these standards in mind, students were focused to this essential question: "What can we learn from encounters with the unexpected?"

In prior planning, Ms. Shelly decided that students would analyze the text of "The Hindenburg" by Patrick O'Brian as a starting point for lesson one. This historical account of a crash involving the unsuccessful flight of the first dirigible, or aircraft ever flown in Germany was the basis for Ms. Shelly's first lesson plan observation. Because Ms. Shelly was always conscious of the lesson objective and Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) Standards, she initiated the lesson by instructing students to read the lesson's objective statement, "I will identify cultural

and economic developments in the U.S. from 1877 to the 1930s” aloud, and later directed students to revisit this statement at various points throughout this lesson.

With the support of a *PowerPoint* and classroom SmartBoard, Ms. Shelly displayed the lesson’s College and Career Ready (CCRS) Standards for students to read aloud. Starting with, “Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says” and “Determine two or main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details.” Ms. Shelly also noted, today’s reading story is expository nonfiction.

Students actively listened to a short discussion that revealed transportation, specifically transportation from the past, was the focus of today’s lesson. Ms. Shelly asked the students to examine a few images taken from the Internet of past transportation, including a picture of a dirigible. Reading from the *PowerPoint*, the class then read the definition of a dirigible aloud. Ms. Shelly led a short discussion that highlighted the difference between fact and opinion, the skill of the week. Ms. Shelly distributed the anticipation guide and instructed the students to participate in a “before” strategy to assess their previous knowledge and to establish a purpose for reading. The anticipation guide presented the students with five statements related to the history of the Hindenburg, and they were instructed to circle whether they agreed or disagreed.

Ms. Shelly selected a digital documentary that featured actual footage from the crash site of the Hindenburg blimp and facilitated a “during” strategy that involved students chunking parts of the video content and jotting notes to assist them with engaging and organizing informational text. Next, the students were asked to watch and listen to a *YouTube* clip about the Hindenburg blimp and given instructions to write down facts related to the blimp on their previously distributed jot charts. Ms. Shelly would intermittingly start and stop the video in an effort to chunk the video content and to provide students with time to complete their jottings on their

assigned jot chart. While chunking the video content, time was allowed for Ms. Shelly to contribute additional jottings related to the Hindenburg blimp on the dry erase board, implementing the strategy “I do, We do, You do.” At the completion of this task, students were asked to return to their anticipation guide and instructed to complete the second column by reading the five statements and again circling whether they agree or disagree.

The text of the lesson came next, and the students read a passage about the historical accounts of the Hindenburg blimp and were required to contribute three facts and opinions learned about the blimp and record on his or her T-Chart. Students were given 10 minutes to complete this task, and Ms. Shelly provided guided assistance where it was necessary. Volunteers were asked to share their ideas noted on their T-Chart with the whole group. Lastly, the lesson closed with students completing an exercise in which the students’ noted their ideas about what they did not understand, questions that remained, whether or not they enjoyed working in small groups, and what mostly surprised them about the lesson.

Lesson 2: Observation. One broad social studies theme, “Harlem Renaissance,” guided this second lesson plan. Reading literature (RL.5.1) and (RL.5.2) anchor strands and Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) Standards were the premise for this lesson; it reads, “Identify cultural and economic developments in the society of the United States from 1877 through 1930s.” The objective for lesson two was “We will identify and sequence cultural and economic developments in the society of the U.S. from 1877 through the 1930s.” Ms. Shelly selected the reading text “Jazz, Jazz, Jazz” by Sharon Franklin as the basis for lesson two. Ms. Shelly highlighted the lesson’s story and reiterated that today’s lesson, like lesson one, would also feature the expository nonfiction genre. A *PowerPoint* was displayed to aid Ms. Shelly in

facilitating the lesson and to display informational content for the students to follow as the lesson was taught. After students read the lesson objective and lesson focus from the *PowerPoint* slides, they were instructed to locate their copy of the trade book “Jazz, Jazz, Jazz,” and asked to turn to a specific page in the text. To build the students’ background knowledge about the Harlem Renaissance, Ms. Shelly requested that the students read a portion of one passage from the text aloud. While Ms. Shelly facilitated a chunking exercise that allowed for students to read parts of the text and then pause to break down difficult text into simple pieces, students were allowed one minute to write their ideas about things that made them say, “Wow” or “New” Learning on a sticky note and while she modeled for students by jotting her own ideas down on a sticky note. Ms. Shelly stated, “One thing that made me say, ‘Wow’ was ‘The pride in black people and that pride was apparent in the overall flavor of African American culture’ To wrap up, the students were asked to voluntarily read their ideas aloud and instructed to post their ideas to the dry erase board underneath the subheadings “Things that made me say, ‘Wow!’ or New Learning.”

Case 3: Mr. Best

Teacher Description

Mr. Best was a 43-year-old, single, Caucasian male, with no children of his own. Mr. Best was neatly dressed, energetic, and appeared to be a bit nervous during our initial introduction. Despite any nervous jitters, Mr. Best welcomed me into his classroom, explained he hoped his participation would be helpful to my research, and assured me he was more than willing to participate in the study in any way that he was needed.

Mr. Best studied in the southeastern United States where he earned a Bachelors’ Degree in Elementary Education, kindergarten through sixth grades, and later received his Master’s in

Collaborative Education (formerly known as Special Education), kindergarten through sixth grades. Mr. Best was responsible for teaching mathematics, science, and social studies, with fourth grade students where he was currently paired with a fellow elementary teacher who was responsible for teaching the language arts portion of the curriculum. Mr. Best also reported that he was responsible for teaching social studies to a few special needs students who were assigned to visit his class for 30 minutes per day. Mr. Best was an experienced teacher with over 13 years of classroom experience in first, second, third, and fourth grades. Along with his classroom experience, Mr. Best had also participated in specialized instruction including having served as a reading coach for five years and having previously served as a member of his school's Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) committee.

Description of Classroom Setting

The elementary school site where Mr. Best taught was located in and surrounded by an area near current new home construction, various recently developed subdivisions, and an existing suburban community. A contemporary structure built in early 2001, Smith Elementary School was also located in a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. From all initial appearances, the school building was clean, orderly, and well maintained. The structure of the school building was designed to establish the main office and nurse's station as the central hub of the school. Two academic wings were constructed on either side of this central hub in order to equally accommodate both the lower and upper elementary grade classrooms. Mr. Best's fourth grade classroom was built as part the wing that serviced upper elementary grade students.

Mr. Best's fourth grade classroom was well organized and appropriately decorated with both a moderate and traditional academic flair for the needs of his fourth grade students. The

classroom door was highlighted with the caption, “Mr. Best’s All Star Team” and was adorned with red and blue stars that represented the students in his class. A Smart Board was arranged in the front center of the classroom, and two dry erase boards were organized on either side of the Smart Board for instructional purposes. The classroom rules, conduct system display (represented by a traffic light) and a poster depicting the Pledge of Allegiance were positioned near the classroom door where students could see them easily. One of the two dry erase boards was designated as the display for students to refer to their daily assignments, important dates, homework assignments, and other important information. The second of two dry erase boards was where Mr. Best outlined the curriculum standards, lesson objectives, and the essential question for the social studies unit. There were also inspirational quotes exhibited throughout the classroom to encourage students’ achievement including, “Our Class is Buckets of Fun,” and just above the teacher’s desk was the caption “Kids are Special People.”

Mr. Best’s desk and professional space was sparse, and for the most part was uncluttered. It did not appear to be an area that students were allowed to access or use. There were several cabinets in the back of the classroom appropriated for storage and various academic purposes. Mr. Best, not wanting to waste valuable space, determined the doors of the cabinets would be convenient areas to display informational content. Various instructional aids displaying particular strategies including a Response to Instruction (RTI) chart was arranged visual references. There were two district-mandated aids noted on the wall as well; one observed by the researcher noted the strategies Talking, Writing, Investigating, Reading, and Listening (TWIRL) and a second aid, which emphasized the Cycle of Instruction, a strategy suggesting before, during, and after lesson techniques and application. The researcher did not observe a designated reading corner for students; however, there was a bookshelf where plastic tubs containing

various trade books were available for student use. There was one kidney bean table with a teacher chair and four student chairs available for small group instruction. The technology in the classroom was comprised of two student computers, one teacher computer, and a listening station with an audio recorder and headphones for student use, and a television mounted on the wall. The students' desks and chairs were arranged in pods for easy cooperative learning opportunities and there was storage underneath each student's desk for his or her own storage of materials and personal items.

Mr. Best's fourth grade classroom, one of four of sample settings in this study, involved a predominately African American student population of mostly male students. The student population in his fourth grade classroom totaled 19 students. Of those fourth grade students, 11 (58%) were male and 8 (42%) were female. The racial demographics for Mr. Best's class reflected 16 students (84%) who were African American, and two students (11%) who were Caucasian, and one student (5%) who was Asian.

Teacher's Reported Instructional Approach to Teaching Social Studies

Mr. Best characterized his approach to instruction as being more teacher-centered based on a continuum that spanned traditional to constructivist teaching approaches, especially regarding social studies education. He reported that his training and experience as a reading specialist strongly influenced how he planned and delivered his social studies instruction. Mr. Best also explained the fourth grade curriculum standards guided his instructional practices, as well, and he "liked the structure the standards provided." In the early stages of his career, Mr.

Best was trained in Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) techniques and explained that he had been conditioned to follow the scripted instructional techniques suggested in his professional

development training for teaching mathematics and reading, since those were the two subjects most heavily emphasized. His background as a reading specialist and his love of reading instruction is where Mr. Best said he draws his inspiration, and he usually integrates these reading strategies with every subject matter he teaches.

Mr. Best revealed he spent more time planning reading and mathematics lessons compared to time spent planning for social studies or science. Although he felt it was probably more appropriate to apply student-centered approaches, he explained that when planning and implementing social studies education, he mostly relied on the traditional strategies and the use of text-book based instructional techniques for teaching Alabama History. When asked why he typically approached social studies instruction with the use of basic reading techniques and a standardized curriculum, Mr. Best explained that if he followed the standardized curriculum more closely rather than, using more-integrated, constructivist approaches, he would feel confident that he had covered all the standards that students were required to know. According to Mr. Best, planning his instruction by following the standardized curriculum and applying textbook-based teaching methods guaranteed his students to be more prepared for the end of the year testing. Mr. Best did not consider himself a creative teacher and explained that he usually did not find very many opportunities where he could authentically integrate various subject areas other than reading skills throughout the curriculum. He reported he was more comfortable integrating only reading curriculum and he argued that it was difficult to find science and mathematics connections within social studies content, so he did not typically plan instruction with integration in mind. Mr. Best further explained that the social studies standards are what he mostly considered in his approach to teaching social studies education, and he feels “that’s what

drives it.” If there is a natural fit with other subjects and it fits the needs of students he will go with it, but only when it’s authentic and necessary.

Social Studies Lessons Observed

Lesson 1: Observation. Mr. Best, like the other teachers who participated in this study, was required to submit one set of lesson plans per week through iNow as required by the state and his local school district. Mr. Best reported that since he is paired with a fourth grade language arts teacher, he is only responsible for planning and teaching the basic social curriculum including mathematics, science and social studies. Mr. Best did not have many handouts or supplemental materials to accompany his lessons; however, he assured me he would be happy to share his lesson plans with me and would clarify any questions about his lesson observations if it were necessary.

The social studies concept “Changes in transportation over the past century” was the premise for the first lesson, as outlined by the Alabama Course of Study Standard (ALCOS) SS 4.16 “Determine the impact of population growth on cities, major road systems, demographics, natural resources, and the natural environment of Alabama during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.” One sub-concept was also noted in this first lesson plan: “Relate Alabama’s economy to the influence of foreign-based industry including the automobile industry.” The lesson’s objective stated, “Students will be able to explain the role of agribusiness in 21st century Alabama and be able to describe ways transportation has changed over the past century.”

Mr. Best opened the lesson by calling on student volunteers to read the lesson’s objective aloud during whole group instruction. One student was chosen and read, “I will be able to

explain the role of agribusiness in 21st century Alabama.” Attempting to build students’ background knowledge of unfamiliar vocabulary terms that could have potentially created a barrier for learning, Mr. Best reviewed the vocabulary word *agribusiness* and asked students “What does the word agribusiness mean?” For the next few minutes, Mr. Best facilitated a brief discussion with the students that led to several students contributing their ideas about the origins of the word agribusiness and offering a student definition. As part of the activities that occurred before instruction assess students’ prior knowledge, Mr. Best arranged the Promethean Board for instructional purposes and displayed the question “How has transportation changed over the past century?” Mr. Best then called on student volunteers who offered ideas and he recorded these responses on the board.

Prior to instructing students to read the text, Mr. Best instructed students to preview the comprehension questions in order to set a purpose for reading. Mr. Best asked, “Why do we look at the pages of the book before we start to read?” Students were asked to look for answers to the questions at the end of the story while they participated in choral reading. Students were also asked to jot down any notes related to the questions during the choral reading exercise. While the students read the paragraph content, they were asked to stop at various points during the story and asked to address the answers to the lesson questions. After having the students read a few paragraphs, they encountered the terms *rural* and *urban*. Mr. Best paused the lesson for a moment and clarified the unfamiliar vocabulary terms with students. He asked, “What is the difference between rural and urban?” Mr. Best attempted to prompt student dialogue of rural and urban with a short discussion. He then, stated, “Alabama makes a great deal of money from poultry,” and then asked students, “What is our Alabama’s largest commodity?” For the next few minutes a short discussion between the Mr. Best and the students ensued.

The lesson resumed as the students participated in reading the next few paragraphs of the text during a choral reading exercise. There were several pauses throughout the lesson as Mr. Best tried to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary words before moving on with the lesson activities. The lesson continued as Mr. Best instructed students to locate various pages throughout the text and asked students additional comprehension questions about the lesson's material that included, "Which part of our state is known for minimal cattle production?" Mr. Best eventually closed the lesson and implemented what he referenced as his "after" lesson strategy. Students were instructed to complete the answers to the remaining questions as they worked in small groups.

Lesson 2: Observation. For lesson two, Mr. Best focused on one broad social studies theme: "Alabama Sports Figures" was the focus of lesson two. The Alabama Course of Study Standard (ALCOS) SS 4.15, "Identify major world events that influenced Alabama since 1950, including the Korean Conflict, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and the War on Terrorism." was the driver for lesson two. The lesson objective stated, "Students will be able to identify leaders in business, sports, and the arts." Mr. Best began the lesson by instructing students to turn to page 368 in their social studies textbook. Prior to being instructed to read various passages aloud in their social studies textbooks, the students were asked to read a number of related facts paired with the social studies passages they would later be instructed to read. Student volunteers read various passages aloud while the whole group tracked the reading text with their finger. Eventually, all the students were asked to choral read multiple passages from the reading text. Mr. Best explained to students they would be required to answer comprehension questions related to the social studies text and that he would not slow down during choral reading for students to complete the answers to the comprehension questions. Because of this, he

reminded students they should jot notes related to the comprehension questions as they followed along during the whole group reading exercise.

For the next phase of the lesson, Mr. Best structured the lesson to include the teacher reading a passage from the social studies text aloud, and then alternated to allow student volunteers to read passages aloud. At various points when student volunteers were reading, Mr. Best would stop the exercise and draw all students' attention to the informational text found at the top of the page. This practice assisted students in locating the appropriate responses to the reading comprehension questions they would soon answer. The first notable American sport figure Mr. Best asked students to explore through a short video clip was Willie Mayes, a famous baseball player from Alabama. To prompt students' thinking about notable sports figures in Alabama, Mr. Best asked the students, "Why are these individuals important from a national perspective?" Next, the students were asked to explore Hank Aaron by again watching a video about the famous sports figure. This exploration of famous sports figures continued as Mr. Best instructed students to watch various You Tube clips that highlighted multiple famous individuals including Leah Rawls, Bo Jackson, Jesse Owens, Harvey Glance, and Vonetta Flowers. Mr. Best would intermittingly stop at various points during the lesson to provide a short discussion and would pause to clarify factual details about the notable individuals highlighted in the video clips.

Case 4: Mrs. Lindsay

Teacher Description

Mrs. Lindsay was a veteran elementary teacher, aged 54, Caucasian, and married with two teenage boys. She was delightful, poised, and displayed a cheerful spirit. I enjoyed getting to know her and was grateful to spend time in her classroom. Mrs. Lindsay was a stay-at-home

mom for nine years prior to earning an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and pursuing a career in education. Ms. Lindsay was educated in southeast United States and held a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. Mrs. Lindsay's current position was third grade teacher assigned to teach the mathematics, science, and social studies disciplines. Mrs. Lindsay explained that she was hired as a one of two teachers assigned work as a pair working with the same group of students. She had taught elementary grades for 14 years, two of which were spent teaching the Quest gifted educational program. Quest, she explained, was a special education program offered to academically advanced students who were tested and qualified for Quest services. She was previously assigned to teach grades third, fourth, and fifth; however, she indicated that third grade her favorite grade to teach. Mrs. Lindsay characterized third grade students as independent, yet receptive to her support and at times rebellious, but still eager to learn. For these reasons, she enjoyed teaching third grade the most.

Mrs. Lindsay had never worked in a reading coach or mathematics coach position, but held a certification in gifted education. She was previously hired to teach gifted students, but decided to return to teaching a traditional elementary curriculum after two years. Mrs. Lindsay reported that she loved teaching gifted education, but was not in favor of the demanding student testing required of gifted teachers; therefore she opted to return to teaching in a traditional program. Mrs. Lindsay believed that all students should be exposed to a gifted instruction, so she further explained she tried to implement some of her gifted instructional ideas and strategies with her traditional, third grade students. She also confessed she held a deep passion for science, so she applied as many opportunities for student projects and investigations as possible with her third graders.

Description of Classroom Setting

The elementary school site where Mrs. Lindsay taught was located in and surrounded by an area near current new home construction, various recently developed subdivisions, and an existing suburban community. A contemporary structure built in early 2001, Smith Elementary School was located in a large southeastern area in the United States. From all initial appearances, the school building was clean, orderly, and well-maintained. The structure of the school building was designed to establish the main office and nurse's station as the central hub of the school. Two academic wings were constructed on either side of this central hub in order to equally accommodate both the lower and upper elementary grade classrooms. Mrs. Lindsay's third grade classroom was built as part the wing that serviced upper elementary grade students.

The researcher's visit to Mrs. Lindsay's classroom was a positive experience that allowed me the opportunity to understand who Mrs. Lindsay was both personally and professionally. Mrs. Lindsay was assigned to third grade and was asked to teach basic social curriculum including science, social studies, and mathematics for third grade students. The classroom was well organized, beautifully designed with a multitude of cheerful colors, and fully outfitted for the academic and social needs of her third grade students. As I entered Ms. Lindsay's classroom, I was greeted by the phrase "Now Showing In third Grade Math, Science, and Social Studies" that was placed above her classroom door on a movie marquee replica she had previously designed. Mrs. Lindsay reported she had a love for social studies and science, so the influence of both science and social studies subject matter and the subjects' academic advertisements were captured throughout her classroom. There was a dry erase board at the front of the classroom, and her room was equipped with a Smart Board as well. On either side of the Smart Board, the individual dry erase boards were organized with important subject matter material, including

student assignments and lesson goals. The dry erase board to the left side of the Smart Board provided the students with eight standards for mathematical practice. Next to the mathematical steps the researcher observed standards based on the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) stated on promotional cards specific to mathematics, science, and social studies. Each promotional card was structured as a reminder to students to practice the “I Can” statement, and each card emphasized the use of essential questions and before, during, and after strategies when applying both science and social studies subject matter.

An oversized teacher-made, three-dimensional butterfly life-cycle display was mounted on the wall located in the center of the classroom literacy corner. The literacy center was outfitted with large, fluffy pillows, chairs-in-a-bag, and a large, fuzzy carpet for students to sit comfortably and read books and engage with media materials. I noticed there were small reminders of various strategies based on College and Career Ready (CCRS) Standards for student and teacher use around the room, including the strategy known as “TWIRL,” where the teacher facilitates students’ participation in talking, writing, investigating, reading, and listening skills. Just beneath this display, I noticed another reminder that highlighted the cycle of instruction including the use of before, during, and after strategies. Mrs. Lindsay’s classroom included a computer station that contained three computers, one printer, and headphones for student use. The room was also outfitted with one television monitor; however, the researcher was unsure if the television was functioning properly or was currently being used. As a means to organize subject matter ideas, structure a classroom word-wall, present subject matter vocabulary, and provide informational content related to mathematics, science, and social studies, Mrs. Lindsay adapted the use of the cabinet doors located near the back of the classroom as working bulletin boards to further support students’ academic needs.

The researcher observed many tubs containing various materials, however the containers were not accessible to students, so it appeared the containers were mainly used for the purpose of storage for Ms. Lindsay's materials. Mrs. Lindsay's desk was a bit cluttered and accommodated one teacher computer, so it appeared her desk served mainly as her personal workstation and was not designated for student use. There was a small kidney bean shaped table paired with a teacher's chair and several student chairs located at the back of the classroom where Mrs. Lindsay could work with students in small groups, although the researcher did not observe Mrs. Lindsay work with any students at this table during the two lessons observed while conducting her research. Mrs. Lindsay bragged about her students, praised them for their work, and selected various areas throughout the classroom to post her students' work samples. There were various cabinet doors, wall displays, and the surface of a few file cabinets that served as display areas for various third grade student work samples in Mrs. Lindsay's class.

The students' desks were arranged in a large square where students were allowed accessibility to collaborate in small groups with their classmates or be free to engage in discussion with partner sets.

Mrs. Lindsay's third grade classroom, one of four of sample settings in this study, involved a population that was all African American student population with an equal number of male and female students. The student population in her third grade classroom totaled 18 students. Of those third grade students, 8 (50%) were male and 8 (50%) were female. The racial demographics for Mr. Best's class reflected 18 students (100%) who were African American. There were no other racial demographics reported.

Teacher's Reported Instructional Approach to Teaching Social Studies

Mrs. Lindsay found that she was more comfortable teaching creatively in a way that allowed for realistic learning opportunities for her students. She realized that over time, she became more student-centered in her approach to teaching because her skill-level matured as she gained teaching experience. Consequently, evolved in her confidence to venture out in her instruction and ability to teach, thus began teaching with more emphasis on the student rather than the teacher. Mrs. Lindsay reported that she scheduled guest speakers, including parents, whenever the appropriate opportunity presented itself so her students would be exposed to real world examples that connected with subject matter content. Mrs. Lindsay explained she usually assigned a student project in social studies and science per nine weeks, and she enjoyed researching ideas for student projects or creating or allowing students to develop their own authentic designs.

Mrs. Lindsay also reported she was in favor of integration, and that she tried to apply curriculum integration at least once a week depending on what subject matter was taught. Mrs. Lindsay preferred the term cross-curricular when she thought about integration, and defined integration as pinpointing connections with subject matter ideas and skills. Mrs. Lindsay gave this example when she discussed grid systems in mathematics; she also found the connections to science and social studies subject matter content and addressed those connections in her instruction as well. "So if I find something that I can integrate, I certainly do. I try to integrate as often as possible." Mrs. Lindsay knows it is not always possible to integrate plans with all the subject areas. The other barriers to practicing integration more often were lack of time and a restricted instruction schedule, according to Ms. Lindsay.

Social Studies Lessons Observed

Lesson 1: Observation. Mrs. Lindsey, like the other teachers who participated in this study, was also required to submit one set of lesson plans per week through iNow as required by her state and local school district. Ms. Lindsay offered me a copy of the lesson plans she prepared in order to assist the researcher with data collection purposes. Mrs. Lindsay provided me with copies of student handouts, instructional aides and other lesson-related support materials.

“Rules and Laws in a Community” were the premise and broad social studies theme that guided Mrs. Lindsey’s first lesson plan. The Alabama Course of Study Standard (ACOS) SS 3.10, “Recognize functions of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States” was noted in the lesson plan. There were two sub-concepts addressed in this lesson plan as well: “Describe the process by which a bill becomes law” and “Explain the relationship between the federal government and state governments, including the three branches of government.” The lesson’s objective read, “I can evaluate our national government and explain why it consists of three branches.”

The lesson began with Mrs. Lindsay encouraging her students that today’s lesson would include understanding some important information. Students were prompted by Mrs. Lindsay to read the lesson’s “I Can” statement aloud while she tracked the statement written on the classroom dry erase board. Students read, “I can analyze how the Iroquois were able to bring order and calm to their five tribes through the use of laws.” To clarify the meaning of what seemed to be an unfamiliar vocabulary word to her third grades students, Mrs. Lindsay asked the students, “What does the word analyze mean?” A volunteer student raised her hand and explained that they will be able to talk about how the Iroquois native tribe was able to bring

peace to their tribe. Mrs. Lindsay affirmed the student's response and further explained, "We will write about how laws and rules are developed."

The students were previously arranged into partner sets in order to participate in today's discussion through the use of a think- pair-share strategy. Next, Mrs. Lindsay provided each student with a sticky note and instructed them to turn to their partners and discuss what life would be like without any rules or laws and to jot down their ideas on the sticky note. Mrs. Lindsay walked around the classroom, weaving in and around partner occasionally dropping down to listen to students' exchange of ideas. After two or three minutes, Mrs. Lindsay instructed students to end their discussions and to bring their attention to the whole group. Mrs. Lindsay invited students to publically share their ideas, and then facilitated further discussion as she closed this part of the lesson by asking students, "Would schools be safe if we didn't have rules and laws?" "Would communities be safe?" and "Would people go to jail for wrong doing?" allowing time in between for responses.

In preparation for today's lesson, Mrs. Lindsay had previously handed out informational packets taken from the website Teachers Pay Teachers, giving one to each student as a strategy to supplement appropriate social studies content related to laws and rules. Students were instructed to retrieve their student informational packet from their desks and were later asked as groups to read various sections of the content aloud. The student groups were always prompted to choral read as Mrs. Lindsay prompted them by saying, "Ready, Set, Read." At times, Mrs. Lindsay instructed the students to stop as she explained or reiterated unfamiliar vocabulary words found throughout the informational packet.

Students were then instructed to retrieve their social studies textbook and all turn to the same page in the textbook. The title of the textbook chapter was "Rules and Laws in a

Community.” Mrs. Lindsay began by reading the chapter title and first few paragraphs of the text aloud while students tracked the reading material with their fingers. Mrs. Lindsay paused for a moment, arranged the Smart Board to allow for students to examine five significant lakes found on the east coast of the United States map. She explained each lake represented on the map of New York was named for an individual Native American tribe. As an attempt to connect the lesson ideas related to rules and laws Mrs. Lindsay posed a question to students asking, “How did Native Americans communicate new laws to other tribes?” She lectured to students for the next few minutes explaining and clarifying how Native Americans living on reservations then and even today establish their own set of rules and laws through the use of a tribal council. Ms. Lindsay went on to explain that the United States establishment of rules and laws was mimicked and adapted from Native Americans’ formation of various tribal councils.

Mrs. Lindsay paused for a moment and displayed an image of a significant Native American belt worn by Hiawatha Wam Pum on the Smart Board. She explained the belt was worn to symbolize the agreement to live in unity established between the five original Native American nations Haudensaunee. Additional content was read and discussed by Mrs. Lindsay as she read sections of the informational booklet aloud to students. She prompted more discussion with students as she asked, “How do we make our city laws?” and, “How do we make our state laws?” Mrs. Lindsay lectured and clarified the concepts of and rules further and attempted to connect for students how local and state laws were developed.

Mrs. Lindsay concluded the lesson with a question for students: and “What did you learn about the 13 rules and laws developed by the Iroquois tribe?” Finally, Ms. Lindsay instructed students to construct one question they had about the lesson and to jot their question on their exit slip.

Lesson 2: Observation. The focus of lesson two investigated the three branches of government from a local and national perspective. The Alabama Course of Study standard (ACOS) for this lesson SS 3. 10 stated, “Recognize the functions of the declaration of Independence and United States Constitution.” The “I Can” statement for this lesson read, “I can evaluate our national government and explain why it consists of three branches.” Mrs. Lindsay started the lesson by posing a question to the students: “Where is our national government located?” Some of the students seemed to be knowledgeable about the geographical location of the nation’s capital and responded with “Washington, D.C.” Mrs. Lindsay explained that Washington D.C. was a territory and not an individual state. Students were then instructed to read the lesson’s “I Can” statement and repeated, “I can evaluate our national government and explain why it consists of three branches.” Before moving to the next point in the lesson, Mrs. Lindsay clarified the meaning of the word *explain* in simple terms for students’ understanding. Mrs. Lindsay then posed a second question to students and asked, “How many judges make the supreme court?” Ms. Lindsay explained that today’s lesson would include determining how many judges were seated on the Supreme Court. Mrs. Lindsay again used instructional websites such as Teacher Pay Teacher to support the unit lesson and organized the use of the Smart Board to display these support resources. The SmartBoard was also selected as a technology resource in order to teach vocabulary words to students. Mrs. Lindsay reviewed a couple of vocabulary words by instructing students to participate in a brief activity composed of a word and definition match entitled the “Three Branches of Government” displayed on the Smart Board.

For the next exercise in the lesson, students were required to use a pre-printed student packet to help carry out the lesson’s objective. The information for the lesson’s student packets were compiled and copied by Mrs. Lindsay who earlier organized and handed out the packets for

students' use as supplemental materials to explain the important ideas about the three branches of government. After participating in the previous definition match, students were then instructed to place their "Laws and Rules" packets on their desks. Mrs. Lindsay used the packet to reiterate many of the vocabulary words including *senate*, *house* and *congress*. The students were asked to watch a short, student-friendly video hosted by the website Brain Pop to build their background knowledge about the three branches. After the video, Mrs. Lindsay explained that students, who were arranged in cooperative learning groups of five, would participate in a hands-on sorting activity. Each student group was provided with three star-shaped organizational trays with the implication that each tray represented one of the three branches of government. Each group was given factual statements written on informational cards, was asked to read each statement aloud in their group, was lastly asked to sort the statements according to the appropriate match between content three governmental branch.

At the completion of this exercise students, were given an individual graph and asked to chart the appropriate number of stars, which symbolized for the appropriate matches to content and governmental branches, on the student graph. Students were given three minutes to complete this task. With the use of the class dry-erase board and a large graph designated for the purpose of whole group instruction Mrs. Lindsay then modeled an appropriate example that showed students how to correctly document the number of stars on their individual student graph before assigning students to work independently.

Mrs. Lindsay followed this activity with a whole-group discussion. She asked students, "Why do you think we divide the government into three branches?" and, "Why is it organized in this way?" Mrs. Lindsay explained that the role of the president is to make laws. Mrs. Lindsay used a student-friendly example to help students better understand the role of the president and

the executive branch of government by stating, “For example, if I were president I would make students eat lasagna every day for lunch.” Then she asked the students, “Would this be fair if there were only one branch of government?” For the purpose of furthering the discussion, Mrs. Lindsay asked, “Why do we need three branches of government?” The lesson was concluded as Mrs. Lindsay explained, “We need the three branches of government in order to keep laws fair, with a system of checks and balances in place, and so wise decisions are agreed upon by multiple people, not just one person making the decisions for the whole nation.”

Within-Case Analysis

The table that follows will outline the emergent themes consistent with the data collection from this study. Data collected through various data sources in these four cases (teacher interviews, lesson observations, lesson plan artifacts, CoRe and PaP-eR pre-observational adapted interviews, and informal and unstructured discussion) and the themes that emerged from these data sources were confirmed using within-case analysis and will be discussed further in the sections that follow. The research question and sub-question that guide this study are indicated in the first column of Table 4, and they are mentioned as sub-headings to precede each case and the findings that resulted in the investigation of the individual cases. The remaining columns arranged in Table 4 display the emergent themes that correspond with the individual case and specific research question. The subsequent paragraphs discuss information and findings related to the research question and sub-question based on data collected.

Table 4

Within-Case Analysis: Themes for Mrs. Long, Ms. Shelly, Mr. Best, and Mrs. Lindsay

Research Question and Sub-Questions	Mrs. Long's Themes	Ms. Shelly's Themes	Mr. Best's Themes	Mrs. Lindsay's Themes
1. What instructional strategies do elementary teachers typically implement when teaching social studies education?	<p>Theme 1: Incorporating literacy with the use of history and social studies text</p> <p>Theme 2: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts</p> <p>Theme 3: Questioning and clarifying to support student comprehension</p>	<p>Theme 1: Incorporating literacy with the use of history and social studies text</p> <p>Theme 2: Applying comprehension questions to support student comprehension</p> <p>Theme 3: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts</p>	<p>Theme 1: Incorporating literacy with the use of history and social studies text</p> <p>Theme 2: Incorporating technology to assist in social studies instruction</p> <p>Theme 3: Facilitating Read aloud to develop reading comprehension</p> <p>Theme 4: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts</p>	<p>Theme 1: Incorporating literacy with the use of history and social studies text</p> <p>Theme 2: Incorporating technology to assist in social studies instruction</p> <p>Theme 3: Facilitating read aloud to develop student comprehension</p> <p>Theme 4: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts</p>
2. What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies to address social studies education?	<p>Theme 1: The Cultural climate of college and career readiness -CCRS standards</p> <p>Theme 2: Incorporating English language arts instruction as a means to address social studies goals</p> <p>Theme 3: Teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions</p>	<p>Theme 1: The Cultural climate of college and career Readiness -CCRS standards</p> <p>Theme 2: Developmental appropriateness for students</p> <p>Theme 3: Teaching English language arts as an approach to address social studies goals</p> <p>Theme 4: Teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions</p>	<p>Theme 1: The Cultural climate of college and career readiness-CCRS standards</p> <p>Theme 2: Teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions</p> <p>Theme 3: The impact of standardized testing & accountability</p> <p>Theme 4: Social studies, literacy & English language arts integration</p>	<p>Theme 1: Developmental appropriateness for students</p> <p>Theme 2: Teaching literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions</p> <p>Theme 3: District level requirements for student grades & grade reporting</p> <p>Theme 4: The impact of standardized testing & accountability</p>

Research Question 1: What instructional strategies do elementary teachers implement when teaching social studies education?

Case 1: Mrs. Long

One instructional strategy Mrs. Long reported using to teach social studies education involved incorporating literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content. For Mrs. Long, using social studies or history material to teach literacy instruction was two-fold. Teaching social studies while emphasizing literacy skills was a practical approach that allowed her to address social studies concepts as well as literacy skills with her students. Three major themes related to instructional strategies emerged from the data collection. Those three themes are (1) Incorporating literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content, (2) Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts, and (3) Questioning and clarifying to support student understanding.

Theme 1: Incorporating literacy with the use of history and social studies content.

According to Mrs. Long, one instructional approach she applied to teaching social studies concepts involved strategies that emphasized literacy skills. The literacy skills specifically noted by Mrs. Long were allowing students to make predictions, chunking the text, organizing reading content with the use of graphic organizers, and summarizing key ideas. Paragraphs below address the specific literacy skills that were emphasized during Mrs. Long's social studies instruction. A bold heading at the beginning of each section indicates the various literacy skills mentioned during social studies instruction.

Incorporating Pre-reading Tools and Support

Mrs. Long passed students individual copies of the anticipation guide during lesson two, and asked them to complete this task before she began teaching the new lesson's ideas. The anticipation guide allowed students to make predictions prior to the new lesson's ideas being taught. The anticipation guide was a brief exercise that required the students to circle whether they agreed or disagreed with the five statements that outlined historical information about the United States flag. Mrs. Long reminded her students that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions mentioned in the anticipation guide. She explained to students that they would return and respond to those same questions near the end of the lesson. After the lesson, students explored how their responses to the questions had changed or remained the same. Mrs. Long reported the anticipation guide served as a pre-reading guide for her students' with an activity that not only allowed them to activate their prior knowledge before learning new ideas, but also helped to develop students' personal interest in the content of a forthcoming lesson and questions they are interested in answering as they read. She stated, "not only does it show you what they already know, but it gives them a chance to see what they're going to learn."

Chunking the Text

During her first social studies lesson observation where she taught the lesson topic, "American Traditions," the researcher noted evidence of the importance that Mrs. Long placed on chunking the text. It was during this lesson about past and present changes in American baseball that the researcher observed Ms. Long incorporate a literacy strategy with her students she identified as "chunking." Mrs. Long explained students would read a story aloud about American baseball hero, Satchel Paige. Mrs. Long instructed students to read the content as a

whole group and directed them to stop at various points during the reading exercise in order to address the chunks of information read aloud. The chunking strategy, Mrs. Long explained, was a technique that engaged students in pausing at various points during the reading exercise in order to discuss their understanding of the material being read.

Normally we would chunk the information because it's like more than one page. We will chunk the information and then we would stop and say something about it. And if vocabulary is in there, we will pull out that vocabulary and we will talk about it and try to relate it to, you know, whatever is in the study, whatever the theme is, and tie it back to the standard.

According to Ms. Long, when her students' encountered words they did not recognize, this strategy easily allowed her to assist her students with determining the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Organizing Reading Content with the Use of Graphic Organizers

While observing lessons in Mrs. Long's class, students were engaged in compiling reading text and organizing that reading material into two individual graphic organizers. A timeline and T-chart were provided for each student and planned for student use in both lessons one and two. The researcher observed students using the timelines to record and organize factual information that documented the history of the United States flag. Mrs. Long also used both graphic organizers as guided practice that assisted her students with the "during portion" of social studies lessons being taught. Mrs. Long explained that some strategies were best served before the lesson began and others were appropriately suited as strategies applied during the lesson.

Well, some strategies work best if you're planning before, during, and after the lesson. There are certain strategies that work before the lesson begins. And then there are some that you need to use, like chunking the text and closed reading, for during. Or, graphic

organizers, you know, are better used during the lesson. And the summarizing always works well at the end.

The T-chart strategy also demonstrated in Mrs. Long's social studies unit was identified through instructional delivery and documented within the context of lesson one. Mrs. Long reported she was comfortable applying the use of graphic organizers with her students and explained these strategies were "appropriately matched to the subject content." Mrs. Long stated, "I use a lot of think aloud--you know I also use graphic organizers--I try to pull it in, like I use the T-chart a lot." The first lesson observation showed Mrs. Long instructing students to take out their T-charts, to write down two ways baseball was different today from the past, and record this information on their individual graphic organizer. Mrs. Long made the point within the interview that the suggestion to incorporate a T-chart strategy could be found in the back of the reading textbook. Mrs. Long was observed walking around the classroom and monitoring students' responses recorded on their T-charts.

Summarizing Key Ideas

Mrs. Long felt it was good practice for her second grade students to summarize subject content after the new concepts of the lesson had been taught. Mrs. Long believed it was appropriate for students to engage in culminating exercises like the summarizing activity used in her lesson because it helped students reflect on what they learned. Mrs. Long explained that summarizing was an important writing exercise appropriately planned as an activity for students during the "after" portion of the lesson, because, by the end of the lesson, the students should know more about the topic, therefore should be able to provide key details in their summary.

Well, I always use summarizing. It could be the only written activity we do, or it could be applied after the assessment where they complete a fill in the blank chart. This is my go to strategy for our "after" reading exercise. I mainly use it because it's on top of what

they've already learned, and they can use it to make connections or as an assessment for reading comprehension.

Summarizing the lesson's ideas was documented within Mrs. Long's social studies unit, lesson two, and was also observed in her instructional delivery. Her plans indicated that "students will write a brief summary to recount the historical changes made to the United States flag," although this writing strategy was not fully developed within the context of instructional practice and lesson delivery. While conducting a lesson observation, the researcher noted that Mrs. Long closed the lesson by simply summarizing the key points of the lesson herself, then, she guided students as they revisited additional key points from the story "Three of the Greats." It was from this point that Mrs. Long instructed students to write their ideas about the changes made to baseball over the years on their T-charts rather than apply them through the summary that was indicated in her lesson plan. The students were instructed to write their ideas that were previously indicated during the lesson and jotted on sticky notes, and, copy any necessary details posted on the class concept web, or, simply ask Mrs. Long for guidance in noting their ideas on the T-chart.

Theme 2: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts.

Mrs. Long was observed implementing discussion strategies with students to convey social studies concepts. Students were engaged in discussion strategies that assisted them in reporting changes that occurred to the American flag with small groups. The students were also presented with strategies that assisted them in sharing their ideas about what they knew about American baseball and the changes in baseball today and from the past. There are two subthemes in this section including (1) partner discussion strategies and (2) whole group discussion strategies

Partner Discussion

There were specific instructional strategies noted in the lesson plans and incorporated during Mrs. Long's social studies instruction that allowed her to facilitate both partner and whole group discussion among all her students. An observation of lesson one showed that students were instructed to participate in a "think-pair-share" exercise with their side-by-side partner "before" the new lesson ideas were taught. As part of Mrs. Long's strategy to activate the students' prior knowledge, she facilitated a partner discussion strategy that allowed her to give the students 60 seconds per student partner to respond to the lesson's essential question, "How is baseball today different from baseball in the past?"

An observation of lesson two showed that students were instructed to discuss changes made to the American flag with their partners and then asked to respond to a few questions in a brief anticipation guide exercise. Mrs. Long was observed facilitating a discussion with students as she instructed them to address the question "How did the American flag change over the years?" The observation data captured Mrs. Long facilitating a "think-pair-share" exercise with students where she asked them to share their ideas with their "side-by-side" partners and then asked them to circle whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements mentioned on their individual anticipation guides to activate their prior knowledge. Students were given 60 seconds to discuss with their side-by-side partners why they selected their answers, and Mrs. Long explained that they would return to the same questions later in the lesson to determine whether their perspectives had changed.

Whole Group Discussion

Both lesson plan and observation data indicated that Mrs. Long carried out her social studies instruction by engaging her students in whole group discussion. In lesson plan one Mrs. Long wrote “Students will review the essential vocabulary as a whole group” while “the teacher monitors and observes students discussion.” After students participated in the “think-pair-share” exercise, they were instructed to pause and convene as a whole group, where they were asked to share the ideas discussed with their “side-by-side” partners with the whole group. For the next few minutes, several students participated in a “share out” exercise to express their individual ideas about the changes in baseball today and baseball in the past.

Lesson plan one also indicated that “students will create a diagram of a baseball field using some of the essential vocabulary” and “the teacher will monitor and observe the students successfully construct a baseball field diagram with the use of some the essential vocabulary.” Within observations, Mrs. Long introduced the diagram exercise to students and explained that each student would be responsible for constructing a diagram of a baseball field and would have to successfully identify and label the parts of the baseball field using essential vocabulary words. A teacher model of the diagram was previously constructed and posted on the dry erase board to assist students with an appropriate layout of the baseball field. Mrs. Long facilitated a short whole group discussion with students about the various positions identified in a baseball field prior to students completing the diagram exercise.

Theme 3: Questioning and clarifying to support student understanding. Interview and observation data showed that Mrs. Long used various types of questions with students and clarified social studies concepts for student understanding while implementing instructional

practices to teach social studies education. The interview and observation data also indicated that Mrs. Long engaged her students in both guided and independent exploration of curricula content through comprehension exercises. Mrs. Long applied questions that spanned factual recall to critical lines of questioning by asking essential questions. Subthemes in this section are the (1) Implementing comprehension questions for student understanding and (2) Teacher's use of clarifying for student understanding.

Implementing Comprehension Questions for Student Understanding

During observation one, lesson one, Mrs. Long instructed students to read the lesson's essential question as a whole group. The lesson's essential question was written and posted on the dry erase board at the head of the classroom to aid in whole group instruction. At Mrs. Long's request, the student's read, "How is baseball different today from baseball in the past?" aloud. Students were previously arranged as groups of five and were assigned to work with their group members in their individual cooperative learning group. After students recited to the lesson's essential question they were asked to share their responses to the essential question with a partner as they participated in a "turn and talk" exercise. Mrs. Long was observed traveling to each cooperative learning group where she stopped, dropped, and listened to students dictate their responses. She then jotted each student's response to the essential question on an individual sticky note. Once this activity was completed, students were asked to convene as a whole group.

Observation data and lesson plan documentation indicated that Mrs. Long incorporated the use of comprehension questions so students could communicate their understanding of social studies content. Mrs. Long began with an introduction of the story "Red, White and Blue" found in the students' reading textbook. She explained to the students the story would be read aloud

and complemented with the aid of an audiotape version of “Red, White, and Blue.” The students understood they were expected to follow along with the tape as they tracked the words in the reading textbook. Students listened to the audio recording with the tape paused at various points during the story and various questions were posed for the purpose of student comprehension. Many of the questions pertained to factual recall; further, the researcher observed Mrs. Long guiding students’ discussion with their partners as they participated in the question and answer exercises. Some of the questions included “Who sewed the first American flag?” and “What changes occurred to the American flag over time?” Mrs. Long attempted to question the students during the reading exercise and after the audio recorder stopped, showed that some students were involved in addressing a few simple factual recall questions. Otherwise, the use of questioning during this reading exercise did not appear to be fully developed within the actual lesson.

Theme 4: Teacher’s use of clarifying for student understanding. During Mrs. Long’s social studies instruction, the researcher observed her clarifying key ideas with her students to help reinforce their understanding of the new concepts before the lesson began and then observed her implementing this same strategy throughout the remainder of the lesson. Observation data showed students being instructed to watch a short video about Independence Day and to listen for important details about the history of the American flag that would later be documented on their individual T-charts. Before introducing the Independence Day video, Mrs. Long provided background knowledge about the flag for students, and she clarified several key points about the American flag. Observation data captured Mrs. Long as she shared information about the American flag with students to build their knowledge “before” the lesson began. The observation data further showed that Mrs. Long reinforced social studies concepts related to the American

flag with students by showing video material that depicted content examining the history of the American flag. Although lesson observation data indicated that Mrs. Long clarified information for student understanding this strategy was not indicated in her lesson plans and was not reported in her interview with the researcher.

Summary of Within-Case Analysis for Mrs. Long

When Mrs. Long taught social studies education she used strategies that involved incorporating literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content. This emphasis on literacy strategies involved building prior knowledge and demonstrating pre-reading skills, chunking subject matter text, organizing informational data with the use of graphic organizers, and summarizing key ideas. Mrs. Long also reported implementing the use of discussion of discussion strategies with students to convey social studies concepts such as partner discussion and whole group discussion strategies. She also described incorporating questioning and clarifying to support student understanding. The specific strategies she identified were implementing comprehension questions for student understanding, and the teacher clarifying information for students' understanding. Mrs. Long's instructional choices to use particular research-based instructional strategies were influenced by three key factors or criteria. These factors accounted for the cultural context of College and Career Readiness (CCRS) standards, incorporating literacy and English language arts skills as a way to address social studies goals, and social studies topics and themes based in reading text or literacy materials driving instructional decisions.

Case 2: Ms. Shelly

Mrs. Shelly's reaction to the first research question is explained within this section. Three themes related to typical instructional strategies reportedly used by Mrs. Shelly to teach social studies concepts emerged from the data. Mrs. Shelly (1) taught social studies with a focus on literacy skills, (2) applied comprehension questions to support student understanding, and (3) implemented the use of discussion questions to convey social studies concepts. The various themes are all discussed in the next three sections indicated by theme titles in bold headings.

Theme 1: Incorporating literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content. Ms. Shelly was observed using a diverse set of instructional strategies with her students that emphasized literacy skills while teaching social studies. One such instructional strategy applied during her instruction was using a lesson anticipation guide with her students that allowed Mrs. Shelly to determine her students' prior knowledge. Using this anticipation guide with students also allowed them to make predictions. The proceeding paragraphs describe six instructional strategies emphasizing literacy skills that were reported by Ms. Shelly. These strategies include (1) students involved in making predictions, (2) facilitating read-aloud for student comprehension, (3) chunking educational video content to support student comprehension, (4) incorporating vocabulary instruction to enhance student comprehension of lesson ideas, (5) incorporating reflection strategies to aid student reflection, and (6) implementing the use of cooperative learning groups, and they are noted by bold heading at the beginning of the section.

Students Involved in Making Predictions

Observation and lesson plan data revealed that Ms. Shelly incorporated an anticipation guide before and after whole group instruction. She indicated that this strategy was implemented to allow students to make predictions, and used to monitor a change in their predictions after the new ideas were taught. Ms. Shelly noted in her lesson plan that the purpose of the anticipation guide was incorporated to discuss students' predictions before they read the text. During the first lesson observation students were asked to follow along as Ms. Shelly read statements about the first dirigible, the "Hindenburg." Ms. Shelly read each statement mentioned in the anticipation guide while students were observed circling a response of agree or disagree. Later in the lesson, Ms. Shelly asked students to return to their anticipation guide where they were instructed to answer the questions in the anticipation guide for a second time. The students reviewed their previous responses and determined whether their answers had changed or remained the same.

Facilitating Read-Aloud for Student Comprehension

In her first social studies lesson plan, Ms. Shelly indicated that students would read the text related to the Hindenburg aircraft to confirm or negate their initial responses to the questions asked in the student anticipation guide. Ms. Shelly revealed in her interview that she planned to read aloud and that a read aloud in her social studies instruction sometimes involved the students' participation or teacher as participant. She explained that it was the requirements of her local school district and the expectations of College and Career Ready (CCRS) Standards that guided her instructional decision to practice read aloud strategies with her students.

The students participate in a read aloud strategy, the turn and talk strategy, with their partners, and they practice summarizing. My local school district and the Common Core standards encourage teachers to incorporate questioning and recommends that teachers asks students higher order thinking questions. So questioning, implementing partner

discussion, applying graphic organizers, and incorporating read aloud are the various types of strategies I use to teach social studies.

In lesson one, the observation data showed that Ms. Shelly explained to her students that they would read a passage about the Hindenburg aircraft while trying to locate facts and opinions throughout the passage. The researcher observed a student volunteer reading the passage aloud while the remainder of the students tracked the text with their finger. After a few students volunteered to read the next few passages, the researcher observed Ms. Shelly reading the final passage aloud. The read aloud strategy was observed for a second time during lesson two when Ms. Shelly explained to students they would participate in reading text about the Harlem Renaissance while also engaging in an exercise called “chunking.” Ms. Shelly was observed facilitating a read aloud of the story “Jazz, Jazz, Jazz” by Sharon Franklin with students serving as student volunteers to read passages from the text. While participating in reading passages aloud, students were also instructed to jot down any new ideas or examples of things that made them say, “WOW” as they read. The read aloud strategy was documented within Ms. Shelly’s first and second lesson plans and was carried out through her instructional delivery during her social studies instruction.

Chunking Educational Video Content to Support Student Comprehension

To breakdown difficult text into smaller pieces “before” before engaging students in the text, Ms. Shelly’s lesson plans indicated she would facilitate a “chunking” strategy with her students. The chunking strategy allowed students to pause at various points while reading a passage and pausing while watching a video so they could jot down notes to reinforce the material being covered.

We watched a short video about the Titanic during one lesson and the children were asked to jot down notes or to chunk the content in the video. This allowed me to stop the video at certain points and required students to write down notes about the Titanic. So again, even though it's reading, I brought in social studies and I was able to incorporate strategic teaching strategies within the lesson as well. That's one way I combine the social studies with reading.

The chunking strategy was also observed "during" Ms. Shelly's first lesson observation where students were instructed to watch a short video about the Hindenburg aircraft and were asked to jot factual information about the aircraft under the words "chunk 1" and "chunk 2." Ms. Shelly was observed alternating between the students and herself as she guided students on what notes to specifically jot when it was her turn to chunk material. Students were allowed to copy Ms. Shelly's notes written on the dry erase board, and she walked around to assist any student that was having trouble copying the material from the board.

During lesson observation two that focused on the Harlem Renaissance, the researcher observed Ms. Shelly distributing a sticky note to every student to use to jot down their ideas that would breakdown difficult text into less difficult pieces. Students were instructed to write something that surprised or captured their interest after reading a passage about the Harlem Renaissance and were given one minute to complete this task. While waiting for students to complete the task of sharing their ideas on their sticky notes, Ms. Shelly wrote the phrases "Wow" and "New Learning" in bold letters on the dry erase board that would later facilitate a discussion with the whole group. The researcher observed Ms. Shelly modeling for students as she presented her idea of something that made her think "Wow" for the whole group and then recorded this idea on the dry erase board beneath the phrase "Wow." The students were instructed to share any new ideas discovered after reading about the Harlem Renaissance with the whole group. The researcher observed students reading their ideas they jotted on the sticky note while walking to the front of the class to add their ideas to the dry erase board underneath

the word “Wow” or “New Learning.” The strategy “chunking” to breakdown difficult text into more simple ideas was noted in Ms. Shelly’s lesson plans and verified within in her instructional delivery.

Incorporating Vocabulary Instruction to Enhance Student Comprehension of Lesson Ideas

Ms. Shelly explained that her students would frequently encounter unfamiliar vocabulary words found in the informational text that they read during social studies instruction. While observing Ms. Shelly’s first lesson about the Hindenburg, she paused during instruction to emphasize the word “dirigible.” She then instructed students to refer to the *PowerPoint* where the word dirigible was highlighted, read the word aloud, and, lastly, asked that they read the definition of the word aloud.

I have to take into consideration the level of vocabulary that is being used as well. Because even sometimes, you know, I find myself having to read a passage, and even I may not know the definition of a word. There are a lot of unfamiliar words, especially in that informational text, that students may not be as familiar with, so I find myself going in pulling out those unfamiliar words and providing kid-friendly definitions so the students are able to understand and can really comprehend what is in the passage or what the lesson is all about.

Although vocabulary instruction was observed in Ms. Shelly’s lesson observation and she reported that teaching unfamiliar vocabulary words was necessary to help her students successfully master the objectives prepared in her first lesson, there was no mention of teaching vocabulary words nor indication of how vocabulary would be taught documented in her lesson plans.

Incorporating Reflection Strategies to Aid Student Reflection

To reflect on the new ideas presented in lesson plan two, Ms. Shelly indicated that students would independently write down what they had learned, concepts they did not understand, and jot down any questions they had by recording their ideas on an “exit slip”. Later during the lesson, Ms. Shelly instructed the students to retrieve the exit slips from their desktops. Students were asked to record one thing they did not understand about the history of the Hindenburg, then were asked to record one remaining question they had about the Hindenburg. After that, the students were asked whether they enjoyed working in small groups and instructed to record what surprised them the most about the lesson related to the Hindenburg. Ms. Shelly documented that she would incorporate reflection strategies in her instruction and explained that her students would participate in reflective practices in her first lesson plan. Ms. Shelly was observed implementing these strategies in her instructional delivery; however, using reflective strategies to facilitate her instruction or involving her students in reflective practices was not reported during the interview with Ms. Shelly conducted by the researcher.

Implementing the Use of Cooperative Learning Groups

The procedures for lesson plan two stated, “Students will read a text, collaborate with their group members to find the answers to comprehension questions, and select an expert to present the information” using a jigsaw strategy. Ms. Shelly planned a cooperative learning approach with students to provide them with the opportunity to help each other build their comprehension about the Harlem Renaissance.

She indicated in her second lesson plan that students would engage with the text and would be instructed to divide the text into more manageable chunks within their cooperative

learning groups. After setting the foundation for the lesson about the Harlem Renaissance, Ms. Shelly instructed students to move to their pre-assigned cooperative learning groups. At each group location there was a blue folder that contained a jigsaw puzzle (worksheet aide), a set of comprehension questions, and copies of informational packets related to significant figures featured during the Harlem Renaissance.

The students were also provided with copies of the trade book *Jazz, Jazz, Jazz* by Sharon Franklin and instructed to refer to this resource to help answer the comprehension questions. Students were instructed to answer the questions that accompanied the jigsaw puzzle and were asked to record their answers to the questions on the jigsaw puzzle pieces. After 20 minutes of working together in their groups, the group's reporter was asked to present to the class their group's answers to the questions for the entire class.

Theme 2: Applying comprehension questions to support student understanding:

Incorporating comprehension questions with students. During an interview conducted with Ms. Shelly, she revealed that she incorporates comprehension questions with her students, but admitted she should probably ask the more critical, higher-order, questions with students.

That's probably the one strategy that I really just don't use a lot. I should be questioning the students just a tad bit more. And when I use questioning, I guess I probably don't question the students with higher-order thinking questions as much as I should.

While observing Ms. Shelly's first lesson, she highlighted the strategy "asking questions" on the *PowerPoint* slide. She explained to students that the purpose of asking questions and determining the answers to those questions was to help them recall important ideas. During a discussion about the Harlem Renaissance, Ms. Shelly instructed students to read aloud the question, "Why did the

Harlem Renaissance era become known as the Harlem Renaissance?” Students were instructed to write down their response to this question on their sticky note.

Theme 3: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts: Facilitating whole group discussion. In the first lesson observation, the researcher noted that Ms. Shelly facilitated a discussion with her students that involved them determining a fact from opinion based on the available text about the Hindenburg. After participating in a read aloud about the Hindenburg, students were instructed to determine the facts related to the Hindenburg aircraft that they recalled after listening to the text and were asked to record those facts on their “jot charts”. Ms. Shelly instructed students to pause at various points during the read-aloud and was seen engaging them in short discussions about this particular form of transportation. As the students recorded notes that indicated factual and opinion statements related to the Hindenburg aircraft on their individual T-charts, Ms. Shelly was observed writing her personal informational statements on the dry erase board. For the next 15 minutes, Ms. Shelly guided the students in further discussion that focused on recognizing the difference between fact and opinion. She continued to encourage all the students to share their ideas about what specific statements they determined as fact or opinion.

Ms. Shelly facilitated a whole group discussion during her second lesson observation that focused on the Harlem Renaissance. Lesson plan data indicated that students would participate in a jigsaw exercise that required them to read the assigned text, collaborate with their group members to find the answers to a set of comprehension questions, and make a group presentation to communicate the group’s responses to the questions assigned. The assigned group reporters from each group were observed reading a question aloud and then allowing the other group

members to respond. Each group member was given an opportunity to answer a specific question and was observed responding to at least one question as part of the jigsaw puzzle exercise.

Discussion strategies that involved students in small group discussion and whole group discussion were noted in both of Ms. Shelly's lesson observations. The lesson plans indicated that students would participate in discussion skills as well. However, Ms. Shelly did not specifically identify or report the discussion skill strategy in her interviews conducted by the researcher.

Summary of Within-Case Analysis for Ms. Shelly

Ms. Shelly reported using a variety of literacy-based instructional methods to carry out social studies instruction in her classroom. The first strategy discussed, which served as an instructional method for teaching social studies content, was incorporating literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content. These specific literacy-based strategies included making predictions, facilitating read aloud for student comprehension, chunking subject matter content from video clips, applying vocabulary instruction, and incorporating reflection strategies. Second, Ms. Shelly applied comprehension questions to support student understanding. The specific strategy noted was incorporating comprehension questions during whole group instruction. Third, Ms. Shelly described implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts. The specific strategies indicated were using discussion prompts to facilitate student discussion and implementing various graphic organizers (T-Chart and Jot Note Taking Aid) to record information realized during whole group discussion. Ms. Shelly's instructional choices in specific strategies were employed with consideration of certain measures. The criteria she indicated were the cultural context of College and Career

Readiness (CCRS) Standards and determining the developmental appropriateness for students. She also stated using Literacy Strategies as a Way to meet Social Studies goals, and covering Social Studies topics and themes based in Reading text or Literacy materials driving instructional decisions were additional factors.

Case 3: Mr. Best

Mr. Best's reaction to the first research question is explained within this section. Four themes related to typical instructional strategies that were reportedly used to teach social studies emerged from the data. Mr. Best (1) taught social studies with a focus on literacy skills, (2) incorporated technology to support the delivery of social studies content, (3) facilitated read aloud to aid student comprehension, and (4) implemented the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts. The themes are all discussed in the next four sections indicated by theme titles in bold headings.

Theme 1: Incorporating literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content. Mr. Best gave an account of various instructional strategies he used during his social studies instruction with his third grade students. Some of the strategies he reported emphasized literacy skills by implementing vocabulary instruction to reinforce student comprehension. Mr. Best also involved the students in note taking to build their knowledge. And, he used discussion questions with the students to help them set a purpose for reading. The specific literacy skills described by Mr. Best are indicated by bold headings at the beginnings of the sections.

Implementing Vocabulary Instruction to Reinforce Student Comprehension

Mr. Best explained that the teacher would quickly review vocabulary words with students that might create a barrier to learning “before” the new lesson ideas were taught in his lesson plan. The lesson objectives noted in the first lesson plan stated, “Students will be able to explain the role of agribusiness in 21st century Alabama” and “Students will be able to describe ways transportation has changed over the past century”. Mr. Best was observed introducing the word “agribusiness” to students during his lesson about changes in transportation over the past century, and he asked students, “Where does the word ‘agribusiness’ come from?” and “What does the word ‘agribusiness’ mean?” Mr. Best was observed facilitating vocabulary with students multiple times during the lesson, whenever they approached an unfamiliar vocabulary word. While students were chorally reading passages from the social studies textbook aloud, Mr. Best was observed instructing them to pause at various points while they were reading to identify and define unfamiliar words. For example, students approached the word “agriculture” and students were instructed to turn to the back of the textbook and asked to read the vocabulary word and definition aloud. During his post-interview, Mr. Best reported that he practiced vocabulary instruction as one way to deliver social studies content and ideas. Mr. Best facilitated vocabulary instruction with his students many times during his social studies instruction, and vocabulary instruction is noted in his social studies lesson plans. Mr. Best mentioned that he planned vocabulary instruction for the purpose of integrating skills into his social studies lesson. Mr. Best, in his remaining interviews conducted by the researcher, however, does not specifically discuss how he used vocabulary as a strategy, or what specific activities he would implement with students to teach vocabulary terms.

Applying Note Taking Skills to Build Student Knowledge

The lesson plan data indicated that the teacher would present social studies material and allow students to take notes as he would lead the students in discussion. Specifically, the lesson plans explained, “Students will take notes ‘during’ a presentation of material presented during the lesson.” The objective for lesson plan number two stated, “Students will be able to identify leaders in business, sports and the arts arena.”

The observational data showed Mr. Best facilitating a read aloud exercise with students using passages of text taken from the social studies textbook. Mr. Best asked students to participate in a choral reading of various passages about famous Alabama Sports figures. He also explained that students would jot notes to help them determine the answers to a set of prescribed comprehension questions as they listened to the story being read aloud.

Mr. Best further explained that he would not slow down the reading exercise to allow students to jot notes. He noted that each student would be responsible for jotting notes while the read aloud occurred. Students were seen alternating between various small groups as each group read various passages aloud for all to hear. Every student was on the same page as they read aloud exercise progressed, and Mr. Best was observed instructing students to pay attention to the subheadings at the top of the each page. He explained to the students that the information found immediately after the subheadings was important information that would provide the answers to the chapter questions.

Mr. Best indicated that students would take notes during a presentation related to famous sports figures in Alabama in his lesson plan. He was observed facilitating a discussion with students about the famous sports figures in Alabama, and he was heard asking students to take notes while they participated in a read aloud exercise. During a pre-interview conducted with Mr.

Best, he indicated that he would require students to take notes during a whole group discussion and also during a choral reading exercise to implement multiple instructional strategies in his lesson. Mr. Best does not specifically discuss student note taking or how students would use the note taking skill for multiple uses in any of his remaining interviews conducted by the researcher.

Setting a Purpose for Reading with the Use of Discussion Questions

Lesson plan data indicated that the Mr. Best would preview questions from page 367 before asking students to participate in a choral reading exercise. He explained that this requirement would allow students to set a purpose for reading. The objective for lesson plan one stated, “Students will be able to explain the role of agribusiness in 21st century Alabama” and, “Students will able to describe the ways transportation has changed over the past century.”

Observation data captured Mr. Best set up the question “How has transportation changed over the past century?” on the Smart Board for students to read aloud prior to his instruction of the new lesson ideas. Mr. Best selected student volunteers to provide their ideas, then he recorded student comments on the dry erase board. To set the purpose for reading, he explained that students would preview questions related to the reading text about famous sports figures in Alabama. Mr. Best was heard instructing students to turn the end of the reading chapter and observed asking them to locate the discussion questions for which they would determine the answers. Students were instructed to search for answers on pages 35-37 and to jot down the answers to the discussion questions on a piece of paper for the remainder of the class period while the student volunteers were reading the text aloud.

Theme 2: Incorporating technology resources to support the deliverance of social studies instruction.

Integrating Academic Clips and Internet Websites with the Use of the Smart Board.

Pre-interview data revealed that students, as part of the activities planned for lesson two, would participate in listening to a video clip to gain knowledge of several famous sports figures and their contributions to Alabama and the world. Additional interview data collected from the participant revealed he relied on educational websites to fill the gap of knowledge about certain topics when the textbook did not adequately cover a subject. “When I am covering a chapter with students and determine the textbook does not offer enough information to share with the students I will locate an educational website to fill the gaps in information.”

Observation data showed Mr. Best arranging a video clip from an educational website for students to watch on the classroom SmartBoard. The first famous sports figure featured in the video clip was baseball legend Willie Mays, and Mr. Best was observed pausing the video, explaining, and clarifying information about the famous baseball player. Hank Aaron, Vonetta Flowers, as well as seven other famous sports figures were presented to the students, and Mr. Best was seen further clarifying and lecturing the students about these famous sports individuals to help them understand why these famous figures were significant and what they contributed to society. Observational data captured Mr. Best engaging students with educational websites with the support of the Smart Board during his second lesson observation; however, there was no specific lesson plan data that documented Mr. Best’s plans to use an educational website or the Smart Board to deliver his social studies instruction with students.

Theme 3: Facilitating read aloud to aid student comprehension.

Students' Participate in Choral Reading

Lesson plan data verified that Mr. Best “would present material (technological advancements in transportation and agribusiness in 21st century Alabama) found on pages 357-365 using guided reading strategies. Choral reading, partner reading, and teacher modeling were highlighted in the lesson plan’s data. During the first lesson observation, Mr. Best was seen and heard instructing the whole group to participate in choral reading and asked that they read the first paragraph from the social studies text as a class. For the next few minutes, Mr. Best facilitated choral reading with the students and could be seen asking students to pause at various points while they read and responded to various discussion questions found at the end of the chapter.

Interview data indicated that Mr. Best considered social studies to be similar to a reading lesson, and he employed different reading strategies with his students to deliver social studies education.

A typical social studies lesson is sometimes based on the reading story for the day. I really consider myself to be a reading and social studies teacher because when I teach social studies I am teaching informational text. I believe reading teachers and social studies teachers are one in the same; therefore, I incorporate different reading strategies with students when I cover social studies material. For example, I like to use teacher modeling. So before I allow students to read, I will read the material first.

Mr. Best was seen modeling the reading for students. He read some of the passages found in the text while students alternated with him and read the other passages. Later during the lesson, Mr. Best organized the choral reading exercise differently. He asked that the boys alternate with the girls in their participation. Mr. Best was heard asking the boys who wore blue shirts to read, then he instructed the girls who wore white shirts to read the next couple of paragraphs.

Theme 4: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts.

Applying Whole Group Discussion

From the aforementioned video on famous Alabama sports figures, Mr. Best later facilitated a discussion with students that involved them responding to follow up questions about each sports figure and the accomplishments made by these individuals at the conclusion of each video presentation. Some of the questions that Mr. Best asked were “Who is this individual?” “Why was he or she famous?” “What specific contribution did he or she make locally and nationally?” and “Why was this accomplishment important and how did it impact society?”

Mr. Best did not specifically identify whole group discussion as an instructional strategy and did not describe how he would facilitate whole group discussion in his lesson plans. Mr. Best did not go into detail in his interviews about how he incorporated whole group discussion or what strategies he used to facilitate whole-group discussion. He was, however, seen incorporating mini discussions with his students during social studies lessons.

Summary of Within-Case Analysis for Mr. Best

For the purpose of teaching social studies education, Mr. Best explained he incorporated literacy instruction using history and social studies subject matter as reading content. The literacy strategies noted was incorporating vocabulary instruction, student note taking, setting a purpose for reading using discussion questions. Mr. Best also described incorporating technology for the purpose of teaching social studies concepts. This method indicated displaying subject matter video clips and websites with the use of the SmartBoard. Mr. Best asserted he facilitated read aloud with students to aid with subject matter comprehension. As an example, he demonstrated choral reading during his lesson. Mr. Best also described implementing particular discussion

strategies to convey social studies concepts through whole group discussion. There were four key factors that influenced Mr. Best's instructional planning and selection of strategies and teaching methods. The first criterion was the cultural context of College and Career Readiness (CCRS) Standards. Another criterion was using social studies topics and themes based in Reading text or Literacy materials driving instructional decisions. He also described the impact of standardized testing and accountability. Finally, Mr. Best identified Social Studies, Literacy, and English Language Arts integration.

Case 4: Mrs. Lindsay

Mrs. Lindsay's reaction to the first research question is explained within this section. There were specific instructional strategies reported by Mrs. Lindsay and noted by the researcher during interviews conducted with her. The researcher observed some of these reported strategies during Mrs. Lindsay's social studies lessons. Four themes related to typical instructional strategies that were utilized to teach social studies emerged from the data. Mrs. Lindsay (1) taught social studies with a focus on literacy skills, (2) incorporated technology to support the delivery of social studies content, (3) facilitated read aloud for student comprehension, and (4) implemented the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts. The themes are all discussed in the next four sections indicated by bold headings.

Theme 1: Teaching literacy instruction with the aid of history and social studies content.

Implementing Vocabulary Instruction to Support Student Comprehension

Mrs. Lindsay reported that she would review vocabulary related to the social studies units' previous lesson with her students to prepare them for today's lesson. Social studies lesson

plan data indicated that Mrs. Lindsay planned to implement a warm-up exercise with students that focused on key terms related to the previous social studies lesson in lesson one. As part of the materials planned for students' participation during lesson observation one, Mrs. Lindsay prepared student booklets that she had taken from an academic website for students to review key vocabulary words associated with the lesson. The lesson's focus was on creating laws and rules in a community in order to maintain peace. Lesson one observation data captured Mrs. Lindsay instructing students to locate their student booklets found on their desktops. She then instructed students to participate in a whole group read aloud. Mrs. Lindsay facilitated an exercise with students, which required them to read multiple vocabulary words and their definitions. Students were observed reading aloud the vocabulary word, then definition, from their student booklets.

Lesson plan two also documented vocabulary instruction and explained that students would participate in a warm up exercise involving a review of vocabulary related to the lesson's concepts, the three branches of government, and how a bill becomes a law with students. The materials for this lesson included the students' social studies textbooks, teacher-made packets, an academic website, and the classroom Smart Board.

Mrs. Lindsay was observed arranging the classroom Smart Board and displaying an academic website, Teachers Pay Teachers, for instructional purposes. Once the academic website was displayed on the classroom Smart Board for students to see, Mrs. Lindsay facilitated a short activity with them where students completed a vocabulary "word and definition" match.

Observational data showed that Mrs. Lindsay continued to review key vocabulary terms, and that she instructed students to locate their students' packets found on their desktop before covering the remaining vocabulary words. Students were instructed to repeat the vocabulary words and the

definitions of those vocabulary terms aloud as a whole group. Mrs. Lindsay's decision to review vocabulary terms with her students in both social studies lessons was documented within the lesson plans and vocabulary instruction was reflected in both lesson observations. However, Mrs. Lindsay did not mention her decision to plan and implement vocabulary instruction in the interview conducted by the researcher.

Requiring Student Projects

During an interview conducted with Mrs. Lindsay, she reported that projects were significant for her students who sometimes fell short of achieving an ideal overall subject grade in science and social studies. Assigning projects and offering opportunities for students to complete project-based tasks was one way Mrs. Lindsay's students could boost their overall grade point average for the nine weeks, so she normally assigned one science project and social studies project per nine weeks.

I usually assign projects in science and social studies and require students to complete one for each subject area per nine weeks. With this requirement, students can earn one extra grade, which usually helps them improve their final grade for the nine weeks grading period.

Mrs. Lindsay shared with the researcher that she had incorporated art and drama with her students in a lesson about celebrating Christmas around the world. The students were reading about the Mexican holiday, Navidad, and how Christmas was celebrated in Mexico. Mrs. Lindsay recounted how she had planned a poster project with her students where they were required to design their personal presentation of cultural symbols and asked to provide background information that highlighted the Mexican holiday Navidad. Students were also required to construct a maraca to symbolize one cultural aspect related to the Navidad holiday. According to Mrs. Lindsay students enjoyed constructing their personal maracas and there many

benefits for the students as they participated in making various student-made projects and presentations.

Interview data revealed that Mrs. Lindsay implemented some of the same projects from year to year. Mrs. Lindsay also reported she incorporated some of the same projects with various grade levels as well.

If I use a project with students one year and I really like it, I'll use it again the following year. Sometimes I will revise a project a bit from year-to-year depending on the type of project or whether the project was well-liked by students or not. For example, instead of assigning the same Black History project from last year, this year I developed and implemented a "character shadow box" with students to highlight various African American historical figures featured for Black History month. It's a different kind of project and the kids really like it. In the past, I have used this project with fifth graders, but this year I implemented the project with my third grade students and they did a good job.

Although Mrs. Lindsay noted the use of student projects in the interview conducted by the researcher, she did not indicate the implementation of student projects with her students in her social studies lesson plans. There was no indication that Mrs. Lindsay's students participated in projects during any of the lessons observed by the researcher.

Applying Role Playing with Students

Mrs. Lindsay reported in her interview that she incorporated drama and role-playing with her students to help them understand various cultures and the individuals who were part of these unique cultures. In the upcoming semester, Mrs. Lindsay had specifically planned to teach students about the country of Mexico the geographical aspects of Mexico, including Mexico's population, and various cultural characteristics related to Mexico's customs and significant holidays.

I am making plans so my students can participate in some role playing in honor of the holiday Cinco de Mayo. My students are actually going to make their own sombrero and

each third grade teacher and their students will participate in dressing up for the holiday as well. With the permission of our school principal and the enlisted help of our school cafeteria manager, I am hoping the students will get to experience eating a Mexican dish as we discuss the country of Mexico.

Although Mrs. Lindsay reported her plans to use drama and arts to help students gain a greater sense of Mexico and Mexican culture in her interview conducted by the researcher, she was not observed carrying out any of these instructional ideas in her lesson observations. None of these instructional ideas reported earlier or any additional instructional ideas related to drama or the arts were indicated in Mrs. Lindsay's lesson plans.

Incorporating Student Games

As a former gifted teacher, Mrs. Lindsay felt that it was important to offer her students creative, hands-on instructional approaches to learning, so she incorporated a game in her social studies instruction. Mrs. Lindsay planned and implemented a game with students where they were instructed to use star-shaped collection trays and informational cards that contained facts about the three branches of government. Lesson plan data explained that students would organize informational cards containing details about the three branches of government according to the appropriate branch of government that was represented by an individual star tray. Observation data captured students working in cooperative groups of five, reading the informational cards aloud, and determining the appropriate category or star tray to which each card belonged. As students worked in their groups, Mrs. Lindsay was seen walking around to monitor each group and she listened to students' ideas about how they negotiated the appropriate card with the correct tray. The students were given 10 minutes to work in their groups and complete this task. After time was called to complete this task, students were asked to resume as a whole group. Mrs. Lindsay explained that they would graph the responses to the informational cards based on

the three branches of government. Mrs. Lindsay used a large graph that was located on the dry erase board at the head of the classroom, facilitated a whole group discussion with students, and charted the students' responses to the informational cards on the large graph. Mrs. Lindsay indicated in her lesson plan that the sorting game would be used with students during the social studies lesson. Findings from lesson observations showed this strategy was carried out during Mrs. Lindsay's instruction. Mrs. Lindsay reported that she would use this game with students and discussed in an interview how she would implement the game during her social studies lesson.

Theme 2: Incorporating technology resources to support the deliverance of social studies instruction.

Implementing Academic Video Clips

Showing academic videos and educational YouTube clips were meaningful for students to see according to Mrs. Lindsay, and she would incorporate them into various lessons to provide a visual aide for students. During Mrs. Lindsay's interview with the researcher, she explained that showing a video provided her students with vivid details and offered them a more realistic example of an idea or concept that was unfamiliar to them. By showing videos and YouTube clips students were able to bridge their knowledge gaps and could gain more clarification of an unfamiliar word, idea, or concept. Mrs. Lindsay reported that sometimes using a video during a social studies lesson provided students with a stronger example than what the textbook offered. And, that the decision to use technology for instructional purposes was a student friendly one.

I use the Smart Board in my class to show the students various videos clips and instructional websites. The students recently watched a video about the Amish. When we talked about glass blowing in the book, I pulled up a video that introduced the students to glass blowing, because the students had no idea what glass blowing was until they say the

glass being blown through the use of an oven on the video. They were just amazed. There are so many vocabulary words embedded, just with the glass blowing topic, and then you can further tie that topic into science too.

Pairing the academic video with the appropriate lesson for instructional purposes was captured during Mrs. Lindsay's instructional delivery and was noted during her interviews conducted with the researcher. However, Mrs. Lindsay does not indicate that a video or clip will be paired with the lesson and does not discuss how this basic technological support will be implemented for instructional purposes in her lesson plans.

Instructional Delivery Involving the SmartBoard

Mrs. Lindsay explained that the SmartBoard was significant for her instructional delivery with students and that she was diligent about finding meaningful ways to incorporate the Smart Board for instructional purposes. According to her interview, Mrs. Lindsay was always searching for fresh ideas and researching dynamic activities from the Internet so all of her students could be challenged and given exposure to a rigorous curriculum as if they were in a gifted program.

I pour myself into planning sometimes. I search for hours looking for lesson ideas on the Internet. Despite the fact that I am teaching the same material from year to year, I am always looking for a new or creative way to deliver that same subject matter. I am always trying to find new and interesting strategies and techniques to teach social studies. I like using the SmartBoard in my lessons so am always trying to find lesson ideas that incorporate the Smart Board.

The first lesson focused on Native Americans and how they established rules and laws to maintain order and peace among themselves. In the first lesson observation, Mrs. Lindsay used the Smart Board to display a map of the United States so students could see various populated areas of New York where Native Americans once lived on the lakes that surrounded those areas. She explained to students that each lake was named for a historical Native American tribe or nation. Later in the lesson Mrs. Lindsay showed a picture of a special Native American belt, the

Hiawatha Wam Pum, and explained to students that this symbolic artifact represented an established agreement among the five original Native American nations to live in unity and harmony. Mrs. Lindsay does not directly identify the Smart Board as a strategy that will be used in her lesson plans; however, she does mention the implementation of the Smart Board in her interview with the researcher and implementation of the Smart Board to deliver instruction was noted during both of her lesson observations.

Theme 3: Facilitating read aloud for student comprehension.

Choral Reading for Student Comprehension

Mrs. Lindsay posed an open-ended question and generated a discussion among her students. Then she led a choral reading and required the students to participate in a partner read aloud for student understanding. The first lesson observation revealed that Mrs. Lindsay posed an open-ended question for students stating, “How would communities be safe if there were no rules or laws? Please explain what you believe and why your explanation makes sense to you.” After prompting students’ discussion by asking various opened-ended questions, Mrs. Lindsay selected student volunteers and allowed them time to offer their ideas while she facilitated a short discussion with the whole group over the next several minutes.

At the close of the whole group discussion the researcher observed Mrs. Lindsay instructing students to use the teacher-provided reading materials about the three branches of government. Several students were observed volunteering to read the content for the whole group, so the remaining students who served as listeners could track the reading material. Mrs. Lindsay was observed guiding the whole group, where she stated, “Ready? Set? Read?” Every student and his or her partner were given an opportunity to read various sections of the reading

material and were selected to lead the class in reading while the other students tracked and listened. Mrs. Lindsay would periodically stop while the students were reading and ask questions to confirm students' understanding. The observation data showed that Mrs. Lindsay also paused during the lesson to clarify any misconceptions about Native Americans. She clarified that Native Americans who live on reservations today determine their laws through a tribal council. Further, she explained the Native American council model, much like the tribal councils conducted today, provided inspiration for the new world councils.

Partner Read Aloud

Mrs. Lindsay asked the students to place their social studies textbooks on their desks and instructed them to turn to a specific page number in their text. Mrs. Lindsay said, "The title of this social studies chapter is "Rules and Laws in a Community." Mrs. Lindsay read the subtitle of the first paragraph aloud for students while they listened, then instructed the girls to read the next paragraph. She allowed the girls to read for the next few minutes, then instructed the boys to read the next subtitle and paragraph. For the next 20 minutes, the boys and girls alternated and read the remaining paragraphs until they were instructed by Mrs. Lindsay to stop reading. Mrs. Lindsay noted in her lesson plans that her students would participate in a read aloud exercise during whole group. The students read pages 290-294 and participated in a short discussion with the use of discussion questions. Mrs. Lindsay was captured leading a read aloud with students during her instructional delivery and lesson observation. Mrs. Lindsay does not specifically identify read aloud as an instructional strategy or discuss how she would implement the read aloud with students during her instructional delivery in her pre-interview. She does, however, indicate in her post-interview with the researcher that the students' social studies textbooks were

used for students to participate in read alouds, partner readings, and choral readings to understand the social studies content and lesson's ideas.

Theme 4: Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts.

Small Group Discussion

The objective for lesson two stated, "Students will describe the process by which a bill becomes a law" and "I can evaluate our national government and explain why it consists of three branches of government." Prior to teaching a lesson about the three branches of government, Mrs. Lindsay researched and prepared student reading material, informational packets about the three branches of government, for students to read and to refer to for their understanding about the lesson's concepts. Mrs. Lindsay incorporated an instructional video located on the academic website, Brain Pop, to help students understand their national government and its three branches. Once students were done reading the information found in their student packets and completed the video, Mrs. Lindsay was observed instructing students to engage in a small group discussion with their peers and asking students to participate in a hands-on game by categorizing various statements related to the three branches of government with star-shaped trays as sorting tools to prompt their group discussion on the governmental branches. For the next 15 minutes or so, students were observed listening to the group leader. The leader was heard reading various informational cards to the group, discussing the appropriate governmental branches that coincided with the informational cards, and sorting the appropriate card in the appropriate star tray.

Whole Group Discussion

The objective in lesson plan one noted, “Students will analyze how the Iroquois were able to bring peace to their five tribes through the use of laws.” The activities described in lesson plan one indicated that students would discuss the key content and major ideas expressed in the chapter summary found in textbook page 290 before the new lesson ideas were taught. The lesson plan data verified that students would read pages 285-290 during the lesson, then participate in a discussion using guided questions.

While the researcher observed lesson one, Mrs. Lindsay was seen explaining to students that they would learn why rules and laws were necessary, and how they were developed. Mrs. Lindsay prompted the students’ thinking when she posed several questions and asked that they respond to the questions through discussion. Mrs. Lindsay then asked the students to “turn and talk” to their partners to discuss their ideas about what society would be like without laws and rules. Mrs. Lindsay walked throughout the classroom and dropped and listened to students’ discussion with their partners for the next several minutes. Mrs. Lindsay engaged the students in further discussion by asking a series of questions like, “Would schools be safe if there were no rules or laws?”, “Would your community be safe?”, and “Would people go to jail for wrong doing if there were no rules or laws?”

During the conclusion of lesson observation two Mrs. Lindsay was seen instructing students to resume as a whole group once the students had completed the hands-on sorting activity involving the star trays. Mrs. Lindsay was then observed facilitating a concluding discussion with students. She prompted their input of ideas to check for student understanding and asked, “Why do you think the government is divided into three major branches?” Also, “Why is the government organized this way?” Students were observed volunteering their

response to these prompts for the next few minutes while Mrs. Lindsay clarified misconceptions and inaccuracies. Additional lines of questions were posed to the students including, “Why do we need three branches of government?” Mrs. Lindsay was heard explaining that we need three branches of government to maintain a checks and balances in our government.

Requiring students to participate in discussion in a whole group setting and requiring that students participate in discussion through small groups was planned and noted in Mrs. Lindsay’s lesson plans, and she was observed applying this method of instructional delivery in her lesson observations. Mrs. Lindsay, however, does not specifically indicate or discuss this choice of instructional strategy in her interviews conducted with the researcher.

Summary of Within-Case Analysis for Mrs. Lindsay

Mrs. Lindsay incorporated literacy instruction while using History and Social Studies subject matter as reading content. The reported literacy strategies comprised vocabulary instruction, student projects, role-playing, and student games. She also reported incorporating technology as support to teach social studies education. Mrs. Lindsay facilitated read aloud to assist students with comprehending subject matter. Mrs. Lindsay described engaging the students by using discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts. Mrs. Lindsay noted four criteria in her description of factors that influenced her instructional planning and decisions of teaching strategies and methods. Those criteria included determining developmental appropriateness for students and using social studies topics and themes that based in Reading text or Literacy materials driving instructional decisions. She also described the impact of standardized testing and accountability and district level requirements for student grades and grade reporting.

Research Question 1a: What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies?

Case 1: Mrs. Long

Criterion 1: The cultural context of College and Career Readiness-CCRS Standards. The reported purpose outlined in the CCRS document is to “to ensure that all students have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life upon graduation from high school, regardless of where they live” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, Frequently Asked Questions section, para. 5). The CCRS Standards establishes guidelines for English Language Arts (ELA) as well as for literacy in history and social studies, science, and technical subjects. According to Mrs. Long, she was mindful of the Literacy and English Language Arts standards suggested in the Alabama College and Career Ready (CCRS) Standards and she was thoughtful in her efforts to address CCRS Literacy and English Language Arts standards throughout the curriculum. When asked what criteria guided her instructional decisions for determining appropriate strategies and teaching methods for implementing social studies education, she explained,

The focus is writing now- I always try to tie in writing with the lesson somehow. No matter what I am teaching or what subject matter is covered- I try to incorporate writing by having students summarize what they have learned. So, students are usually writing or summarizing what they have learned at the end of the lesson.

The academic standards recommended in Alabama’s *2010 Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History and Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects* offered Mrs. Long a gauge for student development and represented specific Literacy and English Language Arts skills that students were expected to master, so she incorporated reading, writing, speaking and listening in her social studies instruction when it was possible.

Criterion 2: Incorporating literacy and English language arts skills as a way to address social studies goals. Mrs. Long reported that before she planned her lessons she would consider the specific skills students were expected to master suggested in the second grade reading basal. Mrs. Long explained that she often identified the specific skills that could be taught across the curriculum and planned her social studies instruction to include a certain skill. For example, in lesson one, the students were asked to make comparisons of changes in baseball both past and present by using a T-chart. During her interview, Mrs. Long explained that incorporating the T-chart strategy with her students was appropriately matched to teaching the social studies content. She understood her students were diverse learners and realized that they learned through various learning styles. She reported that the T-chart strategy was consistent with the suggestions offered by the reading basal and explained that incorporating student's use of the T-chart helped them to interpret the social studies concepts, comparisons in baseball, both past and present.

Students were expected to determine a fact from an opinion during Mrs. Long's second lesson. She pointed out that teaching the students this skill (fact verses opinion) was a necessary skill that assisted them in reading and understanding text. She explained that her students were better prepared to summarize the history of the American flag at the end of the lesson since they were taught how to determine a fact from an opinion. The lesson involved students using a timeline to document important events related to the American flag. Mrs. Long explained that using timelines with her students was similar to them completing a sequence chart or using a flow chart. According to Mrs. Long, she used the timeline strategy as method to allow her students the opportunity to record significant events and the dates that these important events took place by using a recording tool.

Criterion 3: Social studies topics and themes based in reading text or literacy materials driving instructional decisions. Mrs. Long considered the reading story or reading theme when she planned her social studies instruction. Mrs. Long explained that if the reading story were based on a social studies theme or idea, she would use the story as the foundation for her social studies lesson.

The reading themes are sometimes related to more than one subject. The topics in reading can cross multiple areas in some cases. For example, when we discuss a fireman in reading we will discuss community helpers in social studies as well. Oftentimes I can locate a story in the reading textbook, the newspaper article, or the weekly reader that touches on various subjects.

Mrs. Long's lesson plans noted that she would discuss the history of the American flag and changes in American baseball during her lessons. Mrs. Long explained that her selection of the reading story, "Three of the Greats" allowed her to address social studies topics and reading requirements, and to also touch on mathematics in one lesson. Observational data also indicated that Mrs. Long used the text "Three of the Greats" and its social studies topics as the basis for her social studies lesson. The content contained within the story allowed her to incorporate various strategies with students. The various strategies observed were using a discussion technique, think-pair-share, implementing a T-chart tool that allowed students to compare and contrast past and present changes in baseball, planning a hands-on exercise that allowed students to create a diagram of a baseball field using some of the essential vocabulary, and providing students with exit slips to support them as they reflected on what key ideas were learned after having read the story "The Three Greats."

Summary

Mrs. Long's instructional choices to use particular research-based instructional strategies were influenced by three key factors or criteria. These factors accounted for the cultural context of College and Career Readiness (CCRS) Standards, and incorporating Literacy and English Language Arts Skills as a Way to Address Social Studies Goals. Mrs. Long examined Social Studies topics and themes based in Reading text or Literacy materials driving instructional decisions as well.

Case 2: Ms. Shelly

Criterion 1: The cultural context of College and Career Readiness-CCRS Standards. Ms. Shelly reported the College and Career Readiness (CCRS) English Language Arts standards was the touchstone or go to document she relied on when she planned social studies instruction and determined appropriate teaching strategies and teaching methods. When asked "Where do you draw ideas from when deciding appropriate instructional strategies?" She responded, "I draw on the Common Core standards, you know, also known as the Alabama CCRS standards." "The standards have a strong impact on how I determine my instructional delivery."

The students participate in read aloud, they participate in turn and talk with their partners, and they practice summarizing. One thing my school district and Common Core recommends teachers to incorporate is asking students questions, specifically higher order, critical thinking questions. So, I use multiple strategies including summarizing, questioning, turn and talk, graphic organizers, and read- aloud with my students.

Teachers were expected to involve students in practicing specific skills and encouraged to engage them in TWIRL exercises (talking, writing, investigating, reading, and listening) on a daily basis. These specific skills are recommended by the school district and encouraged by the state as a result of the Alabama CCRS standards according to Ms. Shelly.

All of these ideas came from the Alabama CCRS Standards. We are expected to incorporate TWIRL practices every day with students. Twirl stands for talking, writing, investigating, reading, and listening. When our principal and district level staff visits our classrooms, they expect to see TWIRL exercises implemented throughout our instruction. Administrators expect to see teachers practice TWIRL every day in our classrooms. That suggestion came from the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards.

As a result of the suggestions outlined in the Alabama CCRS standards, Ms. Shelly used these recommendations to help determine how she would deliver her social studies instruction. The strategies she incorporated in her social studies instruction involved engaging students in skills that included listening to and watching video clips, reading text and determining facts from opinions, writing summaries to demonstrate understanding of social studies concepts, exploring subject matter content by participating in small group investigations, and organizing information with the use of graphic organizers.

Criterion 2: Determining developmental appropriateness for students. Ms. Shelly explained that she was thoughtful about whether the strategies she selected to teach social studies education were developmentally appropriate for her students. She initially thought about the social studies content and tried to determine what the most important ideas students should be aware of or whether there was more factual information that students should be knowledgeable about. Ms. Shelly then determined which strategy would be appropriate and most effective to deliver the specific content.

Well, basically I have to look at the materials first. I have to look at the content of the material, and I have to ask myself, well, you know, “what would be the best way for students to comprehend this particular information?” For example, if in social studies they’re given a passage with plenty of dates, it makes no sense for me to just ask the kids or tell the kids, okay, “What happened in 1909? Or, what happened in 1915?” I think students can remember certain information best when they use a graphic organizer such as a timeline. Therefore, I take a look first for myself at the content being taught and then I determine which strategy or method is most appropriate for the students to help them understand or comprehend the information.

Ms. Shelly reported students were better prepared to make sense of subject matter content when they organized the information for themselves by using various graphic organizers. Instead of having students memorize important events according to the dates that the events took place Ms. Shelly planned activities that allowed students to document important events on a timeline as well as record important ideas on various other graphic organizers.

Criterion 3: Incorporating literacy and English language arts skills as a way to address social studies goals. Like the CCRS standards, Ms. Shelly discussed staying abreast of the grade level skills suggested by the second grade reading basal and social studies text when planning her social studies instruction, and she was intentional in teaching skills across the curriculum.

The good thing about reading and social studies is that the same skills can be taught in both subjects. If I'm covering a skill in reading, then I can cover that same skill in social studies. For example, if I am using a social studies passage or discussing a historical event, the lesson concepts might allow me to teach sequencing at the same time.

Ms. Shelly explained that she usually incorporated graphic organizers such as a implementing a timeline with students to help them understand a historical event or historical account. She also reported that there were lessons that allowed her to plan educational video clips with students and called for them to jot notes based on the video content.

I often review the skills for the week found in the teacher's reading edition. I try to find those lesson skills that can be taught in both the reading and social studies lessons. I am reminded of those strategic teaching activities that can be applied with the reading story of the week. I research video clips and educational videos related to the story, then incorporate those sources in my social studies lesson.

There are certain skills, such as compare and contrast that apply to both reading and social studies subject matter Ms. Shelly explained. Applying the teaching of skills was one of several factors that influenced her selection of strategies to teach social studies education. The grade level skills, the subject matter content, the lesson essential questions were additional factors

considered when Ms. Shelly determined how to carry out social studies instruction and selected appropriate strategies. When asked whether the grade level skills were significant or relevant in planning how social studies instruction was delivered or determining which strategies were appropriate to teach social studies lessons, Ms. Shelly responded,

I do. I do. I think the grade level skills play an important role. I say this because it allows me to revisit the same skills more than once, and again, this goes back to reading . . . whether it's social studies or reading, I can apply some of the same skills. It's a great way to reinforce the skill for students.

According to Ms. Shelly, teaching grade level skills in both reading and social studies was a strategy she had planned and implemented with her pair teacher in previous school years. For instance, if the skill were sequencing, the pair teacher would emphasize this skill in her language arts and reading block. Ms. Shelly, on the other hand, would emphasize sequencing in her science and social studies block. "The social studies teacher and I would partner, and we would address grade level skills in our language arts and basic social classroom blocks. Whatever skill she was teaching in reading at the time, I would teach the same skill in social studies."

Criterion 4: Social studies topics and themes based in reading text and literacy materials driving instructional decisions. Ms. Shelly revealed the social studies concepts were sometimes embedded in the reading story or theme. "I try to cover whatever social studies concepts that are already integrated into the curriculum." For this reason, she applied the reading story as grounds to develop her social studies lesson plan and to select appropriate strategies and resources to carryout instruction.

The reading story sometimes centers on a social studies topic. The social studies ideas are sometimes embedded or integrated in the reading story or text. I can incorporate various strategies and resources, like showing a video that pertains to the particular social studies topic being discussed in the reading story. If not a video, then I will locate other resources and materials. I'll pull a video, newspaper clipping, or something like that. If the students

can gain a better understanding of the social studies concept or idea, and the resource is developmentally appropriate, I will incorporate the strategy in my lesson.

Although Ms. Shelly considered the reading theme or story to guide her instructional planning, she reported she did not intentionally apply an integrated approach to planning her lessons. “I think about integrating the social studies with reading, because social studies concepts are sometimes embedded within the reading curriculum. I try to prepare the social studies instruction with the reading story and reading skills in mind. However, I do not intentionally write my social studies lesson plans with integration in mind.”

Summary

Ms. Shelly explained that there were three criteria that impacted her instructional planning of social studies instruction and determining appropriate teaching strategies and methods. She mentioned the cultural context of College and Career Readiness (CCRS) standards and determining the developmental appropriateness for students in her description. She also stated using literacy strategies as a way to meet social studies goals, and focusing on social studies topics and themes based in Reading text or literacy materials driving her instructional decisions were additional factors.

Case 3: Mr. Best

Criterion 1: The cultural context of College and Career Readiness-CCRS Standards. Mr. Best noted that there were a number of considerations that impacted his selection of methods and strategies to teach social studies education in his fourth grade classroom. Mr. Best had considered the use of subject area textbooks, diminished instructional time; standardized

curriculum; the impacts of testing and accountability; and literacy, language arts, and social studies integration.

Mr. Best reported that he was aware of the Alabama College and Career Ready (CCRS) standards, and he understood the local school district and his school administrators expected him to implement these standards in his classroom curriculum. To his knowledge, the CCRS document did not indicate any specific standards for social studies education.

There are many changes that resulted from the implementation of the Common Core Standards. Most of the professional development that teachers receive is related to Common Core. I cannot remember the last time I received any professional development for social studies education. In the past, an educational specialist from the central office would come to our school to share strategies with us to teach the social studies curriculum. The educational specialist would also give us suggestions on how to incorporate social studies within the reading along with other meaningful resources. From what I remember, it has been a couple of years ago since the educational specialist visited our school and met with the faculty. In recent times I haven't received any professional development in social studies education.

Although, Mr. Best did not receive a great deal of professional development in social studies from the local school district level, he was given a plethora of suggestions and strategies to integrate reading and social studies from the reading coach in his school. "My school's reading coach is no longer a coach anymore and has recently returned to her own classroom. She is a wonderful teacher, and she gives me great instructional suggestions to teach reading and social studies."

Criterion 2: Social studies topics and themes based in reading text and literacy materials driving instructional decisions. When asked whether he was more student-centered or teacher-centered in his approach to social studies instruction, Mr. Best explained that he was more teacher centered.

I am probably more teacher-centered in my approach to teaching social studies education. I approach math, however, with a more student-centered instructional approach. Although I should probably be more student-centered in my approach to both math and social studies instruction, it is usually the opposite in how I tackle social studies content.

The social studies textbook is what Mr. Best relied on most to keep him on track while implementing the reading and social studies pacing guides required by his local school district and school administrators.

When I stick with the social studies textbook, I am confident that I am covering the standards and clear that the pacing guide is being followed. Incorporating the textbook with students helps to ensure that I have covered all the required standards that students should know and will be tested on at the end of the year.

Mr. Best reported the social studies textbook was helpful for determining how he would deliver social studies content with students. He explained that some of the chapters in the text were sufficient in terms of the content that was offered about specific topics. “Some of the chapters in the social studies textbook have more depth than others. So I review the entire social studies chapter prior to teaching the lesson to determine whether the chapter provides enough information on the specific topic being studied.” Mr. Best typically assessed the layout of the chapter to determine the amount of material that needed to be covered and to establish where the natural breaks existed in the social studies text.

I go through the chapter and estimate how long it will take me to cover the chapter content. I determine where the natural breaks are in the day. For example, sometimes the chapter is organized into as many as five or more sections. I consider the number of sections and the number of pages within each section. This helps me determine whether I would teach the lesson in one day or arrange the lesson over several days. For instance, if I expected students to understand the specific sacrifices people made during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, I would spend more time teaching these concepts by organizing the lesson over week or more.

According to Mr. Best, this pre-assessment of the social studies chapter was important to conduct prior to the lesson being taught. This step was necessary in order to determine which

instructional strategies were appropriate to incorporate with students and to discern whether additional resources are needed to support the lesson delivery.

I use the layout of the chapter and the content of the chapter to help me determine which strategies are more appropriate and which resources I will use to help deliver the content. For example, if I am teaching the Montgomery Bus Boycott during the Civil Rights Movement, then I will spend more time teaching these concepts than say, the Paleo period in Alabama. There are certain lessons where the goal is more factual recall, and students are expected to memorize basic facts. On the other hand, the students are also required to examine topics that require them to take a closer look and gain a deeper understanding, such as the Civil Rights Movement.

He reported,

If the social studies topic being covered is difficult to understand, I usually locate other resources to help simplify the information for students so that it is easier to comprehend. It is important to select educational videos and any appropriate resource to assist the students with making sense of difficult subject matter.

Criterion 3: The impact of standardized testing and accountability. According to Mr. Best, the time allotted for social studies instruction has diminished over the years, and he admitted that he spent more time planning math instruction than he did planning social studies. “If I were to measure how much time I spent planning each subject area, I can honestly say I spend more time planning math than I do planning social studies.” Despite the reduction in time allocated to teach social studies, Mr. Best ascertained that he aimed to plan effective social studies instruction every year. He admitted his social studies instruction could be more interesting for students; however, he did attempt to do things better each year. As a former reading coach, Mr. Best viewed the instruction of reading and social studies as one in the same, and he incorporated various reading strategies with students by joining reading and social studies topics. He says,

I see social studies as a reading lesson since both subjects are embedded in one another. That’s my perspective; I guess that’s the reading coach in me. When I follow the reading and social studies textbook, I am confident the students will master all the standards that

are expected of them by the end of the year. I probably could have made my social studies more interesting. And every year I try to do better, I really do. The goal was to try to teach social studies and science every day in his classroom.

However, reading and mathematics usually took precedence over the other grade level subject areas, according to Mr. Best.

The time allocated to teach social studies instruction has diminished. My classroom schedule indicates that I teach social studies for 45 minutes a day, science for 45 minutes a day, and math for 90 minutes. The reality is, I teach social studies for 30 minutes a day instead of 45 minutes. I try to do at least 30 minutes a day.

Standardized Curriculum

Mr. Best admitted his teaching approach was more teacher centered and that a standardized curriculum offered him the structure he found comfortable. He stated,

I am more teacher-centered with social studies instruction. If I stick with the social studies textbook then I will mostly likely cover those standards required by the school district. The standardized curriculum along with using the grade level textbook helps to ensure that I am following the pacing guide. By the time I reach the end of the year I am sure that everything that I am required to teach students will be covered.

Mr. Best confirmed that he was required to keep a copy of the Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) standards on hand by his local school district. He reminded the researcher that his lesson plans included the ACOS standards for each lesson and that he relied on the standards document to guide him in appropriate subject matter for teaching social studies education. The ACOS standards provided the specific knowledge and skills that students should know and be able to do.

My principal requires me to keep a copy of the Alabama Course of Standards close by at all times. The course of study outlines what students are expected to know, and it describes everything teachers are expected to teach. The standards are specific and offer the gist of what teachers are required to teach. So yes, we do have to keep a copy of the course of study standards. I can refer to an electronic copy or either a hard copy when I complete my lesson plans.

Mr. Best preferred the structure that the ACOS document provided. The standards kept him on track with what he should be teaching and were key to how he planned and delivered his social studies instruction. He explained that in the past he had worked with a pre-service teacher to help her fulfill her internship under his guidance. The pre-service teacher had planned specific hands-on activities with the elementary students to teach various social studies topics. However, Mr. Best explained he had advised the pre-service teacher that it might not be wise to involve the students in reenactments related to various historical topics because the school administrators might be resistant to what he described as “fluffy” activities.

I have mentored student teachers for the last two years, and they were expected to teach social studies. The two young ladies I worked with planned dynamic, hands-on activities for my students to participate. One of the interns planned reenactments with students to participate in historical events of the past. The two interns developed great activities for my elementary students; however, I found myself questioning whether the lesson’s ideas were consistent with the ACOS standards or whether they were just fun activities favored by the student teachers. Ultimately, I did not approve the activities and decided not to let the interns implement them with my students. The students were not happy and became upset with me for not allowing them to carry out their lessons as planned. I felt the lessons were nicely planned, but I debated whether the activities were meaningful for students or simply fluffy activities that they personally found fun and exciting. I was also worried that the school’s administrators would not understand it all and would assume the interns were wasting time instead of being effective teachers.

Standardized Testing and Accountability

Mr. Best spoke of subject area standards that students were expected to accomplish and standardized tests they were required to take by the end of the school term. When asked whether or not instructional outcomes and standardized testing for students had an impact on how he determined instructional strategies and methods for implementing social studies education, he replied,

Yes, in a sense the standardized testing and accountability requirements have an impact on how I plan my social studies instruction. In a general sense, I guess the standards impact on how I think about the social studies material and my social studies instruction.

I am always mindful that the students must achieve certain standards by the end of the year. However, in a more practical sense I consider the standardized testing with math more than social studies. For instance, I will preview the textbook chapter prior to teaching the students the information and I will determine what possible questions will be asked on the end of the year assessments, and I try to go over that material with students so they are prepared for the social studies test at the end of the year. I am very thoughtful and try to intentionally prepare the students for questions they might be asked on the standardized test at the end of the year.

Mr. Best explained that his fourth grade students were not tested on social studies content, but rather were required to test on mathematics and reading subject matter. According to Mr. Best, his students benefitted from spending more time practicing skills and knowledge they were actually tested on at the end of the year. He reported that, at times, he felt pressured to teach to test or cover the content that students were actually tested on. Mr. Best reported that at times he felt his teaching job rested on his students' performance on the end of the year achievement tests. For this reason, he found it to be more realistic to put more energy and time into planning instruction for mathematics instead of social studies.

The reality is that at the end of the year, students are tested in math, reading and language arts. The state requires students to be assessed on math rather than social studies. I feel like my credibility as a teacher rests on standardized testing and my students' performance on these standardized tests. Therefore, I feel like my job is based on whether or not my students perform well on these state-mandated tests. Since I know my students are going to be tested in math, I emphasize math and spend the majority of my time planning effective math instruction. This is probably not the best way to prioritize; however, it's the reality in my classroom and school.

Criterion 4: Social studies, literacy, and language arts integration. Mr. Best reported that he combined reading text with social studies education and that identifying social studies concepts through a reading story or text was typically a factor when he planned social studies instruction. The social studies textbook served as the foundation for many social studies lessons and was the basis for which Mr. Best determined appropriate activities and the selection of materials for working with students to deliver social studies education.

I see reading and social studies as one in the same since both subjects involve reading text. I was a reading coach for several years. Reading the text and literacy strategies are embedded in every subject area, so whenever I teach social studies, I plan reading strategies that involve students in reading the text. I do not necessarily look for opportunities to integrate; however, if integration is a natural fit, I will incorporate this strategy in my social studies instruction.

When asked what a typical social studies lesson looked like in practice, Mr. Best explained his social studies instruction would be centered on reading the social studies text or based on the day's reading story. Depending on the lesson focus and themes highlighted in the reading story, Mr. Best explained he would plan instructional strategies with students that involved them in reading and exploring social studies content contained within the text.

A typical social studies lesson in my class would be based on the reading story for the day and might involve covering text from the social studies textbook. I think every teacher should be seen as a reading and social studies teacher because both of these subjects involve exposing students to informational text. I view both the reading and social studies teacher as one in the same. There are various reading strategies that I would use during social studies instruction, such as implementing teacher modeling for students prior to them reading the text. Students have more ownership of the social studies content when I incorporate different instructional strategies. So, I implement partner reading, students' use of graphic organizers, and sometimes, I will show a video that complements the lesson ideas.

Mr. Best viewed social studies as mostly a reading lesson, and he explained that he considered himself to be a passionate reading coach. The fact that he had once served as a reading coach is what caused him to truly value reading instruction, and he reported this experience was the reason he viewed social studies and reading instruction as one in the same. He stated for example,

This week I will cover a social studies chapter about the three branches of government including the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislative branches. Although this material is not the most exciting content to cover, I will incorporate some reading instructional strategies. The students will read the content and they'll compile some information on graphic organizers to understand how the three branches are related to each other.

Incorporating reading instruction throughout the curriculum was a “win-win situation” according to Mr. Best, and in his opinion, students can never receive too much practice in reading or application of their reading skills.

Reading skills are the most fundamental skills that students should have, so I don’t think they could ever get too much practice in reading instruction. Even in math, students are reading word problems, so reading skills are expected throughout the curriculum. I understand that students will be tested on material that requires them to read informational text at the end of the year. This is true not only in social studies, but other subjects as well, so it doesn’t hurt to expose them to reading instruction throughout the curriculum. It’s a win-win situation. Sometimes I wonder why not just use the science and social studies textbook to teach reading rather than having an additional reading textbook.

He explained that integrating social studies with the reading curriculum, in his opinion, would be a more viable strategy to ensure that social studies concepts are covered every day. Despite his opinion that social studies and reading should be integrated, Mr. Best did not suspect this approach to instruction would be truly implemented in the near future.

I try to teach social studies every day, but don’t always get around to teaching it. It would be more helpful if social studies instruction were integrated with reading. I have no doubt that it would save time, and social studies would be covered everyday if social studies were combined or integrated with both reading and language arts standards. However, I don’t see this instructional approach being implemented by most teachers in the near future. It would require every teacher to buy in, and I doubt every teacher would buy in, so I don’t think implementing this approach would be widespread.

There are also challenges to applying integration throughout the curriculum Mr. Best explained. He thought the required pacing guides set by the local school district would need to be re-organized, if teachers were required to use integration to carry out the entire curriculum. For this reason, he argued every teacher might not accept the integration approach.

The pacing guides for social studies and reading would have to be changed in order for teachers to apply integration. The social studies and reading subject areas need to be considered, so it would require two different teachers to be on the same page. It is not likely these two teachers would always agree.

Mr. Best acknowledged that there were concerns about integration; however, he argued that there were benefits to using this teaching approach. Teachers have more instructional time allocated to teach reading, so if social studies was integrated, there would be more time to focus on social studies topics and the subject area would be covered more frequently. The reading block is normally two hours. If teachers could spend that at least one hour on social studies then it would be more beneficial for the students. According to Mr. Best, there is not much differentiated instruction applied in social studies instruction, and students do not work well in small groups. It was his opinion that students would have the opportunity to work in small groups and would benefit from differentiated instruction if teachers applied more integration to their instruction.

Summary

Mr. Best examined four key factors that impacted his instructional planning and selection of instructional strategies and methods for teaching social studies education. The first criterion he asserted was the cultural context of College and Career Readiness (CCRS) Standards. Another criterion he contended was determining social studies topics and themes based in Reading text or Literacy materials driving instructional decisions. Mr. Best also described the impact of standardized testing and accountability on social studies planning and instruction. Finally, Mr. Best identified Social Studies, Literacy, and English Language Arts integration as criterion four.

Case 4: Mrs. Lindsay

Mrs. Lindsay indicated various factors impacted her social studies planning and instructional decisions to employ instructional strategies to carry out social studies instruction

with her students. Those factors involved developmental appropriateness for students; reading skills and themes; requirements for grades and grade reporting; and the Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) Standards.

Criterion 1: Determining developmental appropriateness for students. The developmental appropriateness, challenge level, and creative factor were important aspects and specific criteria that Mrs. Lindsay considered when she determined how she would deliver social studies instruction with her students.

I think my experiences as a Quest teacher in the gifted education program had an impact on my instruction with students in a traditional classroom. I incorporated a great deal of art with my gifted education students, so I decided to continue this strategy with my traditional students in the regular classroom as well. My thought was why limit gifted instructional strategies to only gifted students? Why not go ahead and be creative with whatever type of student I happen to work with? And that's what I do; I try to go above and beyond with all my students, especially my basic social instruction. With the basic social subjects, I am not limited to a framework like the one required in reading and math. I am required to follow the framework for both reading and math; however, I have more flexibility with social studies and science. This allows me to be able to incorporate additional activities that are more exciting for my students.

Mrs. Lindsay's previous experience as a gifted teacher inspired her to select more creative instructional strategies in her social studies and science lessons, and she admitted that sometimes she spent hours conducting research online to look for creative lesson ideas and subject activities for students to participate.

I pour myself into planning sometimes. I search for hours looking for lesson ideas on the Internet. Despite the fact that I am teaching the same material from year to year, I am always looking for a new or creative way to deliver that same subject matter. I am always trying to find new strategies. I specifically try to find lesson ideas that incorporate the Smart Board.

Mrs. Lindsay considered what would be interesting for her students and she tried to determine their individual learning styles prior to instruction.

I am always thinking ahead for my students' sake. I try to determine what strategy or method would be more effective for my students to help them better understand the material prior to me teaching the lesson. It always comes down to what would be the best way to deliver the content for students to comprehend it.

She reported that she had intentionally searched for strategies that allowed her students to be more comfortable learning so they could experience the content through various senses.

I assess my students' individual learning styles in order to determine whether they are more comfortable seeing, touching, feeling, or tasting. I spend many hours trying to secure materials and resources to help my students experience the content through multiple strategies and various techniques for learning.

She explained, "I get excited about finding ways to teach students. My husband laughs at me sometimes, because I get so excited about researching different ways to change my instruction and am always eager to add interest to my lessons for my students' purpose."

Criterion 2: Social studies topics and themes based in reading text and literacy materials driving instructional decisions. Reading instruction and reading skills were typically a consideration in determining how Mrs. Lindsay delivered social studies instruction, and how she shared social studies concepts and ideas with her students. Having previously taught reading instruction, Mrs. Lindsay reported she was comfortable combining reading and social studies instruction and explained that specific social studies topics could be addressed through reading instruction and vice versa.

In the past I was responsible for teaching reading, so I am really comfortable blending the social studies with reading. For example, when the students were learning about the Statue of Liberty in social studies, they were also reading a story about the Statue of Liberty in reading; as a result, we spent more time discussing this topic. This additional exposure to the same topic allowed students to increase their knowledge, and they were able to better understand the history of the Statue of Liberty. My pair teacher and I would exchange ideas and plan instruction together. I would identify social studies topics that were also covered in the reading textbook, so my pair teacher and I could both address the topic within our individual subject areas.

Mrs. Lindsay explained that the reading themes and reading stories mentioned in the reading text were sometimes her inspiration in planning hands-on social studies activities including role playing, art, music, drama, and dance with her students.

Our theme one year focused on the Olympics. So, I actually planned and taught a unit about the Olympics. I also planned a school-wide competition for all the students to participate in Olympic Games. The students were involved in decorating the school with Olympic symbols and decorations in preparation for the games. As part of the unit about the Olympic Games, we discussed the different countries involved in the sports competition.

She explained she had taught fifth grade in the past, and the students learned about the history Boston Tea Party and social studies concepts surrounding taxation without representation. Mrs. Lindsay had thoughtfully planned and implemented role-playing with her students that included them working with props to add more realism to the social studies concepts.

I have previously taught fifth grade, so I planned a unit about the Boston Tea Party and the concepts of taxation without representation. I incorporated role playing and drama with my students and even participated alongside them as the British Queen. The students used candy to represent the tea. I participated in robbing them or stealing their candy to demonstrate a few of significant issues that surrounded the Boston Tea Party conflict between the Patriots and Loyalists. The students also participated in learning songs that furthered their understanding about the Boston Tea Party concepts. I believe the more students are active and allowed to experience the material, the better they learn and the longer they retain that information.

Criterion 3: District-level requirements for student grades and grade reporting. District level requirements to implement a specified number of daily grades and test grades with her students for grade reporting purposes was a constant consideration for Mrs. Lindsay. She was always reminded of the curriculum pacing guides and district's expectation to meet the criteria for the nine week reporting period when she planned her social studies instruction.

We are required to have a specified number of grades by the end of the nine week grade reporting period. We are required to follow the curriculum pacing guides implemented by the district; therefore, we are expected to be teaching certain content and standards for math and reading in a specific timeframe. This requirements and expectations have an

impact on what I teach and how I might cover that material for student understanding. There are times when the pacing guides do not align with all the material I am expected to cover and various curriculum requirements. Sometime I might offer students to take an extra test or quiz or daily grade to address this conflict. I will usually throw in a last minute grade to cover the necessary requirements for the reporting period based on district expectations.

Mrs. Lindsay explained that she normally required a project with students for science and social studies in a nine week period.

I usually require my students to complete at least one project for both science and social studies. I expect students to complete two projects during the nine week reporting period for the purpose of helping them improve their final average for the reporting period. For the students who may not have performed well on an assignment or earned a failing grade on various assignments, this project requirement might improve their overall average for the nine week reporting period.

Criterion 4: The impact of standardized testing and accountability. Mrs. Lindsay explained the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) did not address science and social studies subject areas at this point; therefore, she was required to incorporate the Alabama Course of Study (ACOS) standards instead. She explained that both the mathematics and reading subject areas were addressed in the CCRS documents and that she was expected to adhere to the curriculum pacing guides for mathematics and reading with her students.

There is a pacing guide, and also we have the Alabama Course of Study. The pacing guides determine what teachers should be teaching and when they are expected to teach specific content. The College and Career Ready document addresses standards for mathematics and English language arts this year; however, science and social studies standards are expressed as integration English language arts. So my school district expects me to incorporate the social studies standards identified in the ACOS document, but to also use the nonfiction text found in social studies for the purpose of teaching literacy and writing skills. When I write my lesson plans, I am guided by the ACOS standards, and the required curriculum frameworks that determine what I should be teaching and the timeframe in which the information should be taught.

Mrs. Lindsay noted the ACOS standards were documented in her lesson plans, and that she used these standards to guide her in teaching appropriate objectives in her lessons and for

student mastery. She explained the ACOS standards serve as a guide in her syllabus development; therefore, they are documented and communicated to parents in the syllabus document.

The grade level teachers and I the plan our social studies lessons at the beginning of the year, and we develop a course syllabus for each subject area in advance. We are expected to document the ACOS standards in our lesson plans, and we are required to write them on the classroom dry erase board for students, parents, and administrators to read. I typically edit the standards to make them kid friendly so my students can easily interpret them.

Summary

Four criteria were explored by Mrs. Lindsay and noted in her description of factors that influenced her instructional planning and teaching strategies selected to teach social studies. Those criteria included determining developmental appropriateness for students and using social studies topics and themes that based in Reading text or Literacy materials driving instructional decisions. She also described the impact of standardized testing and accountability and district level requirements for student grades and grade reporting.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data collected from each of the four teachers in regard to their individual cases studied. Teacher backgrounds and descriptions of their respective classroom dynamics were given. Each of the teacher's two lesson plans and their lesson observations were described. Finally, results of the within-case analysis were organized by teacher, with themes noted and related to the overarching research question and sub-question.

Results indicated Mrs. Long incorporated literacy with the use of history and social studies text, implemented the use of discussion strategies to relay social studies concepts, and practiced questioning and clarifying to support student comprehension in social studies instruction. She identified the cultural climate of college and career readiness (CCRS) standards, incorporating English language arts instruction as a means to address social studies goals, and teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions as three criteria determining her use of instructional methods in social studies.

Results of the within-case analysis indicated Ms. Shelly incorporated literacy with the use of history and social studies text, applied discussion questions to develop student comprehension, and implemented the use of discussion strategies to relay social studies concepts to address social studies instruction. She confirmed the cultural climate of college and career readiness (CCRS) standards, developmental appropriateness for students, and teaching English language arts to address social studies goals, and teaching reading with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions were factors that impacted her use of teaching methods in social studies.

Results from Mr. Best's within-case analysis indicated he incorporated literacy with the use of history and social studies text, incorporated technology materials to enhance social studies instruction, facilitated read aloud to develop reading comprehension, and implemented discussion questions to relay social studies concepts as methods for teaching social studies. He reported the cultural climate of college and career readiness CCRS standards, teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions, the impact of testing and accountability, and social studies and literacy integration were criteria used to determine his use of instructional strategies to address social studies education.

Results from Mrs. Lindsay's within-case analysis indicated she incorporated literacy with the use of history and social studies text, incorporated technology to enhance social studies instruction, facilitated read aloud to develop student comprehension, and implemented discussion strategies to relay social studies concepts. She identified developmental appropriateness for students, teaching literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions, district level requirements for student grade reporting, and the impact of testing and accountability as factors that impacted his use of particular instructional methods.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter V discusses the findings in relation to the research question “What instructional strategies do elementary teachers typically implement when teaching social studies education?” One sub-question was considered in relations to the main research question: “What criteria do elementary teacher employ to determine their use of instructional of instructional strategies in social studies education?” In the Discussion, the researcher compared emergent themes across cases for similarities then noted differences in themes.

Discussion

Across Case Analysis

Initially, a within-case analysis was used to establish emergent themes and sub-themes consistent with the data collected from the four cases. Further analysis identified any similarities or differences between the themes. Those themes considered to be dissimilar in relation to the specific data collection are significant since they were not represented in all four cases. The research questions, including the overarching research question and sub-question, are highlighted in Table 5. The similarities and differences noted across cases that correspond to the first research question are identified in the first portion of Table 5. The similarities and differences noted across cases corresponding to the second research question are identified in the second portion of Table 5.

Table 5

Across-Case Analysis: Similar and Contrasting Themes and Criteria Noted Across Four Cases

Research Questions	Similar Themes Across Cases	Contrasting Themes
1. What instructional strategies do elementary teachers typically implement when teaching social studies education?	<p>Theme 1: Teaching literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics as reading content</p> <p>Theme 2: Using discussion strategies in social studies</p> <p>Theme 3: Incorporating technology in social studies education</p> <p>Them 4: Teaching reading comprehension in social studies</p>	Theme 1: Questioning & clarifying to enhance student comprehension
Sub-question	Similar Criteria Across Cases	Contrasting Criteria
1a. What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies to address social studies education?	<p>Criterion 1: The cultural climate of college and career readiness-CCRS standards</p> <p>Criterion 2: English language arts instruction as an approach to address social studies goals</p> <p>Criterion 3: Teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions</p> <p>Criterion 4: The impact of standardized testing & accountability</p>	<p>Criterion 1: Determining developmental appropriateness for students</p> <p>Criterion 2: Social studies, literacy, and English language arts integration</p> <p>Criterion 3: District level requirements for student grades and grade reporting</p>

Themes Across All Cases Identifying Similar Instructional Strategies Used in Social Studies

A review of themes across the four cases in this study revealed four similarities in the strategies reported by elementary teachers to implement social studies education: (1) teaching literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics as reading content; (2) using discussion strategies in social studies; (3) incorporating technology in social studies education; and (4) teaching reading comprehension in social studies. All of the teachers in the study engaged their students in literacy instruction using social studies topics for reading content. Each elementary teacher who participated in this research incorporated discussion strategies and techniques during his or her instruction as a method to convey social studies concepts. Two out of four of the teachers in the study described using technology to assist them with their social studies instruction. The research results confirmed two of the four teachers facilitated read alouds with their students during social studies instruction in order to develop student comprehension, and to also build students' fluency skills.

Theme 1: Teaching Literacy Instruction with the Use of Social Studies Topics as Reading Content

All four of the elementary teachers acknowledged they taught literacy and English language arts while using historical and social studies topics as reading content. Three subthemes describe teachers' literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics as reading content: (1) involving students in pre-reading strategies to determine their prior knowledge, (2) chunking the text, (3) and teaching vocabulary.

Pre-reading Strategies to Build Students' Prior Knowledge

At least three of the teachers involved their students in pre-reading strategies; for example, the anticipation guide and prescribed textbook discussion questions, were incorporated

to assist students in setting a purpose for reading and used to determine their prior knowledge prior to learning about various social studies topics. Mrs. Long confirmed she incorporated the anticipation guide, a research-based strategy, to assess how much background knowledge students held about the lesson's topic and to develop students' prior knowledge. This pre-reading strategy was helpful because the technique encouraged her students' interest in the text *Red, White, and Blue: The Story of the American Flag*, a trade book featuring the history of the American flag.

Mrs. Long explained her students were mostly unfamiliar with the social studies topics surrounding the history of the American flag, thus a gap in their knowledge existed. She revealed, "Students have very little background knowledge about the American flag, so their lack of knowledge about the U.S. flag is one reason why I selected to use the anticipation guide with them." Mrs. Long suggested her decision to use the anticipation guide with her students provided appropriate support to assist them in building their prior knowledge. She reasoned, "this strategy was thoughtfully chosen to encourage students' interest in reading the story that is coordinated as part of the lesson.

Ms. Shelly, a fourth grade teacher, taught a lesson about the history of the Hindenburg, a German passenger airship that crashed in May 1937. Ms. Shelly also required her students the task of complete an anticipation guide to elicit prediction before she taught the lesson ideas. She also applied the anticipation guide with her students at the close of the lesson for assessment purposes. Ms. Shelly explained, however, that the students would search for the appropriate answers to their predictions as they read subject matter surrounding the history of the German airship and its disastrous crash. After reading the text to confirm or disconfirm their original

responses, students were asked to revisit their predictions and to modify their responses, if necessary.

Mr. Best claimed it was important for students to set a purpose for reading before they read subject matter material. This stated purpose explains why he instructed his students to examine the textbook discussion questions prior to reading the chapter text, and to use these questions as a guide for listening to pertinent information. The students were also instructed to refer back to the discussion questions in order to determine the appropriate answers while they read related social studies content from the textbook.

Chunking the Text

A second literacy skill noted by Mrs. Long and Ms. Shelly, one both teachers utilized during their social studies instruction, was chunking the text. During Mrs. Long's lesson about the history of baseball and American baseball heroes, the researcher observed her using a strategy she identified as chunking the text with her students as they read a story about an American baseball hero, Satchel Paige. Mrs. Long instructed students to read aloud the story *Three of the Greats* while she facilitated, stopped at points during the reading exercise, and allowed students to "chunk" the information read so they could comprehend the content as smaller pieces of information.

Mrs. Long explained her students were better prepared to manage their understanding of the assigned reading by chunking the text. She felt this strategy supported her students in comprehending the reading content and helped them express their interpretation of the information when it was required in class discussions. She believed, further, using this strategy

with students allowed them an additional opportunity to become better acquainted with unfamiliar vocabulary and context definitions usually encountered during a read aloud.

The “chunking” strategy used to breakdown difficult text into smaller pieces of information was noted in Ms. Shelly’s lesson plan and was observed during her instruction. The researcher observed Ms. Shelly engaging her students with the use of this strategy as they watched a video about the German Hindenburg airship. She believed the “chunking” strategy reinforced her fifth grade students’ understanding of the history of the Hindenburg airship because the strategy allowed for both student and teacher participation to confirm subject content. Ms. Shelly stated this strategy “allowed for important breaks in the lesson” so students could digest the social studies content in smaller portions.

The researcher also documented Mr. Best incorporating the “chunking text” strategy with his students while he facilitated a read aloud and note taking skills in whole group. During a social studies a lesson focused on the changes in transportation and the role of agribusiness in the 21st century, Mr. Best engaged his students in the “chunking text” strategy as he facilitated a read aloud with students. Students were expected to address text-based discussion questions by listening for specific information and jotting notes pertaining to those discussion questions while they participated in the read aloud task. Mr. Best explained this student-centered note taking strategy, in his instruction, was intended to “reinforce reading” he therefore, claimed this strategy was important for students in bringing their attention to details in reading the content that might be overlooked during discussion.

Vocabulary Instruction

The data analysis demonstrated the majority of the teachers' involved their students in learning lesson-related vocabulary as a strategy in social studies lessons. Although the researcher observed Mrs. Shelly pausing during her lesson to engage students in a brief vocabulary lesson, she did not indicate that vocabulary instruction will be taught in her lesson plan. She explained her students' usually encountered unfamiliar words while reading informational text, so she tried to address this challenge by having students state unfamiliar terms and their definitions aloud prior to participating in reading exercises. The researcher observed Mrs. Shelly showing a *PowerPoint* and displaying it on a SmartBoard to highlight lesson-related vocabulary words and their definitions for teaching purposes.

Mr. Best explained, he also, taught his students new vocabulary words while teaching social studies. He believed it was important for students to be familiar with lesson-related vocabulary terms and their definitions prior to participating in a read aloud; stating, "I review vocabulary words that are used in the story or words that might create barriers for students to comprehend what they are expected to read prior to teaching the lesson's ideas."

Mrs. Lindsay indicated she involved her students in vocabulary instruction as well. She instead, argued it was more appropriate for students to learn unfamiliar vocabulary words in context. The researcher observed Mrs. Lindsay engaging her students in both "before" and "during" vocabulary strategies including a warm-up exercise prior to teaching the lesson, and, a word-and-definition match. Mrs. Lindsay did not clearly explain why she chose to involve her students in these particular vocabulary strategies and she did not offer an explanation as to how these strategies were relevant in terms of students' mastering the lesson's objective[s].

Theme 2: Using Discussion Strategies in Social Studies

Partner Discussion

Research findings identify several examples where the sample elementary teachers used various discussion techniques to facilitate partner discussion with their students to convey social studies concepts. Only one teacher identified partner discussion in her lesson plans. Most of the elementary teachers, however, were observed implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts.

Mrs. Long integrated “think-pair-share” with her students, where they were required to turn and talk with a partner side-by-side to discuss the changes in baseball over the years. Mrs. Long explained the advantage in using this strategy allowed a safe space, more personally appealing to students, to be able to exchange any ideas they held concerning changes in baseball with their peers. This “think-pair-share” strategy was also utilized to determine students’ prior knowledge and develop knowledge through one-on-one discussion with student peers.

Ms. Shelly explained partner discussion was used to develop students’ comprehension of the Harlem Renaissance while working with student peers. The researcher observed Ms. Shelly incorporating a jigsaw exercise with her students while instructing them to work in small groups. Students were asked to use informational packets to help them answer a set of questions about the Harlem Renaissance era. This small group task was incorporated in the lesson to help students engage in partner discussion as the members of each small group worked together, negotiated ideas, and offered their input about the lesson related questions.

Just as Ms. Shelly had, Mrs. Lindsay too, had prepared informational packets for students to use to conduct research in order to engage them in small group discussion. The researcher observed Mrs. Lindsay instructing her students to classify facts about the three branches of

government by playing a game and working together in small groups. Mrs. Lindsay explained students could participate in using collaborative skills, showing personal responsibility, participating in dialogue, and negotiating ideas with their peers by in working in small groups. Mrs. Lindsay believed her students were more confident and more willing to with others when they were asked to serve in a variety of positions in small group instruction.

Whole Group Discussion

Most of the teachers in this study used whole group discussion to some extent during their social studies instruction. Many identified whole group discussion as a method allowing students to participate in discussion and the sharing of ideas. Mrs. Long, Ms. Shelly, and Mrs. Lindsay spoke about whole group discussion at a specified time during the lesson in which a student could use his or her classmates' lesson-related feedback to develop his or her own meaning of concepts. Whole group discussion was utilized for group presentations and to wrap up the key lesson ideas. In Mrs. Long's class, she incorporated a task she coined "share out" in order to prompt her students to share their ideas with her and other classmates after having participated in a read aloud. The researcher observed Mrs. Long using whole group discussion to summarize key ideas related to the history of baseball. The researcher observed Mrs. Long using whole group discussion to assist her students with arranging and matching the appropriate label with various positions on the baseball field as they completed a diagram of a baseball field. According to Mrs. Long, this diagram activity was intended to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of the game of baseball and the various positions involved in playing baseball.

Ms. Shelly facilitated whole group discussion with her students and encouraged them to share their ideas once they listened to a video clip and read the assigned text based on the history

of the German Hindenburg airship. Ms. Shelly explained the purpose of students' participation in listening to the video clip was to use the video's content to distinguish fact from opinion. This strategy was used to engage students in conversation, to exchange ideas through whole group discussion, to express understanding of the lesson's topics, and to ask questions while adding these contributions to the whole class discussion.

Once the students were done listening to the video clip, Ms. Shelly facilitated whole group discussion a second time to allow students to give their group presentations. The researcher observed assigned group reporters participate in leading their group as the group members made presentations about the Hindenburg airship discussed earlier in small groups. Structuring the lesson in this manner prompted the researcher to conclude Ms. Shelly used whole group as a strategy to encourage student comprehension and develop students' knowledge of lesson-related concepts.

Mr. Best, too, was observed facilitating whole group discussion exercises during his social studies instruction. He facilitated a class discussion with the use of a video clip presentation (containing knowledge about famous sports figures in Alabama), displayed on the classroom projector. The researcher observed Mr. Best prompted student discussion by asking students to respond to questions about famous sports figures and their contributions to society. The research data indicate, Mr. Best mainly used discussion strategies as a method to convey social studies content to students and to confirm comprehension questions. After having shown the video clip, the researcher observed Mr. Best pose additional comprehension questions for students to address. It appeared Mr. Best used whole group discussion in a manner that allowed for transmitting information. The researcher concludes Mr. Best asked basic recall questions to

determine how well his students comprehended the lesson concepts. The students' role in whole group discussion seemed to be responding to low-level recall questions posed by Mr. Best.

Theme 3: Incorporating Technology Resources in Social Studies

Introducing Video Clips and Websites to Relay Subject Matter Content during Social Studies Instruction

Mr. Best, Mrs. Lindsay, and Mrs. Long showed lesson related video clips to convey social studies content during their social studies instruction. According to Mr. Best, the information provided in the social studies textbook was superficial, and in some cases, insufficient for the purpose of meeting the goals of the lesson. Mr. Best therefore, researched video clips and educational websites, located trade books, and used the resources as supplemental materials to aid the use of the textbook content. According to Mr. Best, learning by through various mediums was enjoyable for his students. The decision to coordinate the textbook material with the use of video clips and educational websites was one approach to address his students' preferences for learning. The researcher observed Mr. Best Mr. Best showing a video clip, depicting famous sports figures and their various contributions to society, to accompany his lecture with students. Mr. Best was observed using the video clip, to ask comprehension questions, clarify misconceptions, and prompt student discussion.

The researcher observed Mrs. Lindsay showing a video clip and incorporating lesson related websites with her students during her social studies lesson. Mrs. Lindsay explained video clips were "meaningful aids" for students who preferred a visual representation of lesson related concepts opposed to using traditional resources, such as seeing a picture in a textbook. Mrs. Lindsay noted she often implemented web based content and incorporated appropriate use of technology in her social studies instruction.

Mrs. Long explained she typically incorporated the use of technology to facilitate her social studies lessons. The researcher observed Mrs. Long incorporating a trade book about the American flag. Mrs. Long planned and incorporated the use of an audio recorded story and video clip about the American flag to assist students with comprehension skills. First, students were instructed to participate in reading a story, *Red, White, and Blue: The Story of the American Flag*, by listening to an audio recording and following along with the text in the lesson's trade book. Second, students were instructed to participate in watching a video clip describing the history of the American flag displayed on the classroom SmartBoard. Mrs. Long believed the students were better prepared to address the lesson's big idea by learning through multiple sources and using a variety of resources.

Theme 4: Teaching Reading Comprehension in Social Studies

Choral Reading

Data analysis confirmed that all four teachers planned and implemented tasks in their lessons allowing students to participate in reading. The researcher observed students participating in both choral and partner reading. Mrs. Long indicated in her lesson plan that students would participate in reading the story *Three of the Greats*. This trade book selection is important to note since this particular text addressed the reading literature standards communicated in the Common Core Readiness Standards. Specifically, the standards emphasized students' exposure to reading literature based on reading informational text.

As a former reading coach, Mr. Best considered students' participation in reading essential to developing their reading comprehension. He, therefore, planned and implemented multiple opportunities for students to participate in reading throughout the instructional day. The

former reading coach explained he used some of the same strategies and teaching methods to teach both social studies and reading. In Mr. Best's class students were involved in choral reading, partner reading, silent reading, re-reading to detect important details, and reading to address comprehension questions. Through discussion Mr. Best acknowledged he often addressed social studies by instructing students to participate in reading text based on social studies topics.

Like the other teachers, Mrs. Lindsay also offered her students multiple opportunities to practice their reading skills throughout the instructional day. The researcher noted that Mrs. Lindsay instructed her students to turn to a specific page in the reading text that described the purpose for rules and laws in a community. Mrs. Lindsay alternated between boys and girls, requiring they actually read aloud while the remaining students were required to follow along by tracking the text. Mrs. Lindsay explained her students' participation in read alouds provided time to develop reading comprehension and fluency skills.

Contrasting Theme: Instructional Strategy Implemented to Teach Social Studies Education

Findings across cases revealed a contrast in the themes that outlining which instructional strategies were used to teach social studies education. Two teachers implemented questioning and clarifying with students during their social studies instruction. These teachers also applied comprehension and discussion questions in their social studies lesson's discussion.

Contrasting Theme: Using Questioning and Clarifying to Develop Student Comprehension

Mrs. Long and Ms. Shelly both implemented questioning with their students and attempted to clarify any known misconceptions or remaining questions related to the lesson. Mrs.

Long posed the lesson's essential question, "How did the American flag change over the years?" to the entire class prior to teaching the lesson's concepts. She paused during the lesson to ask questions related to the historical changes made to the American flag and Betsy Ross's role in assembling the first American flag. According to Mrs. Long, posing the lesson's essential question to students was significant in terms of starting the lesson. The essential question was meant to offer students a reflecting point to consider while being tasked with various activities during the lesson. She explained once the lesson ideas had been taught, students were asked to revisit the lesson's essential question and were expected to answer the question for a second time through a verbal or written response to confirm whether or not students were developing meaning from the lesson concepts being explored. At that point, Mrs. Long clarified any inaccuracies or misconceptions held by students before closing the lesson with a concluding exercise. She confronted her students' knowledge along the way, pausing at various points of the lesson to ask comprehension questions. These questions were intended to confirm students understanding of the lesson's concepts being taught though they were mostly low-level, factual recall types of questions.

Ms. Shelly also utilized comprehension questions during her social studies instruction. When she taught the lesson about the "Harlem Renaissance," she aimed to determine students' understanding of subject matter concepts. The fourth grade teacher acknowledged she asked students basic comprehension questions. She admitted she should have probably inserted more challenging, critical, higher-order questions with her students during their social studies instruction. A *PowerPoint* was displayed while teaching about the Harlem Renaissance. During the presentation Ms. Shelly pointed out the purpose of asking these questions: recalling important details. Students were prompted with an essential question, "Why did the Harlem

Renaissance era become known as the Harlem Renaissance?” They were asked to write their responses on the sticky note provided to them.

Summary of Themes across Cases for Instructional Strategies Used to Teach Social Studies

In sum, four themes emerged across all cases with one contrast in themes identified. The themes related to the overarching research question include: (1) teaching literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics as reading content, (2) using discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts, (3) using technology to convey social studies concepts; and (4) facilitating read alouds to develop student comprehension. The contrasting theme related to the second sub-question was using questioning and clarifying to increase student comprehension.

Themes across Cases Describing Criteria Teachers’ Employed to Determine Their Use of Instructional Strategies

Across case analysis identified four themes describing criteria teachers employed to determine their use of teaching methods in social studies: (1) cultural climate of College and Career Readiness (CCRS) Standards, (2) teaching English language arts as an approach to address social studies goals, (3) reading exercises based on social studies topics driving instructional decisions, (4) the impact of standardized testing and accountability on social studies instruction. The sections below discuss the themes across cases corresponding to the sub-question.

Criterion 1: The Cultural Climate of College and Career Readiness Standards--CCRS

In three cases, the sample teachers described the impact of a standardized curriculum and spoke about how the 2010 Common Core, Alabama’s College and Career Readiness (CCRS)

Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy, and the Alabama Course of Study Standards for Social Studies on their instructional decisions in social studies. Mrs. Long indicated the state and local school district mandates and recommendations described in the 2010 Common Core standards and Alabama College and Career Readiness (CCRS) Standards had affected her instructional decision making in social studies by placing a heavy emphasis on teaching reading and English language arts. She, therefore, was intentionally mindful of the local district level and state level recommendations, and planned social studies and literacy instruction accordingly. The goal suggested in CCRS is to ensure that students are prepared with the skills and knowledge required to be college or career ready. To assist students in achieving this goal teachers are encouraged to develop student skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Mrs. Long incorporated multiple opportunities for students to practice their writing and reading skills. She structured her social studies lessons with activities that involved students in writing and many of the other skills described in CCRS. Mrs. Long explained, “I always try to tie in writing with the lesson somehow,” so wherever she determined there was an opportunity for students to write in the lesson she incorporated writing activities for students.

Ms. Shelly was expected to use CCRS and ACOS as a guide for planning social studies instruction. She explained the skills and standards recommended in the CCRS and ACOS indicate what she was expected to teach, but did not necessarily determine how she was expected to teach. The fifth grade teacher confirmed her social studies instruction emphasized English language arts and literacy standards as suggested by the CCRS document. She described using discussion, comprehension questioning, graphic organizers, and requiring students to participate in read alouds as teaching methods to develop students’ comprehension in social studies.

Like Ms. Shelly, Mr. Best also confirmed that Common Core, CCRS, and ACOS were contributing factors that impacted his social studies instruction. The former reading coach claimed he was comfortable when adhering to a standardized curriculum and aligning his instruction with the textbook. Adhering to a standardized curriculum and using traditional teaching methods, he ascertained, encouraged him to teach the required curriculum standards students were expected to achieve by end of the year and helped him maintain the curriculum pacing guides suggested by his local school district. Having served as a former reading coach, Mr. Best preferred to incorporate reading and English language arts throughout the curriculum. He noted the school's reading coach encouraged him to integrate reading and social studies and gave him teaching strategies to use in social studies. He reported the curriculum specialist from Mr. Best's local school district visited his school a few times a year the school year and she also encouraged him social studies and literacy instruction.

Criterion 2: Incorporating Literacy and English Language Arts to Address Social Studies Goals

Two of the teachers reported they were encouraged to incorporate literacy and English language arts during their social studies instruction based on the expectations recommended in the CCRS and ACOS. In Mrs. Long and Ms. Shelly classroom, their instruction was planned in a manner where students could participate in language art activities based on social studies topics.

Mrs. Long spoke about identifying literacy skills that were threaded across the curriculum and could be taught in multiple disciplines. She explained, for instance, second grade students are expected to make comparisons and this skill can be taught using many discipline. In her first lesson about the history of baseball, students were instructed to compare and contrast past and current changes in baseball. To accomplish this, the students read the trade book *Three*

of the Greats and documented their ideas about the changes to baseball on the provided T-charts. Mrs. Long used the T-chart to help students draw comparisons. She reported this strategy appropriately matched the objective of her lesson and was developmentally appropriate for students. The second grade teacher verified the T-chart strategy was recommended in the social studies textbook, therefore was appropriate to assist her students in drawing comparisons.

Mrs. Long said she previously identified skills such as fact from opinion and sequencing events and taught these skills in a lesson about the first American flag, when and by whom it was first sewn, and changes resulting in the flag's evolution over time. She guided students in using a timeline to document important events concerning the American flag. Mrs. Long explained it is important for students to apply sequencing, compare and contrast, and inferring when it was possible since these skills are in keeping with second grade curriculum requirements and skills that are tested by end-of-the year testing.

Like Mrs. Long, Ms. Shelly explained one must stay abreast of literacy and English language arts, and she reasoned it was important to identify language arts standards and try to teach them across the curriculum. When it was appropriate, Ms. Shelly would incorporate literacy and English language arts with her students during the social studies lesson. She had students participate in various activities that required sequencing, making predictions, setting a purpose for reading, and addressing comprehension questions.

Ms. Shelly argued teaching literacy and English language arts throughout the curriculum played a significant role in her approach to social studies. Teaching English language arts across the curriculum provided Ms. Shelly the opportunity to revisit various standards and skills multiple time and encouraged students' participation in reading more often.

Criterion 3: Social Studies Topics and Concepts Based in Reading Text or Literacy Materials Driving Instructional Decisions

Data analysis indicated the social studies topics and concepts from trade books and literacy sources were factors driving the teachers' instructional decisions. The researcher concluded all of the teachers in this study structured reading exercises using social studies topics from a basal or trade book. The teachers indicated their decision to incorporate reading exercises using social studies topics was an effective way to address social studies since the reality was they did not have much time to teach social studies. Teaching that emphasized reading about social studies topics through various text was reportedly easier for teachers when determining which strategies, teaching methods, and resources were appropriate.

Mrs. Long explained she typically identified a reading story that could be applicable in more than one discipline. For example, "If we are reading a story about a fireman during our reading block, we will discuss community helpers in social studies as well." If she could identify a social studies topic in reading beforehand that touched on additional subject areas, she planned to use that story and social studies topic as the focus of her lesson unit. Mrs. Long indicated she implemented trade books for students to participate in reading and to supplement the content found in the reading or social studies basal.

Ms. Shelly claimed social studies topics were often embedded in the reading story she used to teach social studies. Ms. Shelly admitted she did not intentionally look for opportunities to integrate multiple disciplines or lesson related concepts, nor was she encouraged to by her administration. She explained, however, if the reading story emphasized a social studies topic or concept, she would structure and supplement the lesson with the use of these ideas. Ms. Shelly's students were engaged in watching video clips, chunking the text, and using graphic organizers to organize ideas based on the information they read in the assigned trade books.

As a former reading coach, Mr. Best asserted using the social studies reading basal was the more logical and appropriate choice to engage his students in learning about social studies concepts. Relying on the content found in the social studies basal, he explained, would ensure that he had addressed the essential standards required by the state and local educational agencies. He stated, “When I stick with the social studies textbook, I am confident that I am covering the standards and clear that the pacing guide is being followed.” The third grade teacher noted that he was comfortable relying on the structure he experienced in using the textbook. He explained he typically previewed the layout of the social studies chapters beforehand to determine where the natural breaks in the reading occurred. These planning efforts, Mr. Best explained, assisted him as he determined how much text or content should be covered in one lesson, which strategies were more appropriate to teach the lesson content and help the students accomplish the lesson’s objective.

Mrs. Lindsay had also served as a lead teacher in reading; therefore she was comfortable blending social studies education with reading instruction. She explained there are particular social studies topics that lend themselves to both reading and social studies instruction. Like the other teachers, she also contended many of the strategies used to teach social studies content were applicable in reading instruction. Mrs. Lindsay explained she was often inspired by the social studies topics and themes presented in the basal reader and trade books, so she would use these sources to assist her in planning social studies. Some of the strategies she commented about were hands-on social studies activities such as role playing, constructing projects, playing games, working in cooperative learning groups to complete lesson tasks, and participating in artistic and dramatic exercises.

Criterion 4: The Impact of Standardized Testing and Accountability on Social Studies Instruction

Mr. Best and Mrs. Lindsay both described the impact of standardized testing and accountability on social studies instruction. Mr. Best explained instructional time for teaching social studies was consistently diminished over time. Despite being allocated 45 minutes for teaching social studies, the reality, he asserted, was he taught social studies around only 30 minutes per day. Describing his approach to instruction as teacher-centered, Mr. Best admitted his social studies instruction could be more exciting for fourth grade students. His intention, however, was to do a better job planning more exciting social studies with his students each year, so he tried to plan social studies with more attention given to engaging students.

Mr. Best typically invested more time planning mathematics and reading instruction than social studies education, since his students were required to participate in taking end-of-the year standardized tests in mathematics and reading. When he planned his social studies instruction, Mr. Best reported he relied on the social studies textbook, and also, Common Core, Alabama CCRS, and the ACOS to guide his instructional planning.

The principal required Mr. Best to keep a version of the ACOS at hand at all times during the instructional day. This requirement, along with the mandate to implement the CCRS in his curriculum, presented clear expectations of what students were expected to learn. Mr. Best asserted the ramifications of these required standards and the school's yearly progress significantly impacted his instructional decisions and how he implemented social studies. The former reading coach explained he preferred the structure of Common Core, Alabama's CCRS, and the ACOS. Mr. Best reasoned by complying with the requirements outlined in these documents and following along with the pace of the social studies textbook, students were sure to attain the knowledge and skills tested through end of the year standardized testing.

Mr. Best indicated students were not tested specifically in social studies, only in mathematics and reading. He, therefore, focused his attention on specific areas tested rather than the areas not tested. Mr. Best explained his position in favor of a structured standardized curriculum and end-of-the-year testing and accountability encouraged his instructional decision to use traditional teacher-centered teaching methods in social studies.

Mrs. Lindsay described the notable impact of Common Core, CCRS, and the ACOS for social studies had on how she planned social studies instruction. Mrs. Lindsay explained the Common Core did not specifically address social studies as a core subject. She ascertained, however, social studies was expected to be integrated with core subject areas such as literacy and English language art, and science disciplines. Mrs. Lindsay explained her local school agency required teachers to indicate the CCRS and ACOS in their lesson plans and to address these specific standards with students in social studies and reading instruction. Mrs. Lindsay reported she and fellow teachers were expected to follow pacing guides outlined for mathematics and reading in order to keep track of specific standards and when these standards were taught. Mrs. Lindsay asserted the district level pacing guides, a standardized curriculum, end-of-year testing, and the school's yearly progress report were factors that impacted her instructional decisions in carrying out social studies.

Divergent Themes across Cases Describing Criteria Teachers Employed to Determine Their Use of Instructional Strategies

Across case analysis identified three contrasting themes describing criteria teachers employed to determine their use of teaching methods in social studies: (1) developmental appropriateness for students, (2) social studies and English language arts integration, and (3)

district level requirements for students grade reporting. The sections below discuss the contrasting themes across cases corresponding to the sub-question.

Criterion 1: Determining Developmental Appropriateness for Students

Ms. Shelly and Mrs. Lindsay described strategies and teaching methods they implemented in social studies and discussed how these strategies were developmentally appropriate for students. Prior to developing her social studies lesson plan, Ms. Shelly typically examined the lesson content to determine the key concepts students must learn in order to achieve the lesson's objective. Based on these steps in planning, Ms. Shelly, then determined which strategies and resources were more appropriate to teach the lesson's ideas and which would be more beneficial to assist students in learning social studies.

Like Ms. Shelly, Mrs. Lindsay considered whether the strategies used to teach social studies were appropriate in terms of students' ability and grade level. As a former gifted teacher, Mrs. Lindsay often considered the challenge level and creative factor when she determined which strategies and resources were appropriate to use in social studies. The third grade teacher's philosophy was all students, both gifted and traditional, should be engaged in hands-on, minds-on, student-centered instructional strategies and methods she used with former gifted students, so she maintained this philosophy when planning her social studies instruction. Ms. Lindsay structured her social studies lessons to include activities considering multiple learning styles such as, auditory, kinesthetic, visual-spatial, and verbal-linguistic. She aimed to incorporate strategies encouraging her students to experience concepts through multiple intelligences. She was excited about using technology to implement her social studies instruction and usually researched lesson ideas involving instructional websites to incorporate social studies. She reported going above and

beyond to plan lessons compatible with using instructional websites and the SmartBoard to support social studies instruction.

Criterion 2: Social Studies, Literacy, and English Language Arts Integration

Mr. Best considered social studies, literacy, and English language art integration when determining which strategies were needed to teach social studies in fourth grade. According to Mr. Best, he did not perceive very much difference in social studies and literacy instruction. He said, “Reading the text and literacy strategies are embedded in every subject area, so whenever I teach social studies, I plan reading strategies that involve students in reading the text.” The fourth grade teacher typically planned his social studies instruction to incorporate many of the same strategies and teaching methods used to teach reading and English language arts instruction. Mr. Best mostly presented social studies concepts to his students by incorporating student participation in read aloud tasks and using discussion and comprehension questions. The reading story of the week, if based on a social studies topic, was the driving force when Mr. Best planned social studies. As a former reading coach, Mr. Best encouraged his students to practice reading as much as possible, so he incorporated reading time throughout the instructional day. Mr. Best described reading integration as a “win-win situation” for students. This was especially true for both science and social studies, he explained, since there was a significant breadth of readable content available within both disciplines.

Criterion 3: District Level Requirements for Student Grade Reporting

Mrs. Lindsay ascertained district level requirements regarding student grade reporting impacted her instructional decisions in planning graded student activities in social studies. She

said her local school district required her to structure her lessons and plan elementary instruction based on a nine-week grading period. Furthermore, she required to plan assignments allowing for students to earn a required number of test grades and daily grades for each nine week in the reporting period. With this requirement in place, it was a challenge sometimes to meet the specified numerical requirement outlined by the local school district. Mrs. Lindsay, therefore, assigned a student project for students to complete in order to satisfy the number of required grades for a nine-week reporting period.

Mrs. Lindsay typically required her students to complete one science and one social studies project per nine-week. The challenge, however, was maintaining the pace of curriculum standards suggested in the pacing guide and meeting the required number of grades expected by the local school district. Mrs. Lindsay explained that in some cases students had not performed well on various assignments during the nine-week grading period. Consequently, she allowed students the opportunity to improve their overall average for the nine-week grading period by creating an additional project for them to complete.

Summary of Divergent Themes Across-Cases Describing Criteria Teachers Employed to Determine Their Use of Instructional Strategies

The research identified three contrasting themes across cases describing criteria teachers' employed to determine their use of instructional strategies to address social studies education. The first theme explored was determining developmental appropriateness for students. The second theme discussed was social studies, literacy, and English Language Arts integration. The third theme described was and district level requirements for student grade reporting.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data collected from each of the four teachers in regard to similar and contrasting themes and criteria noted across cases studied. Results of the across-case analysis were organized by the overarching research question and sub-question thus, themes across cases are noted accordingly.

Results of the across-case analysis indicated four instructional methods teachers used in social studies were similar. The teachers typically taught literacy instruction with the use of social studies topics as reading content, used discussion strategies in social studies, incorporated technology to enhance social studies instruction, and taught reading comprehension in social studies to address social studies instruction. Results from across-case analysis revealed there was one difference among the instructional methods teachers used in social studies. Mrs. Long and Ms. Shelly implemented questioning and clarifying to enhance student comprehension.

Results of the across-case analysis noted teachers employed four criteria to determine their use of teaching methods incorporated in social studies instruction. Teachers described the cultural climate of college and career readiness (CCRS) standards, English language arts instruction as an approach to address social studies goals, teaching reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions, and the impact of testing and accountability. The results of the across-case analysis indicated three criteria were different. Teachers described considering developmental appropriateness for their students, social studies and literacy integration, and district level requirements for student grade reporting.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter VI is organized into the Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research. In Conclusions, the researcher discusses interpretations drawn from this study through findings noted across all cases with relevant research cited as support. The implications discuss consequences for teachers and students. The, recommendations for future research are discussed. Chapter VI concludes with a research summary.

A study overview of the purpose, methods, and analysis are included to remind the reader of the study procedures. This dissertation employed qualitative methodologies, specifically case study inquiry, to investigate how and whether elementary teachers used integrative teaching methods in social studies instruction. The purpose of the study was to add to available research, scholarship, and empirical studies related to teaching social studies in grades Kindergarten-5. There were four sample participants in this study, Mrs. Long, Ms. Shelly, Mr. Best, and Mrs. Lindsay (pseudonyms). Two elementary schools, Brown School (pseudonym) and Smith School (pseudonym), in the Travel School District (pseudonym) served as sample research sites in this study. Data were collected through interviews, lesson observations, field notes, and lesson plans. Qualitative analysis occurred through the constant-comparative method, which involved open, axial, and selective coding analysis, triangulating the data, and within and across case analysis. Within and across case analysis findings were discussed in Chapters IV and V. Conclusions

corresponding with the overarching questions and sub-question are discussed in the sections that follow.

Conclusions

Overarching Question 1

What instructional strategies do elementary teachers typically implement when teaching social studies education?

The paragraphs below discuss the conclusions drawn from the research findings noted across all cases. Data analysis indicate four themes describing strategies used in social studies: (1) Incorporating literacy using social studies topics as reading content, (2) Using discussion strategies ins social studies, (3) Using technology in social studies, and (4) Facilitating read aloud to develop student comprehension. The study’s findings are reported with relevant research cited as support.

Using social studies topics as reading content to incorporate literacy & English language arts.

Engaging Students in the Use of Pre-Reading Strategies

One of the major goals of social studies instruction aims to develop students’ understanding of historical concepts such as significant individuals, other times and places, and diverse perspectives. Teachers, thus, are tasked with the challenge to assist students in becoming competent in these areas (Davis, 1944; Herman, 1967; Solomon, 1987). “The task of comprehending information is part of the very fabric of social studies” (Solomon, 1987, p. 561).

The teachers' descriptions and observational data indicated they taught literacy using history and social studies to engage students in reading non-fictional text. They incorporated pre-reading strategies with students by requiring them to either complete an anticipation guide or review discussion questions prior to being instructed to read a story from a social studies trade book or reading basal. These research results were consistent with existing research suggesting teachers can help activate students' prior knowledge by taking an inventory of what students know, or think they know, about the topic before beginning instruction, or by asking students to make predictions about the content (Good & Brophy, 2008).

The students' participation in using the anticipation guide and previewing discussion questions prior to participating in reading nonfictional text appeared to prompt students' prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading. The students seemed to understand their purpose for reading the story and they were abreast of questions they needed to address along the way while reading the text. Incorporating these student activities and teaching methods in their lessons did not, however, appear to move students' thinking beyond basic reasoning toward more critical reasoning, the type of reasoning required to engage students in deeper intellectual tasks (Solomon, 1987). Over time, an individual's development in conceptual knowledge, content knowledge, and the use of comprehension strategies become strong predictors of reading comprehension (Davis, 1944; Herman, 1967; & Solomon, 1987). The teachers appeared to incorporate pre-reading strategies with their students in a manner that prompted students to share their prior knowledge and to effectively connect students' prior knowledge with the assigned reading content. The steps taken by teachers to activate students' schemas and allow for new interpretations of the assigned reading content were found to be meaningful; and were therefore consistent with the research literature suggesting students can be prepared for story reading by

telling them what the story is about and asking questions to activate schemas necessary in reading comprehension (Davis, 1944; Good & Brophy, 2008; Herman, 1967; & Solomon, 1987).

Chunking the Text

Two teachers were observed leading students in read aloud tasks and requiring them to “chunk” the text while they participated in whole group instruction. Mrs. Long introduced the story *Three of the Greats* to her students, and was observed pausing the reading of paragraphs at various points to assist students in paraphrasing chunks of text. She explained this strategy was incorporated with students to help them make sense of their assigned reading text and to help them interpret others words so the text is meaningful units of language for themselves (Stevens, 1981). She ascertained this strategy was essential for the purpose of allowing students to organize content into smaller, simpler bits of information in order for them to move beyond identifying words, which was instrumental to the students’ comprehension of the content they read. Mrs. Long explained this strategy helped her students clarify meaning of subject matter content. The research findings show Mrs. Long required her students use this strategy in reading both and fictional text and non-fictional text.

Ms. Shelly also engaged her students in the use of “chunking” non-fictional text related to the German Hindenburg airship crisis that took place in 1937. She intended for her students to use this method to better comprehend lesson content presented in the video clip. She, too, argued chunking the text was a purposeful research-based strategy helping students to tackle subject text and organize video content into smaller, easily managed pieces of information for the purpose of increasing comprehension. Stevens (1981) alleged readers of all ability levels could improve their reading comprehension by chunking text into meaningful units. The researcher claimed,

“The need to ‘chunk’ for every reading task should make the discussion of phrasing and of thought units an ongoing activity--this can be emphasized to students by reading meaningful and non-meaningful ‘chunked’ material” (p. 129). The first step in teaching students how to chunk text, thus required teachers to present previously chunked reading text to students as a model for discussion (Brozo, Schmelzer, & Spires, 1983; Stevens, 1981). The research findings from this research did not reveal any teachers explaining the purpose of chunking the text, discussing what type of information was significant or insignificant for the purpose of chunking the subject content, or discussing how to logically arrange the information.

Vocabulary Instruction

During observations, three teachers provided their students with both formal and informal vocabulary instruction to introduce unfamiliar words and assist students with reading engagement and reading comprehension. The teachers conducted vocabulary instruction before, and during the reading of the text, as well as, throughout the lesson. Ryder and Graves (1994) asserted the value of in-class introduction, elaboration, and repeated contextual references to important words was the most significant reason for direct-instruction of vocabulary, and this was consistent with the findings of this study in relation to teaching vocabulary in social studies. Three of the four teachers structured their vocabulary instruction in a manner that encouraged students to refer to student friendly definitions created by the teacher as a means to build their vocabulary and word knowledge.

As mentioned earlier, all of the teachers maintained teaching vocabulary was beneficial for their students when encountering unfamiliar terms and increasing comprehension during reading. The teachers were observed facilitating vocabulary instruction with students stating the

vocabulary words aloud, then stating the definition for each vocabulary word aloud in order to “constitute both information students should know and words they need to function within the subject” (Rekrut, 1996, p. 66).

Two of the teachers explained they targeted new vocabulary words ahead of time and crafted kid friendly definitions prior to the lesson being taught in order to address challenging words that might be unfamiliar to students or even to the teacher herself. This preplanning helped students become equipped to tackle new words and their definitions in order to increase their comprehension and content knowledge through participation in reading text.

Another teacher demonstrated a less-conventional approach to teaching vocabulary. She implemented new vocabulary throughout the lesson while she advanced from one activity to the next with students, pausing at times, to point out and discuss new words with the students. In teaching vocabulary, she avoided the use of pre-determining any particular or specific definition of the new vocabulary words. She decided instead to present new vocabulary words in context and with no pre-determined definition of the word being offered to the students. It was her belief this approach to vocabulary instruction was effective for her students and supported them in developing their own meaning of vocabulary words for themselves instead of being told what to memorize by the teacher.

Research indicates a multitude of sources are responsible for students deriving the meaning of words, including student peer conversation, parents and adults, and television to name a few (Newman & Roskos, 2012; Rekrut, 1996; Ryder & Graves, 1994; Scott, Jamieson-Noel, & Asselin, 2003). Rekrut (1996) ascertained, however, that students’ participation in reading is where the vast majority of new words and word meaning is discovered, stating, “Bottom line is that good and frequent readers have better vocabularies than do poorer or

reluctant readers” (p. 66). Thus, it is expected that effective readers can recognize and know words in depth and can apply them in multiple contexts and associate them through a diverse set of experiences.

It appeared the teachers in these cases appropriately incorporated their use of vocabulary strategies, which they deemed essential for students’ participation in the reading of the text and the lessons’ activities. The predominate use of vocabulary instruction described by teachers and noticed during the teachers’ lessons’ observations was vocabulary instruction involving students repeating the vocabulary words followed by stating the teacher-generated word definitions. There was one example where the researcher observed Mrs. Lindsay using the classroom projector screen and SmartBoard to display a website allowing her students to engage in a discussion as they matched word to definition through a “word definition match” exercise during whole group instruction.

None of the strategies implemented by teachers revealed students were being instructed through constructivist-based, learner-centered strategies for learning new vocabulary words and definitions. There was also no evidence indicating teacher’s aligned their vocabulary instruction in a manner allowing them to access students’ existing schemas or using students’ prior knowledge to build significant content or new vocabulary. It appeared teaching vocabulary, in all three cases, reflected teacher-centered strategies and did not allow for students to complete tasks related to developing new vocabulary, word meaning, or significant content related to the social studies topics being studied.

Research suggests vocabulary, conceptual and content knowledge, and the use of comprehension strategies become increasingly strong predictors of reading comprehension over time (Rekrut, 1996; Ryder & Graves, 1994; Wright, 2012). In severe cases, where students are

weak in these areas, the so-called “word callers,” may sound like good readers but have little understanding of what they read (Rekrut, 1996; Ryder & Graves, 1994).

Implementing the use of discussion strategies to convey social studies concepts

Throughout all of the lessons observed and all of the descriptions given by teachers, the researcher noted across classrooms, teachers incorporated the use of discussion as an educational strategy to involve their students in dialogue about the lesson’s objective. Data analysis suggested teachers applied strategies such as “think-pair-share” with a side-by-side partner on a sorting game based on the three branches of government, facilitated a jigsaw exercise based on the Harlem Renaissance in cooperative learning groups, and required student presentations to prompt discussion and dialogue among students.

For example, in Mrs. Long’s class, the researcher observed students taking turns to report any knowledge about changes in baseball with their student partner, then listening to their partner in an effort to build interest and content knowledge related to the lesson’s concepts. This “before” discussion strategy, intended to engage students in peer dialogue, was consistent with Howell, Thomas, and Ardasheva’s (2011) assertions, talking can help students process new information through opportunities allowing for connecting personally to new knowledge, expressing their opinions, clarifying information, and questioning the material. Similarly, these findings were consistent with Hess (2004), who suggested students improve in their abilities to exchange differences in perspectives when they dialogue in social studies class.

During their instructional delivery, teachers implemented strategies prompting students to participate in dialogue with their teacher and other students in whole group instruction. Ms. Shelly, for instance, discussed the concepts related to the Harlem Renaissance era; she instructed

her students to use in a using a ‘jigsaw’ strategy, where students were asked to read an informational text, collaborate with members of their cooperative learning group to search for answers to comprehension questions, then present that information to the class. This example of students’ participation in discussion did not involve a structured, issue-centered conversation, however the discussion did encourage students to co-construct ideas and exchanging perspectives related to the Harlem Renaissance.

The comprehension questions students were asked to respond to were lower-level types of questions. As a result, students were not expected to confront more challenging questions typically requiring critical thinking and deeper analysis from students. Research findings from three of the cases indicated whole group dialogue and discussion were inconsistent with the literature claiming students are strengthened in their skills to hypothesize, gather, and evaluate evidence when they are engaged in issue-centered, controversial discussion challenging them to move beyond superficial conversation (Harwood & Hahn, 1990).

Hess (2004) believes the use of discussion and dialogue with students enhanced their learning and made learning fun for students. Despite the impression students appeared to enjoy teaming with their group members to collaborate as they answered comprehension questions and presented their findings related to the Harlem Renaissance, there was no indication these intended whole group exercises were student-centered approaches or they required students to apply their critical thinking and analysis skills. Furthermore, the findings show Ms. Shelly mostly maintained control of what and how students acquired knowledge, and, at times, she was observed feeding students the majority of the answers related to the Harlem Renaissance during the reported “whole group” question and answer exercise.

Using technology as resources & materials to communicate social studies concepts.

Technology in education is commonly defined as a technical device or tool used to enhance instruction, meaning, and the intended goal is for teachers to use technology in ways that strengthen classroom learning. The application of technology in classroom instruction should be integrated for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, rather than incorporated merely as a tool for conveying content (Good & Brophy, 2008; Keengwe, Onchwari, & Wachira, 2008, p.563). Research literature has indicated that purposeful technology integration at the elementary classroom level is limited and underutilized, thus the need for teachers to facilitate hands-on technology media that enhances students' thinking ability and increases their ability to attain content is required. (Sutherland, 2004; Venezky & Davis 2002).

Cuban (2001) suggested technology and the use of computers were routinely employed to supplement typical instructional teaching strategies and methods traditionally used in classroom practice. The present study found all four teachers planned and implemented multiple types and incorporated various uses of technology to supplement the content found in both social studies and reading texts which allowed students to engage with several resources and references to study particular social studies concepts. Consequently, students were exposed to more than one method of instructional delivery, and teachers were supported in their efforts to display video media or software media for student engagement while teaching social studies and reading instruction. Mr. Best, for example, projected video and audio media to display notable sports figures and their individual contributions to society on the class SmartBoard. This use of technology integration not only complimented the lesson's objectives and goals, in his opinion, but this use of technology also supplemented the text found in the social studies basal and trade books he incorporated for student comprehension.

Mrs. Lindsay reported, she too, found the social studies basal to be superficial and limited in terms of material for students to read, so she planned and implemented technology to supplement the content offered in the social studies basal. She contended displaying academic websites to demonstrate geographical concepts and projecting visuals found in YouTube clips or through digital media were more concrete representations of concepts she was trying to convey, therefore this use of technology gave her students more realistic examples of ideas than what was presented in the social studies basal.

In a third classroom, Mrs. Long paired the trade book text *Red, White, and Blue: The Story of the American Flag* with a video clip featuring Betsy Ross and the history of the American flag displayed on the classroom SmartBoard. She also paired audio media with the trade book text and instructed students to listen to the story being read while they followed along by tracing the text with an index finger. Mrs. Long found when students were allowed to engage with multiple resources such as trade books, audio and video media, and the use of informational websites via the SmartBoard, they were more prepared to attain knowledge, increase their reading comprehension, and clarify misconceptions. These assertions are similar to those concluded by Lever-Duffy, McDonald, and Mizell (2005) who reported teachers utilize various technologies often included media, models, projected and non-projected visual, as well as audio, video and digital media.

Although the teachers involved in this study appeared to have thoughtfully planned various types and used of technology for instructional purposes, few, if any, demonstrated purposeful technology allowing for students to engage in the application of meaningful technology education. Research literature indicates purposeful technology integration has been underutilized and has been represented in ways that are mainly ineffective and uncreative

(Ginserb & McCormick, 1998; Keengwe, Onchwari, & Wachira, 2008). This research literature was consistent with this research indicating the strategies noted for incorporating technology integration in social studies instruction appeared overwhelmingly teacher-centered. The teachers were observed mainly using technology strategies to support the manner in which they delivered and relayed content to students.

All of the teachers' descriptions and lessons' observations suggested they planned and implemented technology integration with a narrow mindset seemingly overlooking students' needs to develop critical thinking skills and creatively practice higher-order thinking. The majority of the examples demonstrating teachers' use of technology involved them displaying content on the SmartBoard for students to see, hear, and read, delivering concepts through audio media, or securing information from the Internet to accommodate the lack of content offered in the reading or social studies basal. None of these examples of technology integration reflected hands-on, student-engaged, constructivist-based strategies allowing for students to construct or co-construct personal meaning about the lessons' concepts. Rather, the use of technologies and technology integration in all of the cases mentioned were teacher-led, teacher-centered, narrowed, and restricted to teacher application. These findings are consistent to what Okojie, Olinzock, and Okojie-Boulder (2006) explained about the impact of teaching strategies on promoting student thinking and allowing students to construct their own knowledge. These researchers stated, "It is important that teachers use a variety of teaching methods, and students must be taught to use the newly acquired knowledge and skill as well as to critically evaluate and modify such knowledge--ultimately, "teachers should be able to engage students in an exploratory learning experience, which is designed to stimulate thinking" (Okojie et al., 2006, p. 67).

Facilitating read aloud to develop student comprehension. A number of researchers have emphasized that teaching literacy across the curriculum has significance in developing life-long proficient readers. The responsibility to teach content literacy instruction does not solely rest on the language arts teacher instead it requires every teacher to integrate the teaching of literacy in all the subject areas (Binkley, Keiser, & Strahan, 2011; Wise, 2009). Social studies integration has the potential to increase student comprehension and enrich students content area knowledge in becoming competent users of literacy when teachers provide them with literacy-rich instruction. This need for such integration is especially important with social studies. The potential for student growth is powerful when reading instruction is integrated throughout the content areas (The National Institute for Literacy, 2007).

Mrs. Long, Mr. Best, and Mrs. Lindsay were all noted as having incorporated a read aloud with their students to assist them in building reading comprehension skills and learning social studies concepts. “Through reading-aloud, important content teaching happens for the science and social studies units--to which most literacy instruction is connected. What’s more, it is through the read-aloud that the main support pillars of reading instruction are addressed” (Cornett, 2006, p. 236).

In regard to Mrs. Long’s curriculum planning, she spoke of using trade books about social studies topics to allow her students time to read informational text during class in keeping with the recommendations of Common Core Standards and the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards. Mrs. Long explained she secured trade books for her students to read in both small and whole groups in order to build their comprehension about the history of baseball and past and present changes in the sport of baseball.

Mr. Best reported having previously served as a reading coach. He, therefore incorporated reading strategies throughout the curriculum and was observed instructing students to participate in a read aloud many times throughout his instruction. Mr. Best felt it was important for him to model fluency for his students, and he was observed participating in a read aloud where he led students; following that he alternated by instructing students to lead in the assigned read-aloud. Mr. Best found that time allowed in the lesson for students to participate in a read-aloud could also be used as a strategy to address reading comprehension. The researcher observed students previewing reading comprehension questions prior to the start of the lesson, jotting notes to address the prescribed comprehension questions during the read aloud task and arranging their notes on a graphic organizer.

Like her colleagues, Mrs. Lindsay also instructed her students to participate in a read aloud during social studies instruction. During her lesson observation, students were observed alternating between various student pods and taking turns in reading non-fictional text related to the lesson's concepts. She, too, structured time during the read aloud with students to ask them comprehension questions related to the lesson's objective and also utilized this time during instruction to allow for student questions and to clarify student misconceptions. Similar to Mr. Best, she believed reading was essential to students sharpening their comprehension, fluency, speaking and listening skills, so she tried to allow for students to read as much as possible throughout the instructional day.

Given opportunities to participate in read-aloud exercises, students were able to practice fluency, speaking, and listening skills. Data analysis revealed teachers applied the read aloud strategy with students allowing students to search for answers to comprehension questions, prompting students to ask individual questions, and structuring the lesson so the teacher could

clarify any student misconceptions during that time. Aside from allowing students time to practice their reading skills and structuring time so students could address comprehension questions, there was no indication students were involved in a read aloud strategy calling for using investigative skills for exploring the lesson's concepts with scrutiny. Evidences of teachers employing the read aloud strategy with students in a manner requiring the students to think critically or challenging students' thinking in order to attain deeper comprehension were not demonstrated in the research findings.

Research findings in this study are consistent with Cornet (2006), reporting students' writing is richer, student comprehension is more robust, the modeling of fluency is present, and the appropriate use of Standard English is emphasized through the use of an artful read aloud. Solomon (1987), however, concluded, "the promise of social studies for promoting thinking is not being realized in many elementary classrooms" (Solomon, 1987, p.559).

Conclusions (Sub-question 1a)

The paragraphs below discuss the conclusions drawn from the research findings noted across all cases. Data analysis indicate three criteria teachers employed to determine their use of strategies in social studies: (1) College and Career Readiness Standards-CCRS, (2) English language arts instruction to address social studies goals, (3) reading instruction with the use of social studies topics driving instructional decisions, and (4) the impact of standardized testing and accountability. The study's findings are reported with relevant research cited as support.

Sub-question 1a

What criteria do elementary teachers employ to determine their use of instructional strategies in social studies education?

The Cultural Climate of College and Career Readiness Standards--CCRS. The Common Core standards initiative has increased the emphasis on literacy and reading comprehension skills at the elementary grade level. This is especially significant when assessments are aligned with the Common Core standards. As early as Kindergarten, children are expected to “describe the connections between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text, and to identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text” by the end of the school year, according to Duke and Block (2012) who reported Common Core standards have set a high expectation for elementary students to demonstrate comprehension (p. 61). The standards articulated in Common Core suggest students should participate in group reading activities with purpose and understanding. Literacy activities involving students reading informational text are specifically identified in the Common Core standards. As a result, these standards should be addressed in content area instruction rather than only in the English language arts or literacy block of the school day (Altoff & Golston, 2012; Common Core State Standards, 2010; Duke & Block, 2012).

All of the teachers noted the standards reported in the Common Core, CCRS, and ACOS for social studies were factors guiding their instructional planning of social studies education. Mrs. Long said she was focused on of the goals articulated in Alabama’s CCRS to make students proficient in reading writing, speaking, and listening skills. Because of this, she planned opportunities in her lessons that allowed for her students to be engaged in writing when possible.

Ms. Shelly also agreed the standards communicated in Common Core, CCRS, and ACOS for social studies guided her instructional decisions to involve her students in the reading of informational text, listening skills, and many other content literacy related skills.

Mr. Best reported his instructional planning was impacted by the standards reported in Common Core, CCRS, and ACOS for social studies in planning how to address social studies instruction and felt a certain level of comfort and certainty in using the standards because the textbook was aligned with them. Mr. Best felt his use of the textbook and aligning social studies instruction with a standardized curriculum would ensure he had covered all the required standards and skills students were supposed to learn, so he typically referred to these sources to guide his decisions for selecting strategies, resources, and for determining appropriate content for implementing social studies.

Although, the teaching of English language arts is highly emphasized in Common Core, the authors do not assume literacy development is limited to the teaching of content English language arts, but instead recommends literacy be taught in all the core disciplines. Although the expectations of teaching literacy with social studies in Kindergarten-5 is not explicitly stated in Common Core, it is assumed teachers are instructing students in social studies through the use of literature. Informational text and children's literature; therefore, plays a significant role in social studies instruction at the elementary level (Altoff & Golston, 2012).

Incorporating Literacy and English Language Arts Instruction to Address Social Studies Goals. Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) reasoned the terms *skills* and *strategies* are part of the vocabulary used by teachers to describe what they teach and what children learn. These terms vary in how they are used since, teachers express different interpretations of the meanings of these words. Sometimes the terms *skills* and *strategies* are used as synonyms, refer to a

complementary relationship (e.g., strategies support skills), or mean to describe a developmental progression (e.g., first the phonics skills then the comprehension strategies) in some instances.

The teaching of reading, historically, involved the teacher instructing students with interpreting specific activities such as reading the Bible, understanding directions, and answering questions about the text. The teaching of reading and children's reading development is characterized differently today. Engaging students in reading development that includes the teaching of skills and strategies through both formal and informal instruction help to characterize contemporary reading instruction (Afflerbach et al., 2008, Davis, 1944; & Herman, 1967). For at least 50 years, educators have referenced the term reading *skills* in the Kindergarten-12 teaching of reading curricula. In contrast, the term *strategies* became popular in the 1970s to signify the cognitive aspects of information processing. Instead of reconciling the differences between skills and strategies, researchers, educators, and publishers simply grouped them together to be interchangeable (Afflerbach et al., 2008).

Skills identify what students should know how to do, according to Parker (2012), who organized learning skills into three subcategories:

- Democratic participation skills (e.g. listening, decision making, discussion, negotiating)
- Inquiry skills (e.g., using timelines, locating, reading and analyzing information, giving oral presentations, writing reports, testing hypotheses, distinguishing primary and secondary resources)
- Intellectual skills “Critical thinking and problem solving” (e.g., comparing and contrasting, making conclusions, identifying and clarifying problems, distinguishing fact from opinion, inferring cause-effect relationships)

Parker explained that *doing* involves *knowing*. A child is skillful at something because he or she knows how to do it well. Students who demonstrate skillful behavior, thus, are mostly skillful because of their knowing or know-how, procedural knowledge (Parker, 2012).

Two of the teachers spoke of emphasizing English language arts or literacy skills while involving students in reading about social studies topics and practicing their use of curricula skills. One recognized skills, such as compare and contrast or recording events on a timeline about the historical changes in the field of baseball, could be applied across the second grade curriculum; therefore, she structured her lessons to allow students to practice these skills while being instructed to read text and to make sense of social studies concepts. Ms. Shelly felt it was important to identify curricula skills and to incorporate the use of these skills with students as part of her social studies instruction. She was observed facilitating activities that allowed for students to demonstrate their use of various skills, such as setting a purpose for reading, analyzing reading content, participating in listening skills, drawing conclusions based on prior knowledge, and writing ideas in short declarative statements related to the Harlem Renaissance era. The curricular skills that Mrs. Long and Ms. Shelly were observed teaching mainly touched on literacy and English language arts activities. The activities facilitated by the two teachers did not indicate students' participated in democratic or inquiry skills. Instead, the research findings revealed the activities applied by students appeared to mainly build on literacy or English language arts concepts and skills. The activities planned by Mrs. Long and Ms. Shelly appeared be purposeful and student-centered strategies and seemed to reflect literacy and English language arts value. The teaching strategies and methods employed by the two teachers demonstrated minimal value for the teaching of meaningful social studies, thus these strategies did not appear

to further the goals of social studies education and seemed to have instructed students in learning significant social studies concepts to a very limited extent.

Teaching Reading Instruction with the Use of Social Studies Topics Driving Instructional Decisions. The knowledge offered in textbooks is often superficial; thus, the opportunity for extensive study in a particular discipline, is limited in many cases. Despite the reported limitations in using textbooks for student understanding of content knowledge, textbooks remain staples in the classroom, although teachers have been known to overemphasize these resources when providing a framework for instruction. To address the deficiencies and weaknesses identified in content area textbooks, teachers are supplementing their content area instruction with the use of non-fiction trade books. The teachers in this study implemented literature-based instruction across the curriculum including using children's nonfiction trade books as a vehicle to assist students in learning social studies (Moss, 1991; Tyson & Woodward, 1989).

All of the discussion and activities observed during the teacher lessons demonstrated their use of a grade level reading basal or non-fiction trade books for teaching social studies. The teachers indicated in their descriptions they considered the content found in these resources for determining strategies, methods, and materials to implement social studies instruction. Mrs. Long typically used the theme presented in the reading story for the basis of her lesson; for example, if the reading story was based on a social studies topic, she would use this topic to address literacy and social studies instruction. Mrs. Long reported having incorporated non-fictional trade books with her students to supplement the content contained in the reading basal as well.

Ms. Shelly spoke of social studies concepts being embedded in the reading story. She, therefore, identified these concepts beforehand and used these ideas to build her students' content knowledge during the social studies lesson. There was no intentional effort on her part to integrate social studies subject matter with other disciplines; however, when the content featured in the reading textbook highlighted social studies concepts, she would plan and implement teaching methods and strategies, such as reading trade books or organizing information through graphic organizers to develop student comprehension. To develop students' knowledge of social studies concepts further, Ms. Shelly showed video clips complementing the text while she instructed students to chunk the text by breaking the information into smaller parts during their reading exercises.

As former reading specialists, Mr. Best and Mrs. Lindsay described incorporating students' participation in reading and use of comprehension skills for teaching social studies content. Mr. Best indicated it was beneficial for students for him to rely on material in the textbook, so he mainly used the textbook to inform students of various social studies concepts. This way, he was sure to stay on track when addressing required student academic standards. He reported also implementing the textbook in social studies instruction to allow for students to practice reading fluency and to participate in student comprehension exercises. Likewise, Mrs. Lindsay believed certain topics could be used to instruct students in learning about social studies through their participation in English language arts and literacy skills. Thus, many of the strategies that were incorporated for teaching literacy, she explained, could also be applied when engaging students in learning about social studies concepts. Mrs. Lindsay, for example, facilitated small and whole group discussion and instructed students to read informational,

teacher-developed packets. She then had them participate in a sorting activity and complete a graph related to distinguishing the differences in the three branches of government.

Trade books that are screened for specific instructional purposes, are well-written, and paired with lessons that indicate clear and concise objectives can be successfully integrated in the social studies curriculum (Fuhler, 1992; Rice, 2016). Literature can be utilized to broaden students' horizons and extend their learning opportunities when making meaning of social studies concepts. "Carefully previewed trade books can be a rich source of accurate information about many segments of history--trade books provide excellent opportunities for promoting higher level thinking processes" (Fuhler, 1992, p.64). When teachers facilitate instruction involving integrating the information from trade books with factual textbook content, they allow for a natural progression in skills such as inference, comparison and contrast analysis, and predication to flow naturally throughout the classroom (Fuhler, 1992).

The Impact of Standardized Testing and Accountability. With the passage and implementation of the NCLB Act school administrators and teachers overemphasized the focus on teaching language arts and mathematics, assessing students in these areas, and providing remediation for low-performing students. Consequently, the teaching of social studies as a core content has been further marginalized. The 2002 No Child Left Behind Act called for annual testing in reading and mathematics in Grades 3-8, and determined the results from these standardized tests would be key to measuring a school's progress under the federal law (Manzo, 2005).

The previous version of the law, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, was enacted in 2002. The law was scheduled for revision in 2007, and over time, NCLB's prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators. Recognizing this fact, in 2010, the Obama administration joined a call from educators and families to

create a better law that focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers. (Layton, 2015)

According to Mr. Best, the ramifications of standardized testing for the reporting of a school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) were factors impacting teaching methods used by Mr. Best in social studies. The division of the instructional day, he explained, was structured in a manner allowing for more time to teach reading and mathematics. Despite being allocated 45 minutes for teaching social studies, Mr. Best reported the reality was that he struggled to teach social studies 30 minutes per day. Due to the fact students were required to take end-of-the year testing in mathematics and reading, Mr. Best acknowledged he spent more time planning instruction for mathematics and reading than science or social studies planning. Mr. Best indicated he was more teacher-centered in his approach to social studies instruction and felt more comfortable aligning his instruction with the standardized curriculum set forth by his state; he also reported feeling more at ease when relying on the pace and structure provided by the grade level textbook.

Mrs. Lindsay discussed her instructional decisions regarding the teaching of social studies were mostly determined by the recommendations expressed in Common Core, CCRS, and the ACOS for social studies. The message articulated in Common Core and CCRS suggests social studies content be used as a means for student participation in reading and comprehending informational text through literacy and English language arts instruction. Mrs. Lindsay therefore, was encouraged to integrate the teaching of social studies concepts with the use of literacy and English language arts instruction. Mrs. Lindsay, therefore, was encouraged to integrate the teaching of social studies concepts with the use of literacy and English language arts instruction. Mrs. Lindsay also claimed required testing of mathematics and reading impacted her instructional planning of social studies instruction, saying it was pressure to keep up with curriculum pacing guides for mathematics and reading, required of all teachers when prepping

for successful mastery of the end-of-year testing, which drove her instructional decisions. This sort of pressure encouraged her to emphasize the teaching of reading and literacy skills and allowed for more focus on literacy and English language arts instruction to address social studies education.

Research literature indicating the narrowing of the curriculum is one of several effects resulting from the era of testing and of educational accountability. Hutton, Curtis, and Burstein (2006), for example, concluded the emphasis on high-stakes testing “is impacting how the core subjects are being taught, with the social studies curriculum being relegated to the background and only taught when there is time” (p. 18).

In 2015, a new K-12 education law that effectively ended heavy federal involvement in public schools and returned much of that authority back to states and local school districts was signed by President Obama. Currently, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaces many of the measures imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act, has significantly reduced the federal government’s role in U.S. classrooms and government ability to require specific accountability measures for all U.S. schools. The current legislation will still require states to test students annually in math and reading in Grades 3-8 and once in high school and to publicly report the scores according to race, income, ethnicity, disability, and student’s home language. The former United States Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, was diminished in his legal authority and legally barred from influencing state decisions on academic benchmarks, such as the Common Core State Standards, teacher evaluations, and other policies under the new Every Student Succeeds Act (Layton, 2015, *The Washington Post*).

Implications

Data findings from this research study investigating how and whether four teachers used integrative teaching practices to address social studies education revealed teachers did not apply integrative teaching methods. Instead, the data findings showed the teachers taught literacy and English language arts using social studies topics as the text. Furthermore, teachers taught in a manner not allowing allow for meaningful connections to mathematics, science, art, drama, music, movement, geography, economics, or various other disciplines. The teachers structured social studies so that students were participating in reading, practicing literacy skills and learning social studies topics through English language arts. The results of the study showed teachers relied on traditional teacher-centered teaching methods, but also used some constructivist student-centered teaching methods. Data analysis determined some of the teachers overemphasized the use of the textbook by instructing students to participate in choral reading, partner-reading, and whole group reading of non-fictional informational trade books. The findings of this study, therefore, have implications for teacher practice and the manner in which students learn. These implications also serve as a background for future research.

Implications for Teacher Practice

The implications from this study may have an impact on how teachers conceptualize integrative teaching, the ways in which they implement social studies instruction, and how they determine their use of strategies for teaching social studies content to elementary students. First, teachers should examine various theoretical models of integration. As teachers explore the theoretical principles that undergird integrated teaching, their knowledge concerning the how and

why informing integrative teaching will develop (Beane, 1997; Drake, 1998; Etim, 2005; & Parker, 2012).

Within these four cases, the teachers mostly defined curriculum integration as the teaching of reading across the curriculum and emphasizing English language arts skills across the curriculum. None of the teachers were able to articulate what constitutes a legitimate curricular connection or described an authentic commonality across disciplines. The teachers expressed they were aware of thematic integrative teaching. Aside from thematic integration, the teachers were unaware of various other theoretical models related to integrative teaching. Two of the teachers conceptualized curriculum integration as teaching a common skill[s] across the curriculum. All the teachers confirmed they did not intentionally plan integrative teaching methods or use integration as an approach for teaching social studies instruction. They each reported they would use integrative teaching where a natural fit occurred in the curriculum, but agreed they would not apply integration for the sake of using integrated teaching.

There are a variety of theoretical principles informing integrative teaching, spanning from thematic integration to multi-disciplinary integration to inter-disciplinary integration (Burton, 2001; Miller, 2003; & Snyder, 2001). Examining various theoretical models can assist teachers as they grow in their understanding of purposeful uses of integrative teaching and the dimensions involved in various styles of integrative teaching.

Secondly, it is important for teachers to investigate criteria employing their decisions to use best practices for teaching social studies education in elementary classrooms. Some of the teaching strategies and activities observed in the classrooms of these four teachers did not demonstrate educational value, and might be considered busy work for students. There are purposeful activities that are potentially useful for pursuing significant social studies goals, but

instead are structured with so much emphasis on language arts that the purpose of social studies education is unclear (Alleman & Brophy, 1993; Hinde, 2005; & Palmer & Burroughs, 2002).

Teachers, for example, should consider why they are selecting a specific teaching strategy for teaching social studies education while leaving others out, considering the following questions:

- Do I select a specific teaching strategy based on my own personal preferences?
- Is this strategy appropriate for teaching the social studies concept[s] my students are ready to learn?
- Have I considered whether this particular strategy will motivate student interest and learning?
- Will this strategy help my students place the content within their own lives and the world?
- How does this strategy encourage meaningful and purposeful social studies instruction?
- In what ways will this strategy allow for students to take personal responsibility in how they develop and co-construct meaning of social studies concepts?
- Will this strategy require ALL of my students to engage in content through hands-on, minds-on, inquiry and experiential learning?

The teachers in this study were not able to precisely explain how they determined using certain strategies in social studies instruction. The teachers, however, did discuss some of the factors impacting their instructional approaches for teaching social studies including using social studies topics as a means to address English language arts skills and teaching reading with a social studies topic serving as the text for reading purposes. They also spoke of some of the factors encouraging traditional teaching practices and creating barriers and allowing for more constructivist based teaching methods, such as the climate of Common Core Readiness Standards and the use of social studies text for teaching reading instruction driving instructional

decisions. Teachers should consider these questions when contemplating how to approach planning and teaching social studies. The decisions teachers make while developing social studies objectives and planning social studies instruction have broader implications when teachers begin to implement those plans.

Third, teachers should participate in reflective practice in ways encouraging them to use reflection as they consider how their philosophy of teaching is aligned with their instructional planning and social studies teaching. Dewey (1933) stated it is necessary to develop the habit of reflective thinking (Beyer, 1984; Krol, 2016). Teachers' philosophy of teaching are sometimes inconsistent with the strategies they espouse and do not reflect the teaching methods actually used for teaching social studies (Beyer, 1984; Krol, 2016). All of the teachers in this case study were veteran teachers, with many years of teaching, and various professional experiences.

Three of the teachers reported their methods of teaching had evolved from traditional approaches to more progressive instructional approaches. With this shift in instructional teaching approaches, the teachers reported they aimed to implement more constructivist teaching methods for student learning. The research findings, however, did not support those reported claims related to teaching methods used in social studies. The research results demonstrated teachers practicing strategies such as implementation of reading instruction with the use of social studies text, the teaching of English language arts, discussion and lecture with students, student participation in read aloud, students addressing comprehension questions, and the use of technology for relaying concepts. The teachers' perceived use of constructivist teaching strategies that emphasizes hands-on, student-centered strategies, allows for student discovery, and encourages students to make their own meaning of social studies concepts was not consistent with the findings that resulted from this research.

One teacher reported his approach to teaching was more teacher-centered. He acknowledged he used more traditional teaching methods that were closely tied to the textbook rather than using more creative or hands-on constructivist methods. This teacher's perceived use of a traditional approach to teaching was consistent with the teacher-centered instructional strategies noted during his lesson observations and interviews.

As reflective practitioners, teachers should continuously evaluate the effects of their beliefs and actions as they relate to instructional planning and implementation of subject content with students. There is much to be understood the teacher's engagement in a process of inquiry concerning their philosophy of teaching and instructional implementation should be purposeful, aiming to increase students' knowledge and strengthen teachers' professional knowledge.

Implications for Student Learning

While this study focused mostly on teacher practice, it is important to consider the impact that teachers use of methods in social studies instruction has on students' personal and social development (Winstead, 2011). Research has indicated that students are motivated to learn when they are exposed to a variety of subjects they find purposeful and challenging and demonstrates that students are more likely to retain information and grasp meaningful social studies concepts through thematic or integrated teaching (Hinde, 2009; McBee, 2000; Tanner, 2008; & Winstead, 2011).

The purpose of social studies education is intended to help students acquire knowledge so they may become actively engaged in decision-making processes. The goal of social studies also aims to teach students content to enrich them as they participate in a democratic life.

The social studies discipline continues to be taught primarily using language arts as the base discipline. This narrow approach to teaching social studies ignores other subject matter and disregards the potential connections between multiple ideas and issues. Understanding what integrative teaching is, and what it is not, will help to inform teachers so they are prepared to thoughtfully plan multidimensional instruction that motivates students in learning. Purposeful integrative teaching will allow for students to engage in inquiry and experiential tasks based on real-life circumstances in order to develop meaningful learning. This learner-centered instructional approach will encourage students to become independent thinkers and encourages them to construct the knowledge and skills that are necessary for tackling societal issues and problems.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study merely begins to address elementary teachers' perceived use of integrative teaching, the planning and implementation of teaching methods for addressing social studies education, and how teachers' determine their use of those teaching methods. Areas of future research related to teachers' use of integrative teaching methods for teaching elementary social studies education could be useful. Research should be conducted because teachers' perceived use of integrative teaching, their use of instructional strategies occurring during their social studies instruction, and how they determine their use of social studies teaching methods, have been rarely investigated in elementary education and future work in this field is clearly necessary. One area for future research might address how teacher education programs are addressing some of the barriers teachers face as they prepare constructivist student-centered instructional methods for practicing integrative teaching in social studies. Investigating the

barriers that prevent teachers from practicing integrative teaching in social studies may yield results necessary for assisting teachers who are trying to overcome such difficulties and challenges in social instruction.

Next, future researchers should consider conducting experimental research involving educating teachers of particular frameworks for guiding integrative teaching and requiring that teachers use specific student-centered teaching strategies for implementing a social studies unit to determine the ways in which teachers' knowledge of purposeful integrative teaching is changed or unchanged. Research providing teachers with effective constructivist teaching methods and a specific theoretical framework informing integrative teaching would be useful for examining the changes occurring with teachers who are assisted in this manner. This type of research would provide insight for teachers who are trying to overcome barriers preventing the use of an integrative teaching approach and using more constructivist student-centered teaching methods.

Finally, future researchers should also consider how elementary teachers' social studies instruction and their use of teaching methods affects students' perceptions of social studies and whether their motivation is affected to learn about social studies. Learners are diverse and multidimensional, their instruction, therefore, should be structured with opportunities to explore social, community-connected issues through extracurricular study. The format for teaching social studies should involve exposing students to a variety of subjects and topics with the use of a multitude of constructivist, learner-centered, strategies, teaching methods, and resources that appeal to a spectrum of learners and their preferences for learning.

Study Summary

This qualitative case study investigated the social studies instruction of four teachers and their employment of instructional teaching methods used to carry out social studies education in Kindergarten-5 classrooms. The researcher constructed four cases, each documenting a different elementary teacher, his or her use of instructional strategies for teaching social studies education, and how use of these instructional strategies was determined. The theoretical framework guiding informing this study were constructivist and social constructivist theories as effective theories in teaching social studies with through an integrative teaching approach. The literature reviews the (1) status of elementary social studies, (2) educational legislation, (3) the marginalization of elementary social studies, (4) forms of integration, (5) defining integration, (6) social studies instructional practices in the elementary classroom, (7) curriculum integration as an approach to teaching social studies in the elementary setting, and (8) constructivism as a conceptual framework for integrative teaching, all factors impacting how elementary social studies is taught and relevant research that situated this study. This study involved qualitative inquiry conducted in the form of a collective case study through a descriptive content analysis approach. Methods of data collection included interviews (semi-structured formal pre-interviews, pre-observational CoRe and PaP-eR adapted interviews, post interviews, informal and unstructured interviews), lesson plan artifact analysis, and lesson observations).

Within all the cases, themes were noted. Data analysis determined contrasting themes in a review across the four cases. In particular, however, findings based on the overarching research question and sub-question demonstrated emergent themes describing similarities across cases. Themes found addressing the first research question involving teachers' descriptions of instructional strategies for addressing social studies education include: (1) Incorporating literacy

using social studies topics as reading content, (2) Using discussion strategies in social studies, (3) Using technology in social studies, and (4) Facilitating student read aloud to develop student comprehension. A contrasting theme was detected with two of the four cases indicating questioning and clarifying was applied as an instructional strategy to enhance student comprehension. Themes found related to the second research question examining criteria elementary teachers employed to determine their use of instructional strategies revealed teachers considered (1) the cultural climate of College and Career Readiness standards, (2) incorporating literacy and English language arts skills as an approach to address social studies goals, (3) social studies topics and themes based in reading text or literacy materials driving instructional decisions, (4) the impact of standardized testing and accountability measures.

Conclusions were drawn from all themes and their impact on teachers' perceived use of integrative teaching methods used to address social studies education with students and the actual teaching methods observed during their instruction are discussed. As the implications of this research study are considered, elementary teachers should consider reflective practices that offer more insight about their instructional planning and implementation of social studies education and their use of teaching methods. Teachers must work toward developing purposeful social studies instruction so that students are motivated to learn. Informed citizens who are prepared with meaningful social studies concepts have the knowledge and skills that are necessary to participate in our democratic society.

Recommendations for future research might address (1) the ways in which teacher education programs prepare elementary teachers in planning and implementing integrative teaching, (2) experimental research providing teachers with effective constructivist teaching methods and a specific theoretical frame that informs integrative teaching to determine the ways

in which teachers' knowledge of purposeful integrative teaching is changed or unchanged, and
(3) how elementary teachers' social studies instruction and their use of teaching methods affects students' perceptions about engaging in social studies.

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APPENDIX A

CONTENT REPRESENTATION (CoRe and PaP-eR) PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW

	Social Studies Integration Lesson Plan & Delivery						
What elementary curriculum standards will be covered in this lesson?							
What specific concepts/skills/topic will be taught in this lesson?							
What do you intend for students to learn or be able to do after the lesson is taught?							
What specific connections are made among the subject content/ideas being taught in this lesson?							
How will multiple perspectives of subject content be represented and applied in order to teach this lesson?							
What sources/resources will be represented and applied in this lesson in order to teach the lesson ideas? Explain how sources/resources will be applied in this lesson.							
How will instructional strategies/methods be represented in this lesson? How will these strategies/methods be applied in order to teach the lesson ideas?							
Why did you choose the specific instructional strategies/methods that are represented in this lesson?							
What do you know about how students learn that influenced your choice of the specific instructional strategies/methods represented in this lesson?							
Describe how you will apply integration in the lesson's core activities? What are specific ways you will apply integration in the lesson's core activities?							
What specific student-centered strategies/methods will be applied in order to teach the lesson ideas?							

APPENDIX B
LESSON PLAN RUBRIC

Rubric:
Social Studies Integrated Lesson Plan & Delivery

Name: _____
Total: _____

Strategies → Points ↓	Standards Covered	Connections In Content Made	Multiple Perspectives Presented	Multiple Sources/Resources Incorporated	Multiple Strategies/Methods Implemented	Examples of Integration in Core Activities	Lesson Ideas & Instruction is Student-Centered
2 Points Strategy is clearly <i>demonstrated</i> in lesson plan and delivery, and is fully developed							
1 Point Strategy is <i>demonstrated</i> in lesson plan & delivery, but is does appear to be fully developed							
0 Point Strategy was not applied, and wad not applied in the lesson plan and delivery							

APPENDIX C
ELEMENTARY TEACHER INTERVIEW (PROTOCOL)

Interviewee:
Interview Site:
Interviewer:
Date:
Time:

1. Background:

- Tell me about your current position.
- How long have you been teaching?
- What grade levels and number of years at each level have you taught?
- Have you taught at any other levels such as high school, community college, or graduate school? If so, for how long?
- Have you been involved in any specialized teaching (i.e. reading coach, math coach, etc.)

2. Defining Integration:

- How would you define curriculum integration?
- How would you describe integrated instruction?
- How often do you incorporate integration in your social studies instruction? Explain what integrative teaching would look like in your lesson?
- What role do you feel integration plays in elementary social studies instruction?

3. Forms/Models of Integration

- What is your knowledge of different forms/models of integration?
- Is there a particular form or model of integration you prefer to use for instructional purposes? Explain why you prefer using that form or model?
- How did you learn about this particular form/model?
- Have you allowed this form/model of integration to influence how you prepare your social studies instruction? Explain how.

4. Planning Integrated Instruction:

- What criteria are considered when you plan integrated instruction in order to teach social studies content (i.e. ideas, skills, questions, subject matter, themes, etc.)?
- How do you determine when it is appropriate to apply integrated instructional approaches in order to teach social studies content?
- What challenges/limitations have you encountered while planning integrated instruction? Explain these challenges and what that means in terms of planning.
- How do you determine which sources/resources you will incorporate when planning integrated instruction? How do you determine which sources/resources to incorporate when planning social studies lessons? Provide specific examples of sources/resources that you would incorporate in a typical social studies lesson.

- Discuss some instructional strategies/methods you would implement in order to teach social studies content.
 - What is your understanding of integrative strategies or methods? Discuss some of the integrative strategies/methods you would typically implement in order to teach social studies content?
 - How do you determine which integrative instructional strategies/methods are appropriate to use when you plan your social studies lessons?
5. Implementing/Practicing Integrated Instruction:
- What barriers/limitations have you had to overcome when trying to implement integrated instruction? Provide some specific examples.
 - How typical is integrated instruction for your class? If integration is not typically used, please describe the typical teaching approach used in your social studies instruction.
 - How confident do you feel when practicing integrative instructional strategies? Explain why? What limitations and/or difficulties are connected to this teaching approach?
 - What knowledge about students' thinking and/or learning influences how you incorporate integrative strategies?
 - How confident are you that students will understand social studies concepts taught by using integrated instruction? Explain why?

APPENDIX D
LETTERS TO PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL SYSTEM

LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

MEMO

Principal's Name

Title

Name of School

Date

RE:

Dear **Principal's Name**:

My name is Sharon Ross, and I am doctoral student at The University of Alabama. I am conducting a research study on K-5 Elementary teachers' Social Studies instruction. Dr. Cynthia S. Sunal, Department Head for the Department of Curriculum & Instruction in the College of Education and Professor of Elementary Social Studies is supervising my dissertation research. This case study is entitled "Examining Social Studies Instruction In Elementary Classrooms: Documenting Teachers' Use of Integrative Practices" and means to address the questions "When integrative approaches are used to teach social studies, what instructional practices occur?" and "How do teachers determine their use of instructional practices?" The primary objective of the study is to document teachers' instructional practices that occur during social studies instruction. The study also aims to describe how teachers plan for integrated social studies instruction, and describe how they determine their selection of integrated strategies for instructional purposes. Participants who fit the criteria of this research and who express their willingness to participate will sign a letter of consent to participate before any data collection methods are employed. Results from this research study will not be reported or linked to any particular school site, nor will any specific participant's name be reported during data collection or reporting.

The purpose of this research is to help fill a gap in the existing literature regarding elementary teachers' experiences in practicing social studies instruction including their instructional planning of integration, their use of integrated instructional strategies, and their rationale for selecting and implementing specific integrative approaches for instructional purposes.

Taking part in this research study will involve participant interviews, social studies teaching observations, and document content (lesson plan) analysis. To understand the instructional practices that occur while teaching elementary social studies education, I would like to request that pre-and post-interviews take place with four elementary teachers that work in grades two through five. All participants will be asked to sign a letter of consent to participate in this case study. Participants will also be invited to participate in member checking during the data analysis and editing phases.

The prospective timeframe for this study will start early March, and will officially conclude at the end of the 2014 school year. Pre-Interviews will began early March and conclude early May. Observations will conclude by mid-April with only follow-up interviews and member checking

taking place after that time. Participation is completely voluntary, and information about the study, as well as issues of confidentiality and privacy, will be provided in the attached consent forms that all participants will be asked to sign. Participants have the right to withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. Permission to conduct this study has been obtained from The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB) and will further be obtained from your school system and all participants.

There is no conceivable risk associated with this study. If at any time the researcher perceives the study to have any detrimental effects or cause a conflict of interest for participants the case study will be discontinued immediately. Pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participants to protect their identities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the following e-mail address: saross2@crimson.ua.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor for this study, Dr. Cynthia S. Sunal at cvsunal@bamaed.ua.edu, or Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at 205 348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066.

I hope this study will contribute to the field of educational research by offering additional insight that highlights elementary teachers' experiences in planning and implementing social studies instruction in practice. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon A. Ross
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Alabama

I have read this letter and understand the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this letter.

By signing this letter, I [] give permission [] do not give permission to conduct this research study.

Signature of Principal

Date

I have explained the research to the subject, and answered all of his or her questions. He or she has acknowledged they understand the information described in this document and gives permission to conduct this study.

Signature of Investigator

Date

LETTER TO SCHOOL SYSTEM

MEMO

Superintendent's Name

Title

Name of School System

Date

RE:

Dear **Superintendent's Name**:

My name is Sharon Ross, and I am doctoral student at The University of Alabama. I am conducting a research study on K-5 Elementary teachers' Social Studies instruction. Dr. Cynthia S. Sunal, Department Head for the Department of Curriculum & Instruction in the College of Education and Professor of Elementary Social Studies is supervising my dissertation research. This case study is entitled "Examining Social Studies Instruction In Elementary Classrooms: Documenting Teachers' Use of Integrative Practices" and means to address the questions "When integrative approaches are used to teach social studies, what instructional practices occur?" and "How do teachers determine their use of instructional practices?" The primary objective of the study is to document teachers' instructional practices that occur during social studies instruction. The study also aims to describe how teachers plan for integrated social studies instruction, and describe how they determine their selection of integrated strategies for instructional purposes. Participants who fit the criteria of this research and who express their willingness to participate will sign a letter of consent to participate before any data collection methods are employed. Results from this research study will not be reported or linked to any particular school site, nor will any specific participant's name be reported during data collection or reporting.

The purpose of this research is to help fill a gap in the existing literature regarding elementary teachers' experiences in practicing social studies instruction including their instructional planning of integration, their use of integrated instructional strategies, and their rationale for selecting and implementing specific integrative approaches for instructional purposes.

Taking part in this research study will involve participant interviews, social studies teaching observations, and document content (lesson plan) analysis. To understand the instructional practices that occur while teaching elementary social studies education, I would like to request that pre-and post-interviews take place with four elementary teachers that work in grades two through five. All participants will be asked to sign a letter of consent to participate in this case study. Participants will also be invited to participate in member checking during the data analysis and editing phases.

The prospective timeframe for this study will start early March, and will officially conclude at the end of the 2014 school year. Pre-Interviews will began early March with post-interviews concluding early May. Observations will conclude by mid-April with only follow-up interviews

and member checking taking place after that time. Participation is completely voluntary, and information about the study, as well as issues of confidentiality and privacy, will be provided in the attached consent forms that all participants will be asked to sign. Participants have the right to withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. Permission to conduct this study has been obtained from The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB) and will further be obtained from your school system and all participants.

There is no conceivable risk associated with this study. If at any time the researcher perceives the study to have any detrimental effects or cause a conflict of interest for participants the case study will be discontinued immediately. Pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participants to protect their identities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the following e-mail address: saross2@crimson.ua.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor for this study, Dr. Cynthia S. Sunal at cvsunal@bamaed.ua.edu, or Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at 205 348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066.

I hope this study will contribute to the field of educational research by offering additional insight that highlights elementary teachers' experiences in planning and implementing social studies instruction in practice. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon A. Ross
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Alabama

I have read this letter and understand the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this letter.

By signing this letter, I [] give permission [] do not give permission to conduct this research study.

Signature of Superintendent

Date

I have explained the research to the subject, and answered all of his or her questions. He or she has acknowledged they understand the information described in this document and gives permission to conduct this study.

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM

The University of Alabama
Consent to Participate in Research

Dear **Teacher's Name**,

My name is Sharon Ross, and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at The University of Alabama. I am conducting a research study on K-5 Elementary teachers' Social Studies instruction. Dr. Cynthia S. Sunal, Department Head for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education and Professor of Elementary Social Studies is responsible for supervising my dissertation research. Although social studies is increasingly marginalized in the elementary curriculum, social studies education plays an important role in educating U. S. citizens, and the subject matter learned through social studies is vital in sustaining our democracy. I would like to interview teachers and observe them teaching social studies lessons. I am a former elementary teacher and have previously taught elementary students in various grade levels including Kindergarten through Third.

What is the purpose of this study?

My research is entitled "Examining Social Studies Instruction in Elementary Classrooms: Documenting Teachers' Use of Integrative Practices." The objective of my research is to document teachers' instructional practices that occur during social studies instruction. The study also aims to describe how teachers plan for integrated social studies instruction, and describe how they determine their selection of integrated strategies for instructional purposes.

What is the significance of this study? What good will the results do?

This study seeks to examine the teaching practices of elementary teachers in typical second through fifth grade classrooms, and will investigate how teachers' employ integrative strategies when teaching social studies curricula. The study would help fill a gap in the existing literature regarding how elementary social studies teachers' practice integrative approaches when teaching social studies education. The study has the potential to contribute to our understanding and add to the body of knowledge describing how teachers plan for integrated social studies instruction, how they decide on instructional strategies and materials, and how teachers experience social studies instruction in practice.

It is possible the findings from this study could benefit both novice and veteran teachers who struggle to meet curriculum requirements while juggling multiple subject areas. Teacher education programs and instructors who teach social studies methods courses at the university level may also benefit in relating subject matter to practice and toward subject integration in order to decrease the marginalization of social studies in elementary classrooms.

What procedures will take place in this study? What will I be asked to do?

What will I be asked to do in this study? If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Participate in two semi-structured interviews that include a pre-and post-interview. Each interview will last between 30 to 45 minutes and will be audiotaped and later transcribed.

- Participate in two CoRe interviews; one interview will be conducted prior to Observation of lesson 1 and the second CoRe interview will be conducted prior to observation of lesson 2. The CoRe interviews will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes and will be documented through field notes. No audiotaping will be involved while these interviews are being conducted.
- Participate in two observations of social studies lessons. The participants will decide on two lessons they are comfortable teaching while being observed.
- Participate in submitting a social studies unit that contains a minimum of two social studies lesson plans for the purpose of document content analysis. The participants will be asked to choose two lesson plans they feel reflect their typical delivery of instructional strategies and methods applied during social studies instruction. The participants will also be asked to select lesson plans they are comfortable teaching for observational purposes.

How much time will I spend being in this study?

This case study will take place over the course of 2014 school year (Spring semester). It will begin approximately early March and officially concluded at the end of the 2014 school year. Pre-Interviews will began early March and conclude early May. Observations will conclude by mid-April with only follow-up interviews and member checking taking place after that time.

The pre- and post-interviews will be held at the interviewees' individual school sites. The interviews will last between 30 to 45 minutes, and they most likely will take place during participants' planning periods, before or after school, or be scheduled at the participants' convenience.

Observations conducted in this study will include two 30-minute sessions per participant and will take place over the course of several weeks during participants' social studies instruction. Because the researcher does not know beforehand which days are devoted to social studies instruction, it is impossible to know on which days these observations will take place. Mandated standardized testing days, assemblies, etc. will possibly influence the classroom observation schedule. The researcher and participants will determine an observation schedule prior to pre-interviews taking place.

The researcher will observe teachers' social studies instruction, therefore, two CoRe Interviews will be administered with participants. One (CoRe) interview will be conducted prior to observing participants' teach social studies lesson 1 and a second (CoRe) interview conducted prior to observing participants' teach lesson 2 will be administered. The CoRe interviews should last approximately 15 minutes or less and will take place within an 8-week period.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

You are considered a willing participant for this study. You will not be compensated in any manner for your willingness to participate. You may indirectly benefit by gaining deeper insights about your social studies instructional practices and how you plan integrated social studies instruction. Hopefully participants will become more conscious and reflective about how they practice integration when teaching social studies education as a result of their participation in this study.

What are my choices to withdraw my participation from this study?

Your participation in this research is entirely VOLUNTARY. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am participating in this study?

There is no conceivable risk associated with this study. If at any time the researcher perceives the study to have any detrimental effects or cause a conflict of interest for participants the case study will be discontinued immediately. Pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participants to protect their identities.

Participants who fit the criteria of this research and who express their willingness to participate will sign a letter of consent to participate before any data collection methods are employed. Results from this research study will not be reported or linked to any particular school site, nor will any specific participant's name be reported during data collection or reporting.

How will my privacy and confidentiality be protected?

Multiple strategies will be utilized to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants involved in this study. Letters of consent, transcripts, field notes, copies of documents and artifacts, and other relevant paperwork will be safely secured in a locked file in the researcher's home. All audio tapes will be deleted immediately after transcription has been completed. The transcribed data will be kept on the home computer of the primary investigator. This home computer is locked when not in use. All data will remain securely in the possession of the investigator for three years. After three years have passed all data will be destroyed. No information about you or the data you provide will be disclosed to others without your permission. You and the school site where you work will be assigned a pseudonym for all written reporting. No information will be included that could reveal your identity.

What if have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the following e-mail address: saross2@crimson.ua.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor for this study, Dr. Cynthia S. Sunal at cvsunal@bamaed.ua.edu, or Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at 205 348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066.

I hope this study will contribute to the field of educational research by offering additional insight that highlights elementary teachers' experiences in planning and implementing social studies instruction in practice. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon A. Ross
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Alabama

I have read this letter and understand the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this letter.

By signing this letter, I [] agree [] do not agree to participate in this research study.

Signature of Participant

Date

I have explained the research to the subject, and answered all of his or her questions. He or she has acknowledged they understand the information described in this document and gives permission to conduct this study.

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX F

FORM FOR PRINCIPALS:
CRITERIA FOR PRINCIPALS' RECOMMENDATION OF TEACHERS AS
PARTICIPANTS IN THIS CASE STUDY

Criteria for Principals' Recommendation of Teachers as Participants
in this Case Study

Research Topic: Social Studies Instruction In Elementary Classrooms: Documenting Teachers'
Perceived Use of Integrative Teaching Practices

Directions: Please indicate to what extent the teacher recommended for participation demonstrates the criteria mentioned below. Please rate the teacher by indicating a score in the blank next to each numbered item. Finally, rank the teachers recommended for this study based on their willingness to participate in the research study.

Scoring: 1-Almost Never; 2-Sometimes; 3-Often; 4-Consistently; 5-Always

1. Teacher is responsible for teaching elementary social studies. _____
2. Teacher is responsible for planning elementary social studies lessons. _____
3. Teacher is more likely to volunteer to be observed while teaching social studies lesson. _____
4. Teacher will most likely provide thoughtful reflection about their instructional practices. _____

The teacher identified here is ranked _____ in terms of his or her willingness to participate in in this research study.

APPENDIX G
IRB APPROVAL

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
R E S E A R C H

April 3, 2014

Sharon Ross
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 870232

Re: IRB # 14-OR-104, "Examining Social Studies Instruction in
Elementary Classrooms: Documenting Teachers' Use of Integrative
Practices"

Dear Ms. Ross:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted
approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR
part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as
outlined below:

*(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior
(including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition,
motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or
practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview,
oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation,
or quality assurance methodologies.*

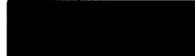
Your application will expire on April 1, 2015. If your research will
continue beyond this date, please complete the relevant portions of the
IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, please
complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this
study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to
eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study
closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to
obtain consent from the teacher participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this
proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Stuart Usdan, Ph.D.
Chair, Non-Medical IRB
The University of Alabama



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