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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES
EDUCATORS: THE REDHEADED STEPCHILDREN
OF EDUCATION

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Rebecca N. Reed

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
School of Teacher Education
Educational Studies

August 2019

This Dissertation by: Rebecca N. Reed

Entitled: *Experiences of Secondary Social Studies Educators: The Redheaded Stepchildren of Education.*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in School of Teacher Education.

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this multi-case phenomenological study is to understand the unique experiences of secondary social studies teachers. The number of participants was bound to six secondary social studies teachers from a public school district in a mid-Atlantic state and the experience of the researcher. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews using Seidman's (2006) Three Step Interview Series and individual profiles were written. The phenomenological data analysis was guided by several methods including Hycner (1985), Moustakas (1994), and Seidman (2006). From the participants' experiences several themes emerged: similarities in personal learning habits, a dislike for mandatory assessments and curriculum, and a sense of an inequitable status among teachers of core disciplines. Additionally, the data was analyzed utilizing Fallace's (2017) model of three social studies orientations—traditional, disciplinary, and progressive. Taken as a whole, the participants aligned to both traditional and disciplinary orientations, but many described themselves as leaning toward a progressive orientation of teaching social studies. Findings indicate a need for future research of implications when instruction, curriculum, and assessment are not aligned to a sole orientation or purpose of social studies.

Keywords: secondary social studies, purpose, experience

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2006 *Social Studies in Our Nation's Elementary and Middle Schools* survey, teachers rate cultural diversity as the most important rationale for teaching social studies (Leming, Ellington, & Schug, 2006). A similar survey published in 2009, *Social Studies in Our Nation's High Schools*, reported that the most important reason to teach world history is to “[develop] a tolerance of cultural differences” (Leming, Ellington, Schug, & Dieterle, 2009, p. 10). Teachers of high school courses other than world history reported that the major reason to teach those courses is to help “students become critically-minded reflective citizens” (p. 59). Although these recorded purposes seem to be different, each rationale or reason appears in the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) definition, “The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, p. 3).

Even though these studies indicate that most social studies teachers would agree with NCSS, the definitions and rationales for social studies are problematic. At a deeper level, many questions are left unanswered. What is cultural diversity? What does it mean to be tolerant? How does someone learn to be critically-minded and reflective? What does it mean to be a citizen? These questions, along with questions about the

definition and purpose of social studies, have been discussed in the literature since the term *social studies* first appeared over 100 years ago.

If teachers feel strongly that cultural diversity is the primary focus of social studies, then do assessed outcomes indicate that students have achieved this goal? One insight into what is taught in the classroom comes from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). U.S. history, civics, geography, and economics are the four social studies content areas assessed under the NAEP federal program. In social studies, each assessment is administered every four years to selected students in grades four, eight, and twelve, except for the economics assessment which is currently administered every six years to twelfth grade students. The summary from the last administration of the NAEP U.S. history, civics, and geography assessments in 2014 indicated that “there have been no changes in the overall scores in any of the three subjects from 2010” (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). The NAEP economics assessment has been administered twice, with the last administration in 2012. The 2012 economics assessment results indicated that “the overall average score for twelfth-graders did not change significantly since 2006” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, p. 6).

It was not my intention to examine the correlation between national assessment and classroom instruction, nor did I examine the validity of national assessment; rather I took a deeper look at the experiences of secondary social studies teachers. The goal of my study was to activate new questions of and inquires in the social studies experience. The intention was not to create a formal checklist of qualities and knowledge of what constitutes a “good” social studies teacher. Instead, I provided an example of how to

reveal the unique characteristics of each teacher in order to understand their perspectives and experiences that make them unique. The following questions served as a guide for this study:

- Q1 How do secondary teachers experience learning and teaching social studies?
- Q2 How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?
- Q3 How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations?

Background of Problem

The role of a social studies teacher is unique in that the content area of social studies is not clearly defined (Evans, 2004; Thornton, 2005). A certified social studies teacher may be required to teach any number of disciplines such as: history, geography, economics, political science, anthropology, psychology, or sociology. Within each discipline, there are many sub-topics, each requiring that the certified social studies teacher have adequate knowledge in order to plan and implement instruction. Curriculum, often created by administrators or commercial publishing companies, is provided to social studies teachers (Thornton, 2005). Standards and frameworks, adopted by legislatures and school boards, are considered the target of the curriculum to guarantee that students receive a solid education in the social studies. Successfully educated social studies students are to become effective citizens (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994). How then do social studies teachers apply their understanding of social studies to develop and carry out lessons that support their understandings? The purpose of this study was to understand secondary school educators' experiences with and perspectives on social studies.

Social studies is the content of controversy. From conflicting reports of when the term *social studies* first was used to defining the purpose of the content, social studies is still debated in current writings (Fallace, 2017). The root of the controversy is focused on what content should be prioritized in the social studies curriculum. Evans (2004) noted that in the mid-1800s, the “foremost aim was to help students understand sacred antiquities and to appreciate classical literature” (p. 5). Recently, legislation has been enacted to include mandatory lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) curriculum as part of the history-social studies state curriculum in California (Resmovitz, 2016). Whether the content of the social studies curriculum is mandated through legislation or based upon local cultural interests, it comes in various forms from textbooks, state assessments and standards, and what teachers actually teach in the classroom. It is the teacher that has the ultimate control of the instructional curriculum. Thornton (1991) described the interactive process of what is taught in the classroom as *gatekeeping*. Though teacher gatekeeping occurs in all instructional decisions, Thornton focused mainly on the social studies and defined gatekeeping as “the decisions teachers make about curriculum and instruction and the criteria they use to make those decisions” (p. 237). With social studies definitions being broad and latitudinous, how do social studies teachers interpret the curriculum?

Problem Statement

There is a problem in social studies education. Currently, the purpose and definition of social studies is often vague and lacks guidance as to how teachers should plan for social studies. With that in mind, social studies has become a catch-all for every new and old social or historical concern; again with little guidance on implementation.

Teachers are the gatekeepers of the curriculum and how they control the curriculum is personal and unique. Cherryholmes (2013) argued that with social studies "...we should not expect definite agreement on what to teach, because text and purposes are slippery and people have different purposes and interests..." (p. 571). This study contributed to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem of how social studies is taught by understanding how teachers define, interpret, and experience the social studies.

Purpose of the Study

Theorists have identified broad aims or purposes of social studies. Many of the stated purposes have similar qualities, but nonetheless, they are different. A common, agreed upon definition of social studies is non-existent (Cherryholmes, 2013; Evans, 2004; Thornton, 2005). The curriculum standards published by NCSS (1994) featured ten broad concepts, or strands, such as production and civilization. Recently, with the push for a national set of standards in reading and mathematics, a committee was formed to create a similar set of standards for social studies. The result, *The College, Career, and Citizenship Framework (C3)*, was an inquiry-based framework for social studies. Although full endorsement of the framework from the Chief Council for School State Officers (CCSSO) was not received, nearly half the states have adopted these standards (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013).

This recent publication of a new framework is evidence of the dynamic changes that are often realized in the social studies. For social studies encompasses both the present and the past with multiple lenses including cultural, historical, economic, social, political, and geographic. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how social studies educators experience the teaching of social studies and to what extent

these experiences relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations. The research questions for this study were:

- Q1 How do secondary teachers experience learning and teaching social studies?
- Q2 How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?
- Q3 How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations?

Personal Stance

My interest in how teachers experience teaching social studies and their perceptions of the purpose of social studies began as my teaching career shifted from that of classroom teacher to social studies curriculum specialist. As a classroom teacher of fifteen years, I planned my lessons in isolation. Except for an annual classroom observation, no other adults were in the classroom with me. Any feedback on my performance came from student assessments and an occasional parent comment about an assigned student project. Professional development days were often spent learning a new instructional method or activity, which I would apply in the classroom to whatever topic I happened to be teaching at the time. I reflected upon my instruction between classes, making adjustments as the school day unfolded. I would also adjust the order of the content to be taught on an annual basis, though my instructional routines and strategies did not seem to vary from the previous years. Occasionally a colleague would ask about an activity that I had implemented. There were few opportunities to discuss with others the content or the curriculum. So-called "planning time" was spent with my grade level colleagues, who taught different core subjects than me.

When I was offered the opportunity to make a lateral move from classroom teacher to that of social studies curriculum specialist in my school district, I hesitated.

My belief at that time was that all social studies teachers taught and planned as I did. I was unsure how this new position would afford me a chance to make a difference. Being the first social studies specialist in the district and one of two in the state, there were no models or exemplars to follow.

As a new specialist, I bonded with my teacher-to-teacher cadre members. Most of my new colleagues were reading or mathematics specialists. From them I learned how to be an observer and how to offer suggestions to improve instruction. I found that most of my work evolved around classroom management or behavior issues rather than content. I never had much difficulty with classroom discipline, so there was a learning curve. My desire to learn more about social studies education was couched, and the demand for improving social studies by administrators was not a district priority.

In these early years as a specialist, I became aware that not all social studies teachers taught the way that I did. I was intrigued. I questioned my instructional practice—who is to say that teaching facts through stories, teaching skills through literature, or teaching mnemonic devices to recall assessment material were not valid or more valid than my belief and perspective of the purpose of social studies? Also called into question were my beliefs of the purpose of social studies and whether my practice aligned to those beliefs.

It is now sixteen years since I was a classroom teacher. I was promoted to district social studies supervisor, prior to retiring from that position in June 2018. Currently, I am employed as a field supervisor working with pre-service social studies teachers. Through my graduate studies, I have found myself making connections between my studies and research to my first educational interest—social studies. Through this study,

I came to understand how teachers articulated, interpreted, and experienced social studies. I also understood that there are common themes of perceptions among social studies teachers. Lastly, I analyzed my findings using a model of social studies orientations.

Significance of the Study

While there is research that examines the impact of standards-based curriculum, mandatory assessments, and different instructional strategies, there is little research on the phenomenon of teachers' experiences and perspectives and how that impacts what occurs in the classroom and with teacher planning. This study, using a phenomenological approach, focused on secondary educators' experiences with and perspectives on social studies. Theoretical and empirical studies of the impact of curriculum standards, instructional methods, and standardized assessments upon teachers' practice are limited by the methodology used. This phenomenological study described "the common meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences*" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76, emphasis in the original). A phenomenological methodology was selected for this study to uncover what participants have experienced and how they experienced it. By analyzing and comparing the findings in this study to a model of orientations, further discussion and reflection on the implications of teachers' orientations and approaches were possible. This study sought to fill the gap in the literature by examining the experiences of secondary social studies teachers.

Social studies as a field of study is multifaceted and massive. The research on social studies is abundant. The methods to teach social studies are numerous. Missing from the literature is the voice of the teacher. How do teachers decide what and how to

teach? How do their experiences as learners, instructors, and employees impact the lessons they plan and execute? This study shared the experiences of six secondary social studies teachers to complement the existing literature on the purposes of teaching social studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A complete review of the literature about social studies education research would be impossible when one considers that social studies is more than a topic taught and assessed in schools. Avery and Barton (2017) characterized social studies education research as an “extensive and sometime unwieldy body of work” (p. 185). Social studies research literature addresses topics such as instructional strategies, curriculum materials, assessment implications, educational theory, pedagogical approaches, and so on.

Research in social studies has employed traditional research methods to “[connect] our field to more general scholarly traditions” (Manfra & Bolick, 2017a, p. 4). Social studies education research has seen an increase in qualitative studies over non-qualitative studies, as well as studies that use a variety of qualitative methodologies. Dinkelman and Cuenca (2017) documented this change by reviewing 96 issues of *Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)*. Though *TRSE* is not the only research journal currently being published, the authors argued that “we currently view *TRSE* as the best single-source window for insights into the state of social studies education research” (p. 104). The authors found that from 1991 to 2014, 60.4 percent of all the articles published in *TRSE* used qualitative methods. This trend continues with 86.2 percent of *TRSE* empirical articles being qualitative based in the years from 2011 to 2014. Additionally, Dinkelman and Cuenca found dominant trends within the research in history education, pre-service teacher education, case study methodologies, and qualitative methods.

This review was conducted by first reviewing materials that I had accumulated throughout my 30-year career as a social studies educator. One source, which proved to be invaluable, was the *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (Shaver, 1991). Since its publication, there have been two additional volumes of social studies research. Additional resources were obtained through the *TRSE* journal, which is considered the leading professional research journal for social studies educators (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017; Levstik & Tyson, 2008a). Database searches were conducted through *Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)*, *Google Scholar*, *ProQuest Research Library*, and *ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global* by using the keywords social studies, perspective, beliefs, phenomenology, teacher, and qualitative. In addition, references found in various studies and literature were used to expand the search for additional sources.

The following literature review focuses on the research questions:

- Q1 How do secondary teachers experience learning and teaching social studies?
- Q2 How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?
- Q3 How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations?

This review is divided into areas of research by first presenting the concept of social studies, then the focus is narrowed to include literature about the value and interpretation of social studies. A section on teacher beliefs and a section on general social studies research are included. The review culminates with a brief discussion of phenomenology and the phenomenological studies conducted relevant to social studies.

Social Studies Defined

Under the Constitution of the United States, individual states have been delegated the authority to set their curriculum and standards. The standards-based era of the 1990s brought the history versus social studies debate to the national level with both history and social studies standards being developed by national professional organizations. History standards written by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) National Center of History in Schools were rejected by the United States Senate in 1995 by a vote of 99 to 1. According to Saxe (2004) this defeat of history standards “left a void in school curricula that the NCSS standards quickly filled” (p. 5). Under the Clinton Administration’s Goals 2000 program, which was first authorized in 1994, the states developed standards in content areas including social studies (Saxe, 2004; Schwartz & Robinson, 2000).

In 1994, NCSS published the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies to serve as a guide to states when developing their standards and curriculum (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). For over two decades the 1994 NCSS framework was the guiding document until it was supplanted by the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017). The *C3* was not accepted without controversy. In 2013, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), an organization of state and U.S. territory educational leaders, withdrew its support of a new social studies standards framework. CCSSO Executive Director Chris Minnich specified confusion over "who is hosting and who is writing," (as cited in Gewertz, 2013). Nonetheless, several states have fully adopted the *C3* as their states’ standards. The *C3* is the current framework for

accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) with full implementation by teacher preparation programs by 2018 (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017).

“Defining social studies is not an easy task; it is encumbered by a confounding history, conflicting conceptual ideas, and strong ideological divergence in both political and educational philosophy” (Nelson, 2001, p. 15). NCSS, the country’s “leading professional organization” (Grant & Vansledright, 2014, p.67), published a definition in 1992. A widely held definition of social studies is the NCSS definition adopted in 1992:

...the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (NCSS, 2010, p. 9)

By listing the different subject areas commonly thought of as being social studies subjects, NCSS established its stance on being all-inclusive of all content areas (Evans, 2017). In addition, NCSS has taken a strong stance on academic freedom, “Without the...opportunities of intellectual inquiry, the overarching mission of social studies education shall be quelled” (Collum, 2016, p. 186). This position on academic freedom is based on democratic ideals that include First Amendment rights.

In other areas, social studies seems to be forgotten or reduced in status. The new *C3* focuses on four core subjects of civics, economics, geography, and history in the main portion of the framework and includes companion documents for anthropology, psychology, and sociology. These addendums appear to be afterthoughts, rather than the primary content focus. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 included the four social studies core subjects, while only mentioning social studies once under Section 4104 – State Use of Funds (United States, 1965). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) currently administers examinations in civics, geography, U.S. history, and economics (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

Other definitions and descriptions of social studies can be found in the literature. Parker (2015) defined social studies by the outcomes of the discipline:

Social studies is at the center of a good school curriculum because it is where students learn to see and interpret the world—its people, places, cultures, systems, and problems; its dreams and calamities—now and long ago. In social studies lessons and units of study, students don't simply experience the world but are helped deliberately to understand it, to care for it, to think deeply and critically about it, and to take their place on public stage. This, at any rate is the goal. (p.

3)

Social studies textbooks assigned to pre-service teachers have provided definitions. At times, the NCSS definition is the only definition provided (see Agarwal-Rangnath, 2013, p. 5). Methods textbook authors supplied readers with different definitions, but with common attributes such as skills and knowledge. Grant and

Vansledright (2014), contributors to the *C3* framework, described elementary social studies as

how and why people behave as they do (from psychology), how people operate in group settings (from sociology), how cultural groups are similar and different (from anthropology), how economic and political systems function (from economics and political science), how people interact with their physical environment (from geography), and how people make sense of the past (from history). (p. 68)

Grant and Vansledright (2014) saw social studies as *threads* of disciplines, each with learning objectives specific to each discipline. Similarly, Zevin (2015) defined social studies as

Social studies should be defined in multiples. It is an all-encompassing subject representing a fusion of history and the social sciences with help from the humanities and the sciences...Different traditions flow within the veins of social studies, one coming from history as a discipline, another from civics, and a third from the social sciences. So, one definition of social studies is to include pretty much everything having to do with human history and society. (p. 3)

Nelson (2001) recounted various definitions of social studies beginning with the 1916 definition from the Report of the Committee on Social Studies of the National Education Association Commission on the Reorganization of the Secondary School. In his chapter, the author made a case for welcoming disagreement in the field which “demonstrates the vitality of the field, and recognizes the worthiness of examination and criticism” (p. 33). He correlated disagreement as an essential principle of democracy

which “demands access to and examination of knowledge, freedom to explore ideas, and development of skills of critical study” (p. 30).

A study of elementary social studies methods textbooks conducted by Butler, Suh, and Scott (2015) looked at the perspective or purpose of the method textbooks. Using three perspectives of teaching social studies as defined by Stanley (2005), the researchers identified the lens which the textbook authors favored. As with the definition of social studies, social studies methods textbook authors and social studies theorists differ in their labeling of social studies purposes.

The Purpose of Social Studies

The definition of social studies offered by NCSS is focused on students becoming adult citizens who can make sound decisions (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). The NCSS definition has differing interpretations of the purpose of social studies. Vinson and Ross (2001) clarified:

The question of course, is whether social studies should promote a brand of citizenship that is adaptive to the status quo and interests of the socially powerful or whether it should promote citizenship aimed at transforming and reconstructing society (p. 42).

Perspectives on the purpose of social studies vary throughout the research literature. Table 1 provides an overview of the different traditions or approaches in the academic discipline of social studies. These purposes should not be considered complete as there are other topics being taught, but as Thornton (2017) pointed out there are few historical accounts on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) issues;

technology; global education; accountability; standards; and English Language Learners. The impact of these contemporary issues on perspectives is not yet known.

Table 1

Social Studies Purposes

Scholar	Terminology	Categories
Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1978	Traditions	Citizen Transmission Social Science Disciplines Reflective Inquiry
Evans, 2004	Camps	Traditional Historians Social Scientists Social Efficiency Advocates Social Meliorists Social Reconstructionists
Fallace, 2017	Orientations	Traditional Disciplinary Progressive
Stanley, 2005	Approaches	Social Reconstruction Pragmatic Method of Intelligence Knowledge Acquisition

Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1978) defined three traditions that describe the different perspectives often found in social studies curricula: *citizenship transmission*, *social science disciplines*, and *reflective inquiry*. Citizen transmission is based on the idea that the United States is founded on a single culture, one “rooted in the history, literature, and philosophy of Western Civilization” (Vinson & Ross, 2001, p. 43). The citizen transmission tradition “refers to a mode of teaching in which the teachers intend that certain behaviors, knowledge, outlooks, and values will be learned by their students” (Barr et al., 1978, p. 20). With citizenship transmission, the teacher transmits the one “*true culture*.” The second tradition, framed in terms of social science disciplines,

conceptualizes the curriculum directly to specific content subject areas. This tradition can be seen today in high school subjects where social studies has come to mean separate disciplines such as civics, geography, economics, and history. The third tradition identified by Barr et al. (1978) is reflective inquiry. Reflective inquiry “developed originally out of the work of John Dewey...[requiring students to] problem solve within a specific sociopolitical context” (Vinson & Ross, 2001, pp. 44-45). Like Barr et al., William B. Stanley (2005) saw social studies as having three perspectives.

Stanley (2005) described three approaches to teaching social studies: *social reconstruction*, *pragmatic method of intelligence*, and *knowledge acquisition*. Social reconstruction is based on George S. Count’s call for a “new social order.” Counts (2017) saw the role of the teacher as one that “should rather seek power and then strive to use that power fully and wisely in the interests of the great masses of the people” (p. 59). Stanley (2005) concluded that social reconstruction appears in the social studies curriculum when teachers “direct our attention to persistent social problems” (p. 286). The second approach described by Stanley is based on John Dewey’s progressive approach to democratic education. According to Stanley, “Dewey’s curriculum theory was not based on a particular theory of social welfare, it did emphasize the centrality of providing the conditions under which the method of intelligence could be applied” (p. 284). Dewey did not specify a goal or outcome for education but instead believed that transfer of knowledge would result in sound reasoning and action. The third approach Stanley identified was that of knowledge acquisition, based on the beliefs of Walter Lippman, Richard Posner, and James Lemming who felt that students lack the ability to obtain adequate knowledge to solve social problems. From this approach, students would

be taught traditional content, rather than developing the skills to critique social issues. This approach is present today in the writings of authors Diane Ravitch (2003), E. D. Hirsch (2014), and Chester E. Finn (2003).

Although taken to task on the use of the word *war*, Ronald W. Evans chronicled the history of social studies as a war, a war between approaches, which at times appear, die off, reappear, and endure (Evans, 2017). Evans (2006) focused on five approaches promoted by traditional historians, social scientists, social efficiency advocates, social meliorists, and social reconstructionists. Evans (2004) identified each approach as a *camp* (p. 1). As each new camp is established, it is often accompanied by a social or political change. Each camp struggled "at different times either to retain control of social studies or to influence its direction" (Evans, 2006, p. 317). Of the social studies camps, traditional historians were the first to establish a professional organization, the American Historical Association, in 1884 (Evans, 2004, p. 6). This camp has seen a resurgence with supporters such as Diane Ravitch (2003) and "conservative foundations and interest groups" (Evans, 2006, p. 320). Evans (2017) simplified the camps as being from one of two categories, traditional or progressive. Traditional historians are the only members of the traditional camp and the remaining four camps are considered progressive camps.

Social studies educators and theorists often recognize a collection of multiple content areas as social studies. The term *social studies* was first widely published in 1916 (Lybarger, 1991; Thornton, 2008, 2017). The social studies camp was resurrected in the 1960s. This camp promoted an inquiry method of learning and is once again popular with the introduction of the new *C3* framework. The social efficiency camp appears in the history of social studies at times when industrialization and business goals

align with the goals of education and is "aimed at preparing students for various life roles" (Evans, 2006, p. 317). Social meliorists have focused on an issues-based curriculum, much like the focus of the high school course, Problems of Democracy (POD). POD courses lost momentum during the 1960s, but there has been a recent renaissance interest in social justice-oriented social studies (Agarwal-Rangnath, 2013). The last camp described by Evans (2004) is the social reconstructionist camp (p. 6). Evans saw George Counts and Harold Rugg as among the leaders of the social reconstructionist camp. Evans concluded with "reformers underestimated the persistence of the grammar of schooling, basic aspects of schools, classrooms, and teaching that defy change to deflect attempts at reform" (p. 177).

Fallace (2017) contributed to the purpose debate in the recent social studies research handbook by fastening the perspectives to learning theories. He identified three orientations as *traditional*, *disciplinary*, and *progressive*. The traditional orientation included any curriculum goal where there was "an attempt to transmit a body of predetermined and prescribed content to students, regardless of the social and/or political outlook of the author" (p. 44). Fallace saw the traditional orientation as a form of transmission and based on "a behaviorist approach to learning" (p.45). The second orientation, disciplinary, is one where the disciplines are the context for learning where students think like the experts in the content field and therefore "reflects a cognitive approach to learning" (p. 45). The last and third orientation presented, the progressive orientation, requires students to develop their own questions which are rooted in the student's personal history. Fallace connected this orientation to an application or situated approach.

Each scholar has provided a way to organize social studies into clear and exact categories. The periphery of the perspectives or whether a blending of categories is even possible was not found in the literature. To Thornton (2005) regardless of whether social studies is taught as an integrated course or by isolated disciplines is not as important as what is being taught, “Whatever *social studies* is taken to mean, its educational significance for students is primarily to be found in the enacted curriculum of classrooms” (p. 3, emphasis in the original). Thornton encouraged the use of *aim talks* as a way for educators to reflect on the purpose of social studies. Without aims talks, “the purpose of education becomes submerged and the aims originally conceived may be lost” (p. 47). The value and experience of social studies are important to understanding the “constraints that affect our approaches to and goals for social studies education” (Ross, 2001, p. 9). Research on how social studies educators apply or understand these different perspectives is lean in comparison to the theoretical literature, indicating a gap in the research.

Teachers’ Beliefs

The research on beliefs is plentiful. Likewise, the research on teachers’ beliefs is also plentiful, wide, and complex. It is difficult to categorize beliefs in a manner that is all-inclusive. Ashton (2015) chronicled in her historical review of research of teacher beliefs how the direction of research had evolved over 60 years, cycling through various perspectives. The author concluded her review by establishing two paths of research. One path of research that Ashton defined was focused on changing teacher beliefs with “the goal to improve their relationships with their students and their students’ motivation and achievement” (p. 45). The other path focused on the distinction between teacher

knowledge and teacher beliefs and the various factors that impact knowledge and beliefs such as classroom contexts, parents, community, and governmental structures. Ashton stated that research in this second area has produced qualitative studies that are “a rich source of ideas, but they need to be validated in further research” (p. 44). This section of the literature review will present various definitions of belief, how beliefs are discussed separately from knowledge, and studies of belief formation and change.

Definitions of Teacher Beliefs

The literature on beliefs overflows with definitions. Pajares (1992) described the difficulty of multiple definitions of beliefs as

Defining beliefs is at best a game of player's choice. They travel in disguise and often under alias—attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature. (p. 309)

What is true of definitions of beliefs, in general, is true of teachers' beliefs. However, Pajares stated that identifying teacher beliefs, separate from all beliefs, is important in research:

Teachers' attitudes about education—about schooling, teaching, learning, and students—have generally been referred to as teachers' beliefs. As it is clear that not only teachers have these beliefs, however, the label is inappropriate. Also, teachers have beliefs about matters beyond their profession, and, though these

certainly influence their practice, they should not be confused with the beliefs they hold that are more specific to the educational process. When researchers speak of teachers' beliefs, however, they seldom refer to the teachers' broader, general belief system, of which educational beliefs are but a part, but to teachers' educational beliefs. It is important to make the distinction. (p. 316)

Kagan (1992) found that “even the term ‘teacher belief’ is not used consistently, with some researchers referring instead to teachers’ ‘principles of practice,’ ‘personal epistemologies,’ ‘perspectives,’ ‘practical knowledge,’ or ‘orientations’” (p. 66). Fives and Buehl (2012) found that “...the manifestation of beliefs in teachers’ practice is complicated, and the understanding of what is meant by teachers’ beliefs in the research literature remains murky” (p. 471). Skott (2015) cautioned:

Despite the shared core and characteristics of the concept of beliefs, it is still somewhat underspecified and there is little consensus on how to distinguish it from attitudes, values, and world views, terms that are also used in the literature. (p. 19)

Though there is no single, agreed upon definition for teacher beliefs, scholars have offered definitions.

Fives and Buehl (2008) studied the beliefs of teachers and identified beliefs with the definition offered by Pajares (1992), “an individual’s judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgement that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend and do” (p. 316). Focused on classroom practice, Kagan stated “teacher belief is defined broadly as tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught” (p. 65).

Skott (2015) offered clarification of the term teacher belief as “the term is used to designate individual, subjectively true, value-laden mental constructs that are relatively stable results of substantial social experiences and that have significant impact on one’s interpretations of and contributions to classroom practice” (p. 19). Lastly, Fives and Buehl (2012) noted common characteristics within the offered definitions of teachers’ beliefs including whether beliefs are stable or dynamic, if beliefs are unique and individualized or part of a larger system, and the relationship to knowledge. Regardless of how teacher beliefs are defined, it is the disclosure of the common characteristics as identified by Fives and Buehl that will indicate the researchers’ perspective of teachers’ beliefs. For example, if the research is conducted with the point-of-view that beliefs can and do change, this may influence the findings.

With a lack of consensus on a definition of educational beliefs, Pajares (1992) noted a separation between beliefs and knowledge:

Beliefs are seldom clearly defined in studies or used explicitly as a conceptual tool, but the chosen and perhaps artificial distinction between belief and knowledge is common to most definitions: Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact. (p. 313)

In research, teacher beliefs and knowledge are often considered to be separate conceptions, yet are complements and interrelated (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2008, 2012; Khader, 2012; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992; Skott, 2015).

Formation of Beliefs

Unlike other professions, teachers are no stranger to the world of education. Because of this extensive interaction with education, teachers develop beliefs about

teaching from a very young age. Pajares (1992) described pre-service teachers as “...insiders. They need not redefine their situation. The classrooms of colleges and universities, and the people and practices in them, differ little from classrooms and people they have known for years” (p. 323). Even with an extended history with education, Kagan (1992) pointed out that “teachers are often unaware of their own beliefs, they do not always possess language with which to describe and label their beliefs, and they may be reluctant to espouse them publicly” (p. 66). Furthermore, when teachers could describe their beliefs, studies have shown that there are inconsistencies between teachers’ beliefs and classroom practices (Brown, 2009; Meirink, Meijer, Verloop, & Bergen, 2009; Thornton, 2005).

Skott (2015) discussed the methodological issues with researching teachers’ beliefs and suggested using “stimulated recall or some other method of inviting teachers to think aloud about relevant classroom processes” (p. 21). In their study of what teachers believe, Fives and Buehl (2008) developed a list of question prompts that elicit teacher articulation of past experiences to understand the knowledge that is unique to teachers, the knowledge that is unique to teaching, as well as beliefs about the ability to teach.

Inquiry into past experiences is tantamount to researching teachers’ beliefs. Pajares (1992) stated that:

Evaluations of teaching and teachers that individuals make as children survive nearly intact into adulthood and become stable judgments that do not change, even as teacher candidates grow into competent professionals, able, in other contexts, to make more sophisticated and informed judgments (p. 324).

There are research implications for whether teachers' beliefs change or not. According to Fives and Buehl (2012), findings of research on changing beliefs is divided into two views, that of beliefs being stable (Kagan, 1992) and the other view of beliefs that can change, especially when prescribed professional development protocols are followed (Guskey, 1986). Each view has consequences and implications for future research. If beliefs are thought to be stable and fixed, then research into how to change beliefs, especially toward a new methodology or practice, is useless. On the other hand, if beliefs are thought to be malleable and flexible, then "there is little point in investigating them" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p. 475); and if teachers' beliefs do change, "their practices often do not" (Khader, 2012, p. 74). Similarly, Lortie (2002) discussed the low value of teacher pre-service education courses in changing beliefs about what constitutes a good teacher:

Thus when they describe their former teachers they do not contrast their "student" perceptions with a later, more sophisticated viewpoint. They talk about assessments they made as youngsters as currently viable, as stable judgments of quality. What constituted good teaching then, constitutes good teaching now; there is no great divide between preentry and postentry evaluations. (p. 65)

Skott (2015) stated that beliefs can change, but "as a result of substantial engagement in relevant social practices" (p. 18). Kagan (1992) agreed that "experienced teachers are also unlikely to modify their belief systems without some dramatic disequilibrium" (p. 78). Meirink, Meijer, Verloop, and Bergen (2009) found that teachers' beliefs changed upon completion of professional development, but not

necessarily in ways that were congruent with the professional development goals. There are conflicting views on changing teacher beliefs' in the literature (Ashton, 2015).

A resolution to this research riddle of teachers' beliefs may lie in the timing and context of when and where the belief is being examined or discussed. In later writings, Gill and Fives (2015) stated that "beliefs need to be evaluated in content and from that perspective be considered as more or less availing, rather than assuming the value of the belief independent of practice, practitioner, and context" (p. 8); beliefs about social studies education notwithstanding.

Teachers' Beliefs About Social Studies

In their literature review about teachers' beliefs about social studies, Peck and Herriot (2015) concluded that "where social studies is being taught, to whom, and...by who" (p.387) are factors that influence social studies instruction and curriculum. Nespor (1985) found that the subject and grade level taught greatly influenced teaching. Of the social studies teachers in his study, Nespor found that social studies teachers believed "that no student could be realistically expected to remember it over [a three to four year] span, no matter how well they learned it in the short run" (p. 153). Instead, social studies teachers focused on teaching skills as a way to disseminate the discrete pieces of information and fact. Nespor explained, "The type of response chosen, and the precise formulation of the supplementary goals (if that course of action was followed) were, as we have seen, products of the particular belief systems of the teachers involved" (p. 154). Nespor summarized that "the beliefs of the teachers formed repertoires of explanations or goals which could be invoked to justify particular courses or action" (p. 154). These findings indicated that belief systems were different for each teacher.

Peck and Herriot (2015) reviewed the literature on social studies teachers' beliefs including beliefs about purpose, content, controversial issues, themselves, and students. The authors cited eleven articles or studies about the "beliefs that teachers hold about the purpose(s) of teaching social studies" (p. 389). Of those eleven studies the authors found that the purpose of teaching social studies is based on three areas of citizenship, transmission of national identity, and how to co-exist with others. In addition, the authors examined studies, not of general social studies, but of the content specific areas of history, citizenship, and geography. Peck and Herriot called for more research of social studies teachers' beliefs since the research "has not made much progress since Thornton's (1991) review" (p. 397). The authors called for research in the specific content areas other than history and citizenship. Research that investigates what transpires between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum was also cited as an area lacking in research.

Stephen Thornton (1985) examined through his dissertation research the disconnect between the "intended, actualized, and experienced curricula" (p. 1) of high school United States History courses. Thornton provided portraits of three high school social studies teachers. From the participant interviews, he identified three different teacher curricular priorities: academic realism, personal connections, and cognitive development. Thornton discussed several implications based on his study, including a call for teachers to be actively engaged in reflective evaluation of their intended goals, instructional execution, and student work.

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) provided a framework for investigating the intended, operational, and received curriculum which taken together form an

instructional arc. This framework can be used in its entirety or in part. The authors explained that the instructional arc is useful for examining perspectives since "...the teachers' intentions are not always stated or obvious. They are, in some cases, even unknown, or not fully conscious, to the teachers" (p. 25). And in his discussion of selecting a phenomenon to research, Vagle (2014) stated that "sometimes we do not know what we think and feel about phenomena until we work through it with others" (p. 71).

Research about veteran teachers' experience as social studies educators is rare. The research on pre-service social studies teachers and new teachers is more plentiful. This difference is perhaps due to the convenience of participant selection or it may be due to the anticipated audience of the research (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017). For whatever the reason, there exists a gap in the literature of veteran teachers' experience and a sense of purpose for the social studies. The elusiveness of teacher perspectives of social studies is reflected by an absence in the literature.

Social Studies Research

Social studies research has evolved since the printing of the first handbook in 1991. Manfra and Bolick (2017a) found that "today, a majority of social studies educational researchers use qualitative research methodologies and, increasingly, they are engaging practitioners as collaborative partners in research endeavors" (p. 2). Manfra and Bolick summarized:

The shift from mainly experimental or quasi-experimental designs to interpretive or critical approaches has led to changes in the way social studies researchers approach theory—from those interested in generating theory through scientific

inquiry to predict student behavior and outcomes in social studies classrooms to those interested in using theory as a lens to interpret observed phenomenon in a naturalistic setting. (p. 2)

In her first editorial address in *TRSE*, Patricia Avery (2008) reflected on 25 years of journal publications. She found that most articles were based on qualitative studies and there were more articles that pertained to teacher educators and classroom teachers. Avery noted a “wider range of theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and methods being employed in social studies research” (p. 7). Avery also called for an increase in articles “that look at how gender, culture, race/ethnicity, immigrant status, and/or income level shape the experiences of students in social studies classes” (p. 7).

Taking over as editor of *TRSE*, Wayne Journell (2017) remarked in his first issue introduction that:

Methodologically, scholarship published in *TRSE* tends to be predominately qualitative in nature. On one hand, the preponderance of qualitative research in *TRSE* is not problematic. In many cases, questions of interest to the field can be best addressed through qualitative methods. (p. 2)

While much of the research in social studies remains qualitative in nature, the scope of issues relating to social studies education has widened, as have the methodologies being used by researchers (Avery, 2008; Manfra & Bolick, 2017a; Nelson & Stanley, 2013).

Of research in social studies education, Shaver (2001) asked the question “for what purpose?” (p. 231). His review of the research in the field was gloomy. Shaver stated that the lack of consensus of epistemological frames and sense of research purpose in the literature had further fragmented the field to the point where little improvement in

social studies education had been realized. Barton and Levstik (2004) concurred that “we have to admit that many classrooms...show little evidence of the curricular and instructional perspectives we have tried to promote” (p. 245). These two rather grim conclusions captured both the undefined nature of epistemologies in the social studies education research and the challenges facing social studies teacher education in the United States. A more optimistic view was offered by Barton (2006) when he described a field where “social studies researchers are producing a growing body of empirical evidence that can be used to make decisions about teaching and learning” (p. 3).

The first comprehensive publication on social studies research, *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (Shaver, 1991) served as the foundation for the next two volumes published in 2008 (Levstik & Tyson, 2008b) and more recently in 2017 (Manfra & Bolick, 2017b). The first *Handbook* was published as the standards-based education movement was gaining momentum. Included in the eight subsections of this first *Handbook*, were topics surrounding research methodologies, students and teachers, instructional strategies, integration with other curricula, and international research.

The second handbook, *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education* (Levstik & Tyson, 2008b), revisited some topics that were covered in the first. Having been published more than ten years after the national standards were established and in response to a call for more emphasis on civic education, social justice, gender, and sexuality issues—context not easily drawn from the national standards at that time, this second handbook included chapters on these issues. The most recent handbook, *The Wiley Handbook of Social Studies Research* (Manfra & Bolick, 2017b), presented topics

that reflected a change in “social and intellectual shifts” (p. 2) since the first *Handbook*. Qualitative research and research from teachers as collaborators were included in response to changes in the field of social studies research. This latest *Handbook* acknowledged that qualitative research has the potential to “heighten sensitivities to instructional, curricular, and contextual features that might otherwise be overlooked” (Hahn, 2017, p. 573).

The trilogy reflected an expanding field of research due in part to the introduction of standards, mandatory assessments, and societal changes which have changed social studies curriculum and instruction (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Grant, 2007; Hahn, 2017). However, in the third volume, the only indexed mention about teacher beliefs was a chapter on media. Beliefs were not indexed in the first *Handbook*. Two chapters in the second *Handbook* were identified as containing references to beliefs, and in both cases, these were about changing beliefs of pre-service teachers. Hawley and Crowe (2016) noted a lack of empirical research on the changing beliefs of pre-service teachers and recognized “that the field of social studies teacher education has relied on mostly theoretical arguments...” (p. 438). This minimal mention of teacher beliefs indicated a need for more empirical research on social studies teachers’ beliefs as Thornton (1991) concluded “because...teachers’ beliefs about the meaning of social studies strongly influence their curricular-instructional decision making, researchers should seek to explore fully how and why teachers come to define social studies as they do” (p. 241).

Phenomenology

According to Merriam (2009), “Phenomenology is both a twentieth century school of philosophy associated with Husserl and a type of qualitative research” (p. 24).

A review of literature about phenomenology is included here since phenomenology constitutes the theoretical framework for this study. Unique to phenomenology is the desire to reach back to original experience. Van Manen (1990) described:

The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of essence—in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (p. 36)

The original experience will be unique for every individual as it is constructed from both objective and subjective experiences (Giorgi, 2009). Crotty (2012) elaborated, “Constructionism and phenomenology are so intertwined that one could hardly be phenomenological while espousing either an objectivist or subjectivist epistemology” (p. 12). Phenomenologists are interested in researching “the way we experience the world...in which we live as human beings” (van Manen, 1990, p. 5) and believe that experience is a product of constructing knowledge of both the objective and subjective. Likewise, constructivists believe that “knowledge is subjective, contextualized, and personally experienced rather than acquired from or imposed from outside” (Egbert & Sanden, 2014, p. 35).

Constructionism is “the view that *all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted with an essentially social context*” (Crotty, 2012, p. 41, emphasis in the original).

Constructionism defines how knowledge is formed. To Husserl, who has been

recognized as “the founder of phenomenology” (Giorgi, 2009, p.4) the subject-object dualism did not exist, but instead he “referred to “transcendental consciousness” because it is neither subjective nor objective but embraces both” (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990, p. 36). Noesis and noema are words Husserl introduced to explain the basic structure of consciousness (Giorgi, 2009; Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). “When speaking of the [subject] side correlation, Husserl uses the term ‘noesis.’ When he speaks of the object side of the correlation, he uses the term ‘noema’ ” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 105). Stewart and Mickunas (1990) cautioned that:

the noetic-noematic structure of consciousness cannot be identified either with the subject or object...for it is the condition for the possibility of experiencing both the subject and the object. One never finds the noetic and noematic in isolation from each other but always correlated; they are two sides of the same coin. (pp. 37-38)

Husserl discussed *intentionality of consciousness* as not dividing “subjects and objects, but into the dual Cartesian nature of both subjects and objects as they appear in consciousness” (Creswell, 2013, p. 77). While constructionism explains how knowledge is made; the intentionality of consciousness explains the act of obtaining knowledge. Constructionism and intentionality are intertwined. Experience is built upon knowledge which is both objective and subjective.

Three phenomenology approaches of transcendental, hermeneutical, and existential phenomenology were reviewed for this study. Transcendental phenomenology was first introduced by Edmond Husserl in the late 19th century (Cherryholmes, 1991; Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). Husserl

spent much of his life describing and refining transcendental phenomenology so that a phenomenologist could develop “a radically unprejudiced justification of his (or her) basic views on the world and himself and explore their rational interconnections” (Beyer, 2016, Life and work, para. 4). Phenomenology borrowed two ideas from Husserl, epoché and lifeworld. Phenomenologists see epoché as a way to understand the structures of phenomena as they appear to one’s consciousness by temporarily bracketing or setting aside all other knowledge associated with the phenomenon. Husserl described the act of epoché as “...I exclude all science to this natural world no matter how firmly they stand there for me, no matter how much I admire them” (as cited in Giorgi, 2009, p. 10). Lifeworld to Husserl was the “common, everyday world into which we are all born and live. It is usually a world of ordinaries” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 10). Husserl’s work was conceptual and “he doesn’t describe in detail the steps involved in an eidetic reduction” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p.15). The Husserlian framework included examining and describing experiences in the lifeworld by setting aside all other knowledge to reduce the phenomenon to the essence or intentionality. Phenomenologists who conducted research using a Husserlian approach “search for the essence of the intentional relation of a particular phenomenon” (Vagle, 2014, p. 30). Moustakas (1994) summarized the process of intentionality as follows:

1. Explicating the sense in which our experiences are directed;
2. Discerning the features of consciousness that are essential for the individuation of objects (real or imaginary) that are before us in consciousness (Noema);
3. Explicating how beliefs about such objects (real or imaginary) may be acquired, how it is that we are experiencing what we are experiencing (Noesis);
and

4. Integrating the noematic and noetic correlates of intentional into meanings and essences of experience. (pp. 31-32)

Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, developed a second branch of phenomenology emphasizing the interpretation of text, which he called “heuristic” or “hermeneutical phenomenology” (Creswell, 2013; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). What set Heidegger apart from Husserl was his approach to interpretation. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) explained Heidegger’s approach as “while the existence of fore-structures may precede our encounters with new things, understanding may actually work the other way, from the thing to the fore-structure” (p. 25). Vagle (2014) described Heidegger’s approach as “more about manifestations than essences...[which] are in a constant state of interpretation” (p. 30). Van Manen (1990) defined “the fundamental model of this approach is textual reflection on the lived experiences and practical actions of everyday life with the intent to increase one’s thoughtfulness and practical resourcefulness or tact” (p. 4). Hermeneutic phenomenologists reflected upon and interpreted texts to reveal “what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced” (van Manen, 1990, p. 29). Phenomenologists, using the hermeneutic approach, built upon the Husserlian framework by interpreting detailed descriptions of a phenomenon supplied by those that experienced the phenomenon.

A third approach, existential phenomenology, elaborated by Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, consisted of extending Husserl’s phenomenology to include the interrelationship of body and consciousness (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Smith et al., 2009; Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). Stewart and Mickunas (1990) offered three points of emphasis for an existential phenomenologist: “importance of the body, freedom and choice, and intersubjectivity” (p. 65). Similarly, Vagle (2014) described post-intentional

phenomenology as “dynamic intentional relationships that tie participants, the researcher, the produced text, and their positionalities together” (p. 30). For the existential phenomenologist, the presence of being in the world as a part and as the whole, as well as the absence of one’s self in the world, are key to the final interpretation. Smith et al., (2009) summarized the similarities and differences between the three approaches as:

Husserl’s work establishes for us, first of all, the importance and relevance of a focus on experience and its perception. In developing Husserl’s work further, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre each contribute to a view of the person as embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns. They move us from the descriptive commitments and transcendental interests of Husserl, towards a more interpretative and worldly position with a focus on understanding the perspectival directedness of our involvement in the lived world—something which is personal to each of us, but which is a property of our relationships to the world and others, rather than to use as creatures in isolation. (p. 21)

Creswell (2013) identified philosophical commonalities across the phenomenological approaches in that each approach involved a study of lived experiences, which are consciously made, and the analysis of the experiences was conducted through descriptions of the experience “not explanations or analyses” (p. 77). Even with these convergences, Eddles-Hirsch (2015) described why defining phenomenology is difficult:

phenomenology is a philosophy, a foundation for qualitative research, as well as a research method in its own right. Added to this confusion is the misperception

that phenomenology is one unified approach when it actually consists of three disparate complex philosophies. (p. 251)

For purposes of this literature review, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* definition is used as the hallmark: Phenomenology is “the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view” (Smith, 2013, para. 1).

Phenomenological Research in Social Studies

Van Manen has been credited as being the first to introduce phenomenology as a research practice in social studies, in 1975 (Cherryholmes, 1991). Van Manen (1975) responded to a chapter in the *Second Handbook of Research on Teaching*, “Research on Teaching Social Studies” by James Shaver and Guy Larkins (1973). In his response, Van Manen saw the traditional methods of research as limited and called for more qualitative methods to be used (Nelson, 1994). Van Manen (1975) argued that:

the demand for more rigorous scientific explanations has been countered by arguments that the social world is expressive of meanings which are inaccessible to empirical-analytic science and which are in need of explanations of interpretive kind offered by disciplines such as ethnomethodology, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. (p. 7)

Although van Manen called for more interpretative studies in 1975, this review revealed only 14 publications using a phenomenological approach to research on social studies in the United States. Two databases were used to conduct this search. A search was conducted in the *ProQuest Research Library* for peer-reviewed journal entries using the keywords: social studies, phenomenology, and teachers. A second search of doctoral dissertations was conducted through the *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global*

database using keywords: social studies, phenomenological, middle and high school, teachers, and phenomenology. Each search was limited to the period 2000 to 2017 and only studies conducted in the United States were considered. A second screening of the found studies was conducted and studies where the participants were elementary, novice, or pre-service teachers were excluded. Studies that were qualitative but did not include an aspect of phenomenological methodology were also excluded. Each source was reviewed for data collection, data analysis methods, and findings. The methodology section of each study was examined for the identification of specific data collection and data analysis methods. Table 2 summarizes this research.

Table 2

Selected Phenomenological Studies in the Social Studies

Study	Methods	Selected Findings
Brkich, 2011 University of Florida (dissertation)	Three high school world history teachers. Interviews. Hermeneutic phenomenological data collection and analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers struggle with balancing instruction of content acquisition and knowledge processes. 2. Testing overshadows teacher professionalism. 3. When teachers are not consulted about introducing new theories, the theories may not be implemented.
Busey & Russell, 2016 (journal article)	Two middle school Latino/a students. Semi-structured interviews. Qualitative interview and narrative methodologies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers relied on the interview series method of data collection as detailed by Seidman (2006) was the main “banking” method. 2. Curriculum lacks cultural diversity.
Chiodo & Byford, 2004 (journal article)	Forty-eight 7 th - and 11 th -grade social studies students. Taped interviews, interview notes. Diener and Crandall’s (1978) analysis method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers displayed involvement and enthusiasm, 2. Students described these classes as having a direct relation to their lives.
Clark, 2011 Liberty University (dissertation)	Twelve middle school content area teachers. Interviews, surveys, observations, and document examination. Moustakas’s (1994) analysis method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The experiences that the participants had as students and teachers mold their level of efficacy, the way they teach, and the way they view teaching and learning. 2. Based on the data collected and analyzed, common attitudes and beliefs were present among the participants.

Table 2, continued

Study	Methods	Selected Findings
Gilford, 2016 Liberty University (dissertation)	Eight middle school social studies teachers. Interviews, classroom observations, document analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vocabulary instruction is important to social studies and should be implemented daily. 2. Participant's formative experiences did not influence current instructional techniques.
Henning, 2002 Penn State University (dissertation)	Nine social studies teachers and four district administrators. Interviews, researcher journal. Wolcott's (1994) data analysis method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants found value in collaborating with others to create curriculum units. 2. Administrators preferred a structure to follow when creating curriculum. 3. Anticipated state social studies standards were used as a guide when writing curriculum.
Henry, 2015 Liberty University (dissertation)	Nine middle school teachers of gifted and talented social studies programs. Interviews, survey, and classroom observation. Interpretative phenomenological analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers gave varying definitions of gifted education, social studies, and primary sources. 2. Definitions given by teachers for critical thinking skills were incomplete. 3. Lack of time to teach concepts was noted by participants.
Kruger, 2012 Northern Illinois University (dissertation)	Four secondary social studies teachers. Multi-case study, interviews, classroom observations, document analysis, reflective journals, Seidman's (2006) three-interview series collection method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal experience with controversy influences teachers' understanding of social studies. 2. Use of controversial issues helped to meet the goal of preparing students to be more involved citizens.
Nance, 2012 Oklahoma University (dissertation)	Eleven secondary social studies teachers. Interviewing and note taking. Moustakas's (1994) analysis method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Controversial public issues are compatible and connected to state standards. 2. Students gain different perspectives through controversial public issues. 3. Controversial public issues enhance citizenship.

Table 2, continued

Study	Methods	Selected Findings
Odden, 2015 University of North Dakota (dissertation)	Five secondary social studies teachers. Interviews. Moustakas's (1994) data analysis method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers valued content over special education pedagogy. 2. Teachers valued collaboration with special education teachers, but education of special education students was the responsibility of the special education teacher.
Olsen, 2014 Utah State University (dissertation)	Three secondary social studies teachers. McAdams's (1995) data collection method, observations, artifact/document reflection. Grounded theory data analysis approach.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers did not subscribe to a single purpose as described by Evans (2004). 2. Found four themes of teacher instruction, environment, and beliefs.
Roycroft, 2014 University of West Georgia (dissertation)	Seven social studies teachers in a virtual high school. Seidman's (2006) three-interview series collection method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Four major instructional themes from teachers' descriptions: organization and management; personalization and motivation; scaffolding, and evaluation.
Siracuse, 2011 Ashland College (dissertation)	Twelve female social studies teachers. Personal conversations, and interviews. Feminist approach to data analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Females continue to be underrepresented in the social studies curriculum and profession. 2. Coaching dominates in the dual role of coaching and teaching.
Swogger, 2016 Indiana University of Pennsylvania (dissertation)	Five secondary social studies teachers. Interviews, field notes, curriculum documents, and Seidman's (2006) three-interview series collection method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers see benefits of teacher created curriculum as professional growth and creating a more useful and long-lasting curriculum. 2. Teachers recognized the importance of teaching literacy.

The search resulted with two published studies and 12 doctoral dissertations. Participant pools ranged from 2 to 48 members, with seven participants being the median. Creswell (2013) recommended that “researchers interview from 5 to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon” (p. 81). However, Barton (2006) claimed:

There are no correct or incorrect ways of interviewing participants, observing classrooms, or designing surveys; there are only more and less productive ways of doing these with given populations for particular reasons. (p. 5)

All the studies found for this review used interviewing as the primary method of data gathering. In three studies, the three-interview series method of data collection as detailed by Seidman (2006) was the primary source of data collection (Kruger, 2012; Roycroft, 2014; Swogger, 2016). Seidman’s (2006) Three Step Interview Series consisted of three discrete 90-minute interviews, each with a specific purpose:

The first interview establishes the context of the participants’ experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. (p. 17)

All studies found for this review utilized a phenomenological analysis method to analyze the data. The first step is phenomenological reduction which Merriam (2009) described as “the process of continually returning to the essence of the experience to derive the inner structure or meaning in and of itself” (p. 26). The next steps in the process include horizontalization (viewing all data with equal weight) and imaginative variation (viewing data from different perspectives) (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). These steps are conducted by labeling the themes found in the data.

Saldaña (2013) defined a theme as “an *extended phrase or sentence* that identifies what a unit of data is *about* and/or what it *means*” (p. 175, emphasis in the original). The final step of phenomenological data analysis is “a composite description that presents the “essence” of the phenomenon, called the *essential, invariant structure (or essence)*” (Creswell, 2013, p. 82, emphasis in the original).

Three of the studies (Clark, 2011; Nance, 2012; Odden, 2015) used Moustakas’s (1994) data analysis method. Moustakas (1994) described his procedure:

...*horizontalizing* the data and regarding every horizon or statement relevant to the topic and question as having equal value. From the *horizontalized* statements, the *meaning or meaning units* are listed. These are *clustered* into common categories or *themes*, removing overlapping and repetitive statements. The clustered themes and meanings are used to develop the *textural descriptions of the experience*.

From the textural descriptions, structural descriptions and an integration of textures and structures into the meanings and essences of the phenomenon are constructed. (pp. 118-119, emphasis in the original)

Upon closer examination of the commonalities and unique qualities of the 14 phenomenological research studies found, a gap in the literature was found. The two published articles sought students’ perceptions of social studies (Busey & Russell, 2016; Chiodo & Byford, 2004). Five of the dissertations examined teachers’ perception and experience with new instructional strategies (Clark, 2011; Gilford, 2016; Kruger, 2012; Nance, 2012) and in an online high school (Roycroft, 2014). Three dissertations focused on teachers’ experience due to external changes such as the adoption of new curriculum standards and mandated testing (Brkich, 2011; Henning, 2002; Swogger, 2016). Student

populations with required differentiated instructional and assessment approaches were examined in two dissertations (Henry, 2015; Siracuse, 2011). Only one study examined how teachers developed an understanding and orientation toward social studies through their experiences (Olsen, 2014).

Common to all the found studies was the focus on perceptions and experience, which is expected given that these studies were identified as phenomenological studies. Except for Olsen's (2014) study, there was an absence in the found research on social studies perceptions using a phenomenological approach. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge generated by phenomenological research on how educators experience teaching social studies.

Review of Literature Conclusion

Because social studies research is broad and eclectic, it is obvious that gaps are expected and not the exception. It is true that few phenomenological studies exist on educators' experiences with teaching social studies. The purpose of this study is to comprehend *how* secondary social studies educators experience teaching social studies. This phenomenological study will add to the knowledge and understanding of how educators experience the teaching of social studies.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my study was to understand how social studies educators value and interpret the experience of teaching social studies. Educators may be able to explain the goals they have for students in a social studies course of study but may not have been given the opportunity to reflect or share how their individual beliefs, biases, and experiences helped to create these goals. For this study, I selected a qualitative, multi-case study approach by following a phenomenological ontology and employing some of the tools or methods of phenomenology.

Approach

My decision to select a qualitative study, rather than a quantitative study, was based on several aspects of my study including, but not limited to, the questions I researched, the method of selecting participants, and my interactions with the participants. To answer the research questions, detailed profiles from educators were collected and analyzed. Harwell (2011) described the differences between qualitative and quantitative research designs, and defined qualitative research as “discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants...” (p. 148). Conversely, he described quantitative research methods as an “attempt to maximize objectivity, replicability, and generalizability of findings, and are typically interested in prediction” (p. 149). Simply stated, qualitative researchers focus on understanding experiences people have with the intent to describe and explain those experiences to

others (Egbert & Sanden, 2014; Glesne, 2016; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Quantitative researchers, on the other hand, focus on the predictability of an event occurring and present their conclusions using statistical data (Glesne, 2016; Harwell, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). Additionally, Yin (2009) explained:

In contrast, “how” and “why” questions are more *explanatory* and likely to lead to the use of case studies. . . . This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence.
(p. 9, emphasis in the original)

My research questions focused on *how* educators experience the phenomenon of teaching social studies and align with Harwell’s (2011) definition of qualitative research.

The participants of my study shared some common demographic characteristics. The participants were employed in the same state or region and were certified to teach secondary social studies. However, their experiences varied based on personal situations, interpretations, and understandings; and how they valued social studies education. Therefore, the data collected was unique to the participants and not predictable. Not only was the data collected qualitative in nature, but the uniqueness of the data was reflective of my ontological stance that individuals create their own reality from relationships, cultural beliefs, education, and unique experiences. Toma (2011) defined this as a constructivist ontology and further explained, “constructivists focus more on how individuals construct their lives, arguing that reality is more relative and locally situated and constructed than a positivist would contend” (p. 267). It was not my intention to criticize quantitative research approaches here but to show how qualitative research best reflected my own beliefs and the purpose of this research.

My research paradigm was based on a constructivist approach as defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994). Like Guba and Lincoln (1994), I believe that reality is made from multiple constructions that are unique to the individual, yet the constructions are not set and can be altered with new experiences. Making sense of the data collected was based, in part, on my experience with social studies education and with the manner that I connected participants' experiences to my own. A phenomenological methodology was selected for this study because it reflects my belief that through in-depth conversation with participants I was able to reveal a new reality. The goal of a methodology, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994), "is to distill a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions (including, of course, the etic construction of the investigator)" (p. 111).

Phenomenological Approach

Of the many qualitative approaches that might have been selected for this study, phenomenology was selected for the aspects that are not found in other approaches. Phenomenological studies often focus on a moment in time, while this study focused on the experiences of teaching and learning social studies over a lifetime. My research goal was to communicate participants' experiences to others so that readers will have a framework on which to reflect on their own experiences. Thornton (2005) explained that regardless of the social studies perspective a teacher subscribes, effective teaching may not take place without a teacher reflecting on "the decisions teachers make about curriculum and instruction and the criteria they use to make those decisions" (p. 1). Thornton argued "that there is no surer road to educational problems than teachers who do not understand the purposes of their actions" (p. 45). From my own experience and

observations, I know that daily instructional objectives are easily identified by teachers. It is the big picture goal that is absent or elusive. Again, from experience, when I've asked about the purpose of a lesson or unit being taught, teachers will parrot a content standard; but a more profound understanding or relationship to an overall goal was not stated. Also missing from my conversations with teachers has been the manner in which an overall goal does or does not relate to a personal belief. Van Manen (1990) explained the irony of teachers not relating their work to their beliefs as

the language by way of which teachers are encouraged to interpret themselves and reflect on their living with children is thoroughly imbued by hope, yet it is almost exclusively a language of doing—it lacks being. (p. 122)

Phenomenological research falls under the category of qualitative research. It is at once a theoretical perspective (Crotty, 2012) and a methodology (Creswell, 2013). Merriam (2009) suggested that the term “phenomenology” in qualitative research can cause confusion:

Although all of qualitative research draws from the philosophy of phenomenology in its emphasis and interpretation, one could also conduct a phenomenological study by using the particular “tools” of phenomenology. (p. 25)

Saevi (2014) clarified, “there is a distinction between phenomenology as a philosophical endeavor performed by philosophers...and phenomenology as a methodological endeavor performed by professional educators” (p. 1). I will refer to the use of phenomenology by educators as phenomenological research.

Several characteristics of phenomenological research were consistent throughout the literature reviewed. Authors agreed on several principles that characterize

phenomenological research: description, bracketing, and interpretation (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Glesne, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2013) described “several features that are typically included in all phenomenological studies” (p. 78). Creswell’s features can be abridged as follows:

- emphasis on a single phenomenon
- participants who have experienced the phenomenon
- discussion of both subjective and objective experiences
- bracketed and awareness of the researcher’s experience
- data collection through interviewing
- data analysis through a systematic procedure
- final description of the essence of the experience

Using a phenomenological approach enabled me to capture the lifeworld and essence of educators’ experiences and beliefs.

What This Study Is Not

Lastly, it is important to define phenomenology by what it is not. Merriam (2009) stated that “in defining a phenomenon such as case study, it is often helpful to point out what it is not” (p. 45). This study was first and foremost not a program evaluation, meaning I did not research whether a particular instructional or assessment method was effective. This study did not identify the characteristics of exemplary social studies teachers, although the participants may be viewed as exemplary by me or their peers. This study was not looking for common characteristics of a social studies teacher in the manner that a quantitative study would. Instead, this study sought to find and communicate how secondary social studies educators revealed and associated their

experiences about teaching social studies and how once those experiences are aligned to a model can be reflected upon for change or confirmation in the future.

Another way to describe what this study was not is to compare the phenomenological approach to other qualitative approaches. According to van Manen (1990),

phenomenology differs from other disciplines in that it does not aim to explicate meanings specific to particular cultures (ethnography), to certain social groups (sociology), to historical periods (history), to mental types (psychology), or to an individual's personal life history (biography). Rather, phenomenology attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld. (p. 11)

My phenomenological research did not attempt to isolate the phenomena of teaching social studies from all other things but looked at the interconnectedness of the phenomena "to the things of the world" (Vagle, 2014, p. 28).

Method of Preparation

Situation

For my research, I interviewed six social studies public school teachers in the mid-Atlantic region. The region is small geographically compared to other regions. The advantage of being from a small area was that I had convenient access to a variety of social studies educators.

In the state where the study was conducted, social studies is currently a measure in determining school and district success under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The measure is based on how well students perform on state

assessments in Grades 4, 7, and 11. Though student achievement on the state social studies assessment is a small contribution to the overall school and district rating, there is still direct accountability (Ujifusa, 2017).

The social studies curriculum has not been prescribed by the state department of education; instead, there is a state provision for local education agencies to demonstrate an alignment to official state standards. The social studies content standards were first published in the 1990s at a time when standards-based education was taking hold across the country. The standards have been the guiding document for the social studies curriculum for more than twenty years. Continuity and stability of social studies standards at the state level are unique in social studies education, with many states legislating strict time periods for reviewing standards (Thomsen, 2014). In the state, the social studies standards have been firmly established, and this research focused on educator experiences over time.

Participants

For this study, I selected to use a multi-case study method. The use of several cases as opposed to one single case allowed me to check for and validate common themes in the experiences of social studies educators (Merriam, 2009). The situation and methodology for my research lend itself well to including different perspectives. The participants were secondary social studies teachers.

After I received IRB approval (see Appendix A), I began my participant selection. Selection of the participants was both criterion and convenient based (Creswell, 2013). Approximately 70 secondary social studies teachers were contacted initially (see Appendix B) about being a participant in my study. These teachers were from a single

school district and I knew most of them by the colleges they attended, the degrees they have earned, years of experience, and their teaching assignments.

From this larger cohort, I received ten inquiries. All ten teachers were sent an email requesting additional information to inform my final selection (see Appendix C). Three potential participants were eliminated. One inquiry was from an educator that no longer was a classroom teacher and two more were eliminated as they taught grades that were not assessed at the state level. This reduced my participant group to seven, which was the upper end of the range of the number of participants I had proposed in my dissertation proposal. Once the final seven were selected I sent them each a form collecting demographic data (see Appendix D) and the research consent form for their review (see Appendix E).

Soliciting potential participants by email, rather than face-to-face, allowed the teacher to turn down my request without explanation. After the preliminary selection of seven participants, one participant did not respond. A second email was sent, and the potential participant did not respond. The cumulative number of participants for my study was six. Merriam (2009) recommended "the more the cases included in the study, and the greater variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be" (p. 49). Of the phenomenological studies that were reviewed for my literature review, participant samples ranged from 2 to 48 members, with seven participants being the median. Creswell (2013) recommended that "researchers interview from 5 to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon" (p. 81). Smith et al., (2009) have suggested between three to six participants as a guide and stated that "we would often advocate three as an optimum number" (p. 106).

Method of Data Collection

A phenomenological study involves collecting data from the people that have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014; Vagle, 2014). The primary method of data collection that I used with participants was in-depth interviews. Seidman (2006) described interviewing as taking “an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). The purpose of in-depth interviewing then was not solely to get answers to questions, but provided an opportunity for participants to elaborate and return to the experience.

The interviews were focused, yet open-ended. I created an interview guide. I conducted two practice interviews with colleagues who are interested in social studies and were also in doctoral programs. From each of the practice interviews, I was able to revise my original interview questions and make modifications (see Appendix F). The purpose of the interview was to understand the experience of teaching social studies, with emphasis on individual values and interpretations of social studies.

The interviews were conducted with a focus on one participant at a time. In other words, I interviewed one participant in any given time period in order to capture the experience of that participant to avoid cross-contamination of the participant’s reconstruction with others. A total of 18 separate interviews were conducted, three interviews per participant. Most interviews were conducted in the participant’s classroom. Two interviews with one participant were conducted in a study room at the local library on days when their classroom was not available. One other interview was held in a school conference room at her request.

During the interviews, I became the listener and not a partner in a conversation. Smith et al., (2009) likened an interview to “a one-sided interview...[where the researcher] is a curious listener trying to get to know the person in front of them” (p. 61). The questions I asked encouraged the participant to respond and I did not purposefully communicate any disapproval or confirmation of what was said to me. I followed Wolcott’s (1994) advice about being a listener and learner in an interview: “I do not mind presenting myself as a bit dense, someone who does not catch on too quickly and has to have things repeated or explained” (p. 348). To encourage and prompt participants to fully describe the phenomena being researched, Vagle (2014) suggested “using phrases such as, ‘tell me more about that,’ ‘I have an understanding of that phrase you just used, but can you tell me what it means to you?’” (p. 81). I avoided injecting my own experiences or reinforcing participant responses. By avoiding inserting my own experiences, there was less of a risk of “distorting how the participant responds” (Seidman, 2006, p. 90).

I recorded the interviews using a small battery operated recorder. As soon as feasible I transcribed each individual interview. I converted the MP3 file of the interview into an MP4 video file. Using the private setting, I uploaded the video to YouTube. YouTube automatically created a transcription, but void of punctuation and identification of the speaker. The YouTube transcription included a timestamp. I copied the transcription into a two column word document. The left column was the transcription and the right column was reserved for the data analysis process. From the YouTube transcription, I added the details from the interview such as laughter, pauses, and volume of the speaker. I also indicated whether I was speaking or the participant. In addition, I

added comments about my own reactions of when I felt uncomfortable or concerned. For example, one participant described how she utilized multiple sources of different candidates' platforms in order to make decisions for which candidates she would cast her vote. I asked whether the students had opportunities to practice the same. The participant stated, "I don't have the time to do that with them" and I recorded my reaction of disappointment at that point in the interview. During the interviews, there were occasions where I wrote notes to remind me to ask about an event or experience in future interview sessions as follow-up questions.

I based my in-depth interview method on the Three Step Interview Series as described by Seidman (2006), in which the total interview series had a purpose of a narrative sequence with a distinct beginning, middle, and end. In other words, each interview within the series had a goal. The first interview was focused on the participant's life history with the goal of participants reconstructing a "range of constitutive events" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17) that led up to the point of becoming a social studies educator. The primary focus for this first segment of the interview was, "How did you come to be a social studies educator?"

The purpose of the second interview segment was to focus on the details of the current experience of being a social studies educator. This second interview fleshed out the activities and thought processes that apply to the daily work of the educator. For this interview, I asked the participant to reconstruct or relive a typical work day from the beginning to the end by inquiring with a statement such as, "Tell me about your daily experience from the beginning to end as a social studies educator."

The third and final interview segment was designed to have teachers reflect on the experience of teaching social studies. The third interview was based on the first two interview segments and included clarifying questions unique to the participants. During this interview, the participant was asked to make meaning of their experience. The general third interview question was, “What is it like to be a social studies educator today?” The question “require[d] that the participants look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation” (Seidman, 2006, p. 18). This third interview question focused on the experience of being a social studies educator and not on “views, opinions, beliefs, perceptions, interpretations, and explanations of experience” (van Manen, 2014, p. 299). No additional interviews were conducted.

Method of Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis was done by gathering textual qualities and structural themes from the interviews, then combining the textural and structural descriptions into a composite description (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). In addition to the textural and structural descriptions, the data was presented in table and visual formats.

The method of data analysis that I employed originated from Moustakas (1994). Moustakas’s steps for data analysis steps are presented in Figure 1.

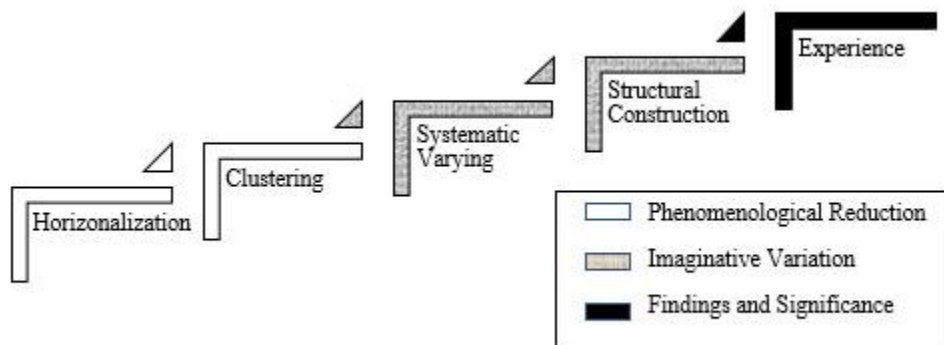


Figure 1. Moustakas's (1994) method of analysis.

Each participant's interview series was analyzed independently of the other interviews (Hycner, 1985). The transcribed text of each participant's interview was read in its entirety. The purpose of reading in this manner was to get a sense of the entire description. "The phenomenological approach is holistic since it realizes that meanings within a description can have forward and backward references and so analyses of the first part of a description without awareness of the last part are too incomplete" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 128). Hycner (1985) called this step in the analysis "listening to the interview for a sense of the whole" (p. 281).

After listening to the entire interview, the interview was then analyzed for statements, sentences, or quotes that describe the experience of teaching social studies. In addition, I was acutely aware of participants' descriptions of their experiences that evoked emotion. Seidman (2006) discussed responding to interview data during analysis:

I am alert conflict, both between people and within a person. I respond to hopes expressed and whether they are filled or not. I am alert to language that indicates beginnings, middles, and ends of processes. I am sensitive to frustrations and

resolutions, to indications of isolation and the more rare expression of collegiality and community. Given the world we in which we live, I am sensitive to the way issues of class, ethnicity, and gender play out in individual lives, and the way hierarchy and power affect people. I do not, however, come to a transcription looking for these. When they are there, these and other passages of interest speak to me, and I bracket them. (p. 118)

Like Seidman, I highlighted interview statements of joy, disappointment, anger, and hope; and the context of those emotions.

This step in the data analysis process is known as Phenomenological Reduction (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological Reduction is the “process of continually returning to the essence of the experience to derive the inner structure or meaning in and of itself” (Merriam, 2009, p. 26). Moustakas (1994) described Phenomenological Reduction as

not only a way of seeing but a way of listening with a conscious and deliberate intention of opening ourselves to phenomena as phenomena, in their own right, with their own textures and meanings. (p. 92)

Van Manen (2014) cautioned, “the meaning of the word reduction can be misleading since the phenomenological reduction is ironically directed against reductionism (abstracting, codifying, and shortening)” (p. 215). Phenomenological Reduction refers to the process of horizontalization and the data is treated as having equal weight (Merriam, 2009). Each statement was given equal consideration, even if the statement was redundant in meaning. Moustakas (1994) elaborated “when we horizontalize, each

phenomenon has equal value as we seek to disclose its nature and essence” (p. 95).

Hycner (1985) described this process as:

the very rigorous process of going over every word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and noted significant nonverbal communication in the transcript in order to elicit the participant's meanings. This is done with as much openness as possible and at this point does not yet address the research question to the data. This is a process of getting at the essence of the meaning expressed in a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or significant non-verbal communication. It is a crystallization and condensation of what the participant has said, still using as much as possible the literal words of the participant. This is a step whereby the researcher still tries to stay very close to the literal data. (p. 282)

The next step of the analysis involved eliminating statements that are irrelevant, repetitive, or overlapping “leaving only the *Horizons* (the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon)” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97, emphasis in the original). In this step, I looked to see whether the horizon “illuminates the research question” (Hycner, 1985, p. 284) by identifying the research question or questions where the statement or horizon could be used as evidence to support the data analysis. The final step of the reduction was to cluster the horizons into themes of meaning.

After the reduction was completed, the next step was to “seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). This step in the process is called Imaginative Variation (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative Variation enables the

researcher to develop structural descriptions of underlying and precipitating factors that impact the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) offered possible structures of “time, space, materiality, causality, and relationship to self and to others” (p. 99) as lenses to view the data.

After the textural and structural aspects of the individual experiences had been identified, the final step in the analysis for each participant was conducted. This final step, called Textural-Structural Synthesis, is when the essence, or what is common or universal, was developed. In this step of data analysis, the researcher “writes a composite description that presents the “essence” of the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 82).

Moustakas (1994) explained that

The essences of any experience are never totally exhausted. The fundamental textural-structural synthesis represents the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon. (p. 100)

I selected a profile format (Seidman, 2006) to share the essence of each participant’s experience. Seidman described a profile as “allowing us to present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time, all central components of qualitative analysis” (p. 119). A profile afforded me an opportunity to retell the participant’s experience from beginning to the present, supporting the experience with descriptions from the interviews that evoked emotion, and with an interpretation of the structural factors that aligned to the experience. Once the process was completed for a single participant, I repeated the process until all six interview sets and my experience were complete. A summative analysis was written

where I looked for “the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations” (Hycner, 1985, p. 292). I also included in my analysis when a theme was not discussed by the majority of participants.

A final analysis was conducted using Fallace’s (2017) model of social studies orientations presenting the data in textual, tabular and visual formats. Fallace’s model and explanation of the purposes was a similar variation of previously published models, but he provided context for how those models related to curriculum or teacher beliefs, instruction, and assessment. What follows is the explanation of the data analysis method that was used to identify each participant’s orientation as well as the color visual associated with each participant’s orientation.

I created a chart that outlined the characteristics of each purpose or orientation in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment from Fallace’s (2017) model. I then reanalyzed the interview transcriptions, looking for evidence of those characteristics and actions.

I found that the participants were very different from each other when analyzed using Fallace’s (2017) model. I wanted to make the differences more apparent and decided upon adding a color visual that would represent each participant’s orientation. The word processing program that I used has a feature where shapes can be added to the text. This shape feature also included the ability to change the color of the shape. The colors were assigned using an RGB (red, green, and blue) color system. With an RGB color system, each color of red, green, and blue was assigned a number from 0 to 255. Each orientation in Fallace’s model has three different attributes representing *observable outcome*, *learning theory*, and *assessment type*. Following Fallace’s model and the order of colors in an RGB

color scheme, I represented the traditional orientation as red, the disciplinary orientation as green, and the progressive orientation as blue. Each participant had a number of characteristics for each orientation from zero to three. When a participant had no characteristics for a particular orientation, then the RGB number was zero. If there was only one characteristic, then the number was set to 85. If there was evidence of two characteristics, then the color number was set to 170. And if the participant communicated evidence for all three characteristics then the number was set to 255, the greatest color-number combination.

Figure 2 is an example of how the color visuals were assigned and created. In this example the participant aligned to all three characteristics under the traditional orientation, one characteristic under the disciplinary orientation, and did not align to characteristics under the progressive orientation. The red or traditional orientation color was set to 255, the green or disciplinary orientation to 85, and the blue or progressive orientation was set to 0. The resulting color, an orange color, was “created” and represented the overall alignment.

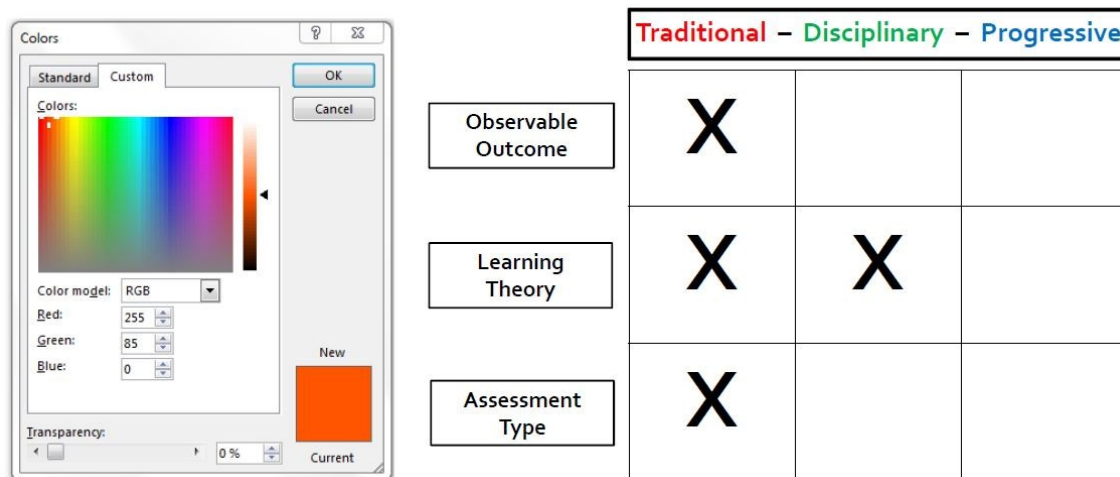


Figure 2. Example of how color visuals were created.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies is the counterpart to *validity* in quantitative studies (Glesne, 2016). The standards of trustworthiness in qualitative research are different from the standards of replicability, reliability, verification, and objectivity found in quantitative research (Creswell, 2013; Toma, 2011; Wolcott, 1994). Trustworthiness in qualitative studies does not “dismiss validity, instead recasting it in more relativist terms and highlighting rigor in the application of method” (Toma, 2011, p. 267).

Although trustworthiness strategies in qualitative studies are numerous, Creswell (2013) winnowed the list of strategies to eight: clarifying researcher bias, thick description, peer review, member checking, prolonged engagement, triangulation, negative case analysis, and external audits. Creswell recommended that “qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study” (p. 253). Glesne (2016) stated that “meeting each and every one of them will not guarantee a good or useful study, but taking the strategies into consideration increases the likelihood that the study will be more than anecdotal” (p. 152). Of those strategies highlighted by Creswell, my study employed three of the eight strategies presented here in the order that I feel were best represented in my study.

Clarifying researcher bias. Researcher bias is always present. Bias plays a part in everything we do, say, and think. It is the responsibility of the researcher to acknowledge their biases. In phenomenology, temporarily setting aside one’s bias toward an object is called epoché or bracketing. The practice of bracketing allows the phenomenological researcher to be aware of “things of the world as we live them rather than as we conceptualize or theorize them, and as we take them for granted” (van Manen,

2014, p. 41). Moustakas (1994) described epoché as making way for new knowledge while suspending all “prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things...the world is placed out of action, while remaining bracketed” (p. 85). Prior to beginning my research, I bracketed my own experiences and biases; and again, during data collection and reduction of participants’ interview data. A full accounting of my research stance was provided along with the research findings in Chapter IV.

Rich, thick description. An oriented, strong, rich, thick, deep description is a hallmark of phenomenological studies (van Manen, 1990). It is the responsibility of the phenomenologist to “depict the essence or basic structure of experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). A phenomenological study is a description of the experiences of the participants and not an explanation or analysis (Creswell, 2013). Rich, thick description is a strategy to contribute to trustworthiness, which Glesne (2016) described:

Through descriptions from observations and words from interviewees, the *thick description* allows readers to understand the basis for the claims you make.

Ideally, you provide enough thick description that the reader can see a possible way to interpret things differently. (p. 153, emphasis in the original)

Thorough descriptions enable the reader to clarify and understand the phenomena of teaching social studies.

Peer review or debriefing. A peer review or debriefing can keep an external check on a study and therefore increase the trustworthiness. Smith et al., (2009) saw a review or audit as “a really powerful way of thinking about validity in qualitative research” (p. 183). Likewise, Toma (2011) discussed how audits can serve as a measure of rigor and leading to *confirmability* which he defined as the “concept that the data can

be confirmed by someone other than the researcher” (p. 274). Most of my professional peers are connected to social studies education, either as classroom teachers or college professors. I contacted a colleague who is also working on her doctorate and asked her to read through several of the participant experience profiles. Her comments about the participants’ experiences were helpful and aligned with my analysis.

Evaluating Reliability

In quantitative studies, reliability is measured by the degree to which a study can be replicated (Merriam, 2009; Wolcott, 1994). This becomes problematic in qualitative studies because both the researcher and the participants are unique individuals with personal perspectives. Merriam (2009) explained:

Because what is being studied in the social world is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual, because information gathered is a function of who gives it and how skilled the researcher is at getting it, and because the emergent design of a qualitative study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful but impossible. (p. 222)

Much like history in the famous George Santayana (1905) quote, “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it” (p. 284), not only can history not be repeated to every minute detail, a qualitative study cannot be replicated. Therefore, for a qualitative study to be deemed reliable, other measures are needed. Creswell (2013) identified questions that could be asked to measure the quality of a phenomenological study:

- Does the author convey an understanding of the philosophical tenets of phenomenology?

- Does the author have a clear “phenomenon” to study that is articulated in a concise way?
- Does the author use procedures of data analysis in phenomenology, such as the procedures recommended by Moustakas (1994) or van Manen (1990)?
- Does the author convey the overall essence of the experience of the participants? Does this essence include a description of the experience and the content in which it occurred?
- Is the author reflexive throughout the study? (p. 260)

These questions served as a guide for me to assess my progress and final dissertation throughout the process of researching and writing my dissertation.

Methodology Conclusion

Phenomenology as a methodology is designed to describe what an experience is like, how it is experienced, and to produce a “unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). It is the responsibility of the researcher to describe and communicate that experience, by looking anew; however, the description is bound by time, space, participants, and so on. The description is written to one interpretation, “while the reader interprets variously” (van Manen, 2014, p. 390). The phenomenological methods of data collection and analysis in this study rendered limited interpretations but ultimately were designed to encourage further discussion of the experience.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The principal aim of this multi-case study was to understand how secondary social studies teachers experience the teaching and learning of social studies. Also of interest was how experiences of individual teachers related to a model on social studies orientations. Data collected through phenomenological interviews of six participants and my perspective of social studies education written prior to conducting participant interviews were used to address the following three research questions of this study:

- Q1 How do secondary teachers experience learning and teaching social studies?
- Q2 How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?
- Q3 How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations?

In this chapter, I first provided background on the setting and the participants highlighting key domains of participants' experiences. Next, I provided a brief profile written from my personal perspective. Qualitative research requires that the researcher brackets their experience (Creswell, 2013; Hycner, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2018). Moustakas (1994) described the importance of bracketing so that "prejudices and unhealthy attachments that create false notions of truth and reality can be bracketed and put out of action....the process can make a difference in what and how we see, hear, and/or view things" (p. 90). I have presented my experience to make it public to the reader. I then presented six profiles that I derived from each participant's interview

data. The profiles exposed the phenomenon of learning and teaching social studies as it “manifests and appears in the lifeworld” (Vagle, 2018, p.23). Following the individual profiles, I provided a summary of key themes that emerged from the analysis of these profiles (Hycner, 1985; Moustakas, 1994). Finally, I provided an interpretation of how the participants’ experiences and interpretations of the purposes of social studies are related to Fallace’s (2017) model of social studies orientations. Fallace’s model presented “three orientations to the social studies—traditional, disciplinary, and progressive” (p. 42). The interview data were aligned to the orientations by examining statements made by the participants to observable outcome, learning theory, and assessment type.

Context: Setting and the School System

The participant interviews were conducted between August 2018 and November 2018, except for the researcher’s personal perspective which was written in December of 2017. All participants and the researcher were employed by the same school district, but the researcher retired from the district two months prior to conducting the interviews.

The school district where the participants were employed is located in the mid-Atlantic region and the district is considered one of the largest school districts in the state, especially in terms of the number of secondary schools. The secondary schools in the district have different academic foci, including: arts; science; pre-college; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); and dual-language. Also included are schools with a traditional or comprehensive emphasis. There are procedures in place in the district so that students may apply or “choice” to any of the schools. Although the

focus in a school may be unique, each school is expected to execute the curriculum that is published, monitored, and assessed by the district administration.

State social studies curriculum standards were approved by the state board of education and each public school or district has been charged with implementing those standards. Each district or charter school was given the autonomy to decide how those standards would be addressed, although the state provided example units of study and syllabi. At the time of the study, the state assessed social studies with an online assessment in Grades 4, 7, and 11. In 2019, there will be district and school accountability associated with the state social studies assessment. At the time of the study, there was no educator or student accountability system directly related to the state assessment.

Educator Profiles

My Profile

Unless one is conducting a heuristic inquiry, the act of bracketing or setting aside one's beliefs and perspectives while gathering data, is essential, if not required of qualitative research. Merriam (2009) described bracketing in the following terms:

Prior to interviewing those who have had a direct experience with the phenomenon, the researcher usually explores his or her own experiences, in part to examine the dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions. (p. 25)

While working on completing my doctoral coursework, the new educational philosophies and methods I encountered slowly infiltrated my beliefs about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the current state of education. The doctoral coursework

deeply affected my current beliefs, more than previous coursework and professional development that I had prepared, presented, and witnessed. The spirit of this dissertation percolated for several years before a single word was typed. One reoccurring reflection was about how my beliefs about social studies had come to be.

With most qualitative research, the researcher brackets their own perspectives to not taint or contaminate the data (Merriam (2009). As a first step to bracketing my perspectives and biases, I wrote my personal experience with social studies to make my thinking public and visible. It is important to this study and methodology to state my perspective. It was written prior to gathering data. What follows is my personal experience written almost a full year before beginning the interviews for this study.

Teaching functional literacy. In my teaching portfolio some 30 years ago, I attempted to define how I valued social studies. Though I no longer have my portfolio, I recall stating that social studies was important because it was a vehicle to teach functional literacy skills like reading graphs, charts, and maps. In December of 2017, I recorded my viewpoint about social studies:

Social studies is a content area that is very eclectic. There are core content areas of civics, economics, geography, and history as defined by current state standards and national frameworks; but can also include content or courses such as anthropology, art history, sociology, political science, psychology, etc. This list is finite but long. The value of social studies lies in the knowledge and skills that are essential to the discipline. Social studies students should experience debate, discussion, and inquiry in a safe space, allowing them to test theories and draw their own conclusions and make their own connections. Social studies is the study and practice of Democracy. Students should

glean from social studies skills that are practical, such as being able to identify, analyze, and evaluate sources for varying perspectives and points of view; to be active in and aware of government policy-making; to be discerning consumers of goods, services, and information; and be reflective and civil in their acts of communicating with one another. The goal of social studies is to create effective, self-sufficient adults, not just workers and consumers.

Shifting from engineering to economics to education. I first entered the state university as a mechanical and aerospace engineering student. I loved mathematics, but I found out rather quickly that I was not prepared for the engineering program. I left school, moved to Maine, and worked as a receptionist, office manager, and waitress. I took a few accounting courses at a local college and did well. I decided it was time to come home and try the university again, but this time as an economics major. Sometime during my senior year, married with a two-year-old child, I decided that I wanted to teach. I packed on the essential education classes to my course load and after nine years since engineering school, I graduated with an economics degree and was certified to teach secondary social studies.

As stated earlier, my teacher portfolio highlighted the skills that students would learn from social studies. In reflecting back, that wasn't the underlying goal for me, the goal was more personal. I was excited to be a teacher because I saw the role of a teacher as being able to share knowledge and wisdom, and I felt I had a lot of knowledge and wisdom to share. I thought of students as obedient, information-starved young adults who would look up to me and want to learn from me. Perhaps a learned perspective from being the oldest child, but nonetheless I wanted to connect with students and change their

lives. I felt quite capable of transmitting knowledge, of all kinds, to my students. Once I began teaching I found that my energy was spent on planning lessons and creating assessments rather than focusing on building relationships with students.

Thirty-year teaching career. I taught in two public school districts for a total of fifteen years. I taught civics, law, and economics at the high school level and mathematics and general social studies at the middle school level. In the first district I worked in, the textbook was the curriculum. There was a district requirement to teach to multiple instructional objectives. The objectives were both content knowledge and process knowledge objectives. At the end of the year, we were to submit a record of how we met the objectives and when the objectives were taught. At the beginning of the following year at a professional development workshop with all other secondary social studies teachers, I was told that I was the only teacher to submit the paperwork. There were no consequences for not completing the requested list. I never completed the list again.

I joined my second district at a time when standards-based education was just taking hold. We received large binders that were filled with documents that had been written by a committee formed to write the new state social studies standards. Each school district was responsible for determining how the standards would be taught and at which grade. The district had just purchased a new middle school social studies textbook to be shared in both sixth and seventh grade. The textbook was a regional world cultures text with a focus on geography and history. It was decided by the district curriculum department how the textbook would be divided between the sixth and seventh grade, with

eighth grade teaching U.S history from Native Americans through the Civil War from a separate textbook.

The push to align standards to content began at the same time I became the middle school social studies department chair. Forced with providing teachers and administrators with a social studies scope and sequence, I decided to assign each grade an equal number of standards to teach. I was more concerned about offending my colleagues with an inequitable plan than whether the distribution of standards made sense to the content for a grade. I made those decisions on my own, with no guidance from the district, nor did I seek guidance. This curriculum alignment was an act of compliance, rather than one that considered the value of social studies as a learning experience.

While teaching in the middle school, I had begun to write social studies assessment items for the state assessment. I was beginning to be recognized as a good social studies teacher and conference presenter. I was then asked by the district social studies supervisor to apply to be a district social studies instructional coach. My time as a social studies specialist afforded me the opportunity to inquire into classroom and social studies best practices. I was able to visit a variety of classrooms. Initially, I was shocked by how varied teaching styles were. Being in the classroom isolated me and I had assumed that everyone taught just like me.

Two purposes of teaching history. My first introduction to the fact that there were varying educator beliefs about the purpose of social studies came one day during a discussion with a colleague about history education. He shared with me that there was a divide in beliefs about teaching history as heritage and teaching history as historiography.

This brief introduction to different perspectives marks the beginning of an exploration of the purpose of social studies education.

Initially, I sensed that opposing viewpoints were only found in teaching history. I was sure the other core subject areas contained within the social studies, civics, geography, and economics, were standardized. I thought the differences in how history could be taught polarized the social studies. I began to read and research the different philosophies about how to teach history. Loewen (1996), Wineburg (2001), Lesh (2011), Nokes (2011), VanSledright (2002), and Schwebel (2011) were some the authors and researchers whose work I investigated. This awareness of historiography was enhanced when I participated in an after-school Teaching American History Grant (TAHG) program.

During the TAHG, historians, political scientists, economists, geographers, educational researchers, and ethnographers were included in a complement of lecturers, as well as local archivists and museum curators. I had an opportunity to speak and meet face-to-face with many of the authors of current research and theory surrounding social studies education. My original perspective on teaching social studies changed. Many of the social studies teachers in my district also participated in the TAHG. Together we grew as a cohort of educators whose practice and understanding were forever changed.

Over the past fifteen years, I have become more interested in and aware of how instruction, assessment, and required curriculum are aligned. At first, I resorted to my initial purpose for becoming a teacher, to share knowledge and understanding of social studies. It would take many years before I was able to relinquish control and seek out practicing teacher expertise. Getting to the point of valuing the uniqueness of each

teacher and the gifts each brings to the classroom was a process, not unlike the process I experienced as a classroom teacher.

Rethink, revise, and refine. With each course, workshop, or research text read, I continued to rethink, revise, and refine my personal perspective of social studies education. I made connections to social studies education in ways that would have been unrecognizable from early in my career. I am certain that my personal perspective will continue to evolve, perhaps even circle back, not just with this research, but after completion of my dissertation as well.

My research sought to find common threads that hold social studies teachers' experiences together and to provide a vehicle for the participants to reflect and evaluate their own personal values and experiences. The purpose of this study was to understand lived experiences of teaching social studies and to provide a basis for the identification of teachers' purpose of social studies.

I have a deep respect for individualism and for "the uniqueness of human experience" (Hycner, 1985, p. 300). I feel privileged to have had an opportunity to hear the stories of social studies educators over the course of this research. I knew all the teachers prior to interviewing them, some better than others. I was able through this process to learn more about them as educators and students.

Each individual interview was transcribed and read for "a sense of the whole" (Hycner, 1985, p. 281). Phenomenological Reduction was completed by rereading the transcript for meaning (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Each meaning was recorded in the margin of the transcript. Next, I aligned each meaning to one or more of the research questions (Hycner, 1985). Meanings were then sorted by the

research questions and clusters of similar meaning were developed to complete the process of Imaginative Variation (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The profiles presented in this chapter were developed from themes that emerged from their interviews, with relevant excerpts included to provide a thickness of description.

Clark's Profile

Clark is a secondary social studies teacher who has taught in three different school districts and every secondary grade, except for Grade 10 over six years. His current course load is seventh-grade social studies and a high school U.S. History course. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in History Education and has teaching certificates in Secondary English Language Arts and Special Education (K-12).

A basement full of books. Clark's love for history began as a child. "My father wished he had studied history. He was always reading. I grew up in an environment where in my basement there were eight bookshelves, literally, just filled with books—most of them on the Civil War." His aunt also fueled his passion for reading. "My aunt worked for a publisher and it was just like Christmas. She was the greatest aunt ever for a while. She would ship me these cardboard boxes just filled with books." He described himself as someone "who just reads, and reads, and reads."

His early elementary experience is not marked by anything memorable in social studies until sixth grade, "I just remember being very engaged with the content. And that was my favorite part of the class." Nothing stands out from middle school, where Clark says he "really did not have strong social studies teachers." By the time he was in high school, he had "four very strong teachers that had a strong presence...had a clear passion for history and social studies." It was then he knew he wanted to be a history teacher.

When I was in high school and making the decision to want to become a history teacher, I definitely imagined myself as someone who's going to stand in [front of] the class and deliver these grand lectures and just talk. I enjoyed learning these stories of history and so on and so forth.

The English language arts and history connection. Clark collaborates with the English language arts (ELA) teacher on his middle school team. Although he is “very close with my ELA colleague”, he doesn’t agree with the manner in which the district has required ELA teachers to teach informational text. Products he sees from the ELA department are often based on summarizing facts. “I saw three students present their projects to the school. They’re book reports, that’s all. It’s literally a regurgitation of fact. They’re not teaching them to ask the right questions.” The right questions to Clark are those that look for bias, question the author’s purpose, and ask if other sources exist. Questioning is important, and Clark easily inserts the idea of questioning sources into situations outside of the classroom,

My wife was talking about something she saw on Facebook. I was like ‘What’s the source? Where did you find it? What do you think about the credibility of that? What do you think the purpose was? Do you think you can find this somewhere else?’ She proceeded to throw a pillow at me. But these are important questions.

Clark is concerned that ELA teachers are being asked to change their instructional focus from reading fiction to reading informational text. With that comes a need to teach different skills. “My issue is that I feel they’re approaching informational text the same way that they would teach a book of fiction. These skills can be taught by [social studies

teachers].” In addition, Clark sees large amounts of money being spent on ELA materials without providing the necessary training for the teachers.

There’s this devaluing of fiction happening. What’s wrong with teaching kids to read fiction? We aren’t going to read fiction in social studies class. We’re working with informational text and have the training, environment, and structure that is specifically built to do this.

This push to use more informational text is a result of implementing and assessing the Common Core for State Standards (CCSS). “[In professional development workshops,] we were learning about disciplinary literacy four years ago, which is hysterical to now be told to by my administrators to teach disciplinary literacy.” Other subjects, especially the arts, are also ignored for the instructional value that they bring to students’ proficiency with the CCSS. “I think the arts have a significant impact in social studies. I really wish we could make stronger connections with the arts because art is expression. Art is people trying to convey.” If proficiency with reading informational text is the overall goal, Clark sees where changes in other social studies subjects are warranted.

In psychology, we read about scientists and question: What was he aiming to do? What was his process? What was his conclusion? Does his data support that conclusion? These questions are important to the discipline. Maybe we should extend our inquires with questions about their word as psychologists, like questioning the credibility of this psychologist.

These are the types of questions that Clark emphasizes with students in his teaching, questions that ask about the author’s point-of-view, perspective, and purpose.

Project-Based learning. Clark is proud of the courses that he developed based on project-based learning, which develops skills that prepare students to ask “why” and instills skills that will transfer across multiple disciplines. Clark described project-based learning as

A progressive, successful, well-developed social studies program is student-centered. It has students doing the work, has students taking ownership of what they’re doing, gives students a lot of freedom and choice, lets students communicate and talk, lets students see a variety of different ideas and interpretations of different things. Getting students asking questions is the most important thing. I think [project-based learning] really gets kids just asking questions about history, about geography, about civics, about psychology...all these different disciplines. It really gets kids just asking about life and why things are the way they are. You get that from skills-based instruction. I think you get that from project simulation and debate-based instruction. You get these questions and then you get deeper understanding. Speaking a little more generally, a successful progressive social studies program—it doesn’t look like ‘digging an inch deep and a mile wide’.

Although Clark sees where other disciplines do “get into those ‘why’ questions”, he notes that work that he does has an additional focus. “We are teaching humans to be human. We are teaching people how to understand the world around them. We’re teaching people how to empathize and interact with the past, socially, politically, and environmentally.” In addition, Clark aims to have students seek alternative interpretations and viewpoints. Students search for primary and secondary sources to

complete projects. Ultimately, he wants students to respect that others may have different viewpoints.

In a U.S. History class, Clark assigned an assessment where students were to present their interpretation of the impacts of U. S. reconstruction after the Civil War on African-Americans. Clark observed that a group of students were reluctant to present their interpretation because it was very different from the previously presented interpretations by other class members. At first, the group did not want to present their conclusions because they thought they were “wrong”, but Clark encouraged them to “just articulate your argument to us and then we'll watch your documentary. Don't be upset. Don't be worried.” After the presentation, a student said to the other group, “I don't think you should be ashamed of having another point of view. You didn't just give us an opinion. You gave us an argument and backed it up with evidence. It is okay to have a different point of view.” Clark said that he would “take that [exchange] and bottle it up and save it forever.” According to Clark, learning social studies skills through project-based learning may be the instructional goal, but having students understand how to interact with others with opposing viewpoints is one of the many purposes of social studies.

Project-based learning affords Clark an opportunity to get to know his students and their interests. When students are planning their projects, Clark takes the time to meet with each student individually or as a small group. He described this unit introductory activity as one of his favorite lessons,

I'll meet with each of them and then find out what's interesting to them. It's so much fun because I get to find out ‘What's interesting to you? What do you have

a passion for?’ They can find a research topic for anything and they have so much more success when they research something that is meaningful and interesting to them.

Getting to know students and helping them is one of the reasons why he enjoys teaching. When he was the age his students are now, he had worked as a summer camp counselor, Sunday school teacher, and kayak instructor. “I have this intrinsic drive to help.”

Developing healthy skeptics. Clark described the main purpose of social studies as having students become healthy skeptics, not those that don’t trust or automatically oppose sources, but teaching skills that help students who want to learn more about a topic.

I like the idea of developing healthy skeptics. I like the idea of that word. We want them to be able to question the world around them in a variety of ways. You know, why was gas \$2.60 yesterday and why is it \$2.69 today? Why is it that a school is changing their mascot from Chiefs to something else? Why is this store located here, in this location? It is all about getting them to become healthy skeptics and ask questions about the world around them and why.

Clark sees another purpose of social studies as helping students to understand how to be able to impact change. He feels that students need to understand that history is not inevitable, but instead is a result of change. “Our history and the way we are today is a result of people being unhappy with the status quo. Sometimes the actions were small, but as a result of that agency we see change.” Clark views this is an important lesson in civic participation, otherwise students will “go out into the world in which they believe

that the world is the way it is and there's nothing they can do to change it." Local and national examples of change that were initiated by individuals are one way he teaches students to not be fearful of taking a stand and fighting for change.

Clark wants students to take away from social studies "the ability to see different perspectives. The ability to approach situations. Be able to look at different points of view. Be able to be, maybe, a little more critical." In addition, he sees a purpose of social studies as the ability to view the "gray areas" of an issue. "Today's society is very polarized. But in social studies, we explore that gray area. It's not yes or no—it's maybe. We got to break that norm that can pull on society." He wants to avoid the single approach that he had in high school. "We were still feeling the effects of 9/11. There was a constant, clear, Republican, conservative agenda...I look back at that now and it's repulsive to me—that [single] narrative."

Clark summarized social studies as "our last hope." Unlike other disciplines, he feels that "social studies is the only class where we're asking why are people doing these things and how can we look at it from another person's point of view. We're teaching the human. We're teaching people to be human."

Claudette's Profile

Claudette has been teaching high school social studies for 14 years. She has an undergraduate degree in history with a minor in sociology and a master's degree in education. Although her bachelor's degree was not in education, she has distinguished herself by winning several history education awards.

It started with the American Doll series. Claudette did not think she would be a teacher after graduating with a history degree, but she had an interest in history from a young age.

In fourth grade, Santa brought me an American Girl Doll. The book that the doll came with [was one of] a series. In the back of the book was a couple of pages with pictures and descriptions of historical materials and artifacts that inspire the story. And I read, and I read, and reread, and then moved on to other books.

Her sixth-grade teacher used projects to engage students. “I remember we made Egyptian burial masks with gold paint and I thought ‘social studies is cool!’” But her memory of her teacher goes beyond projects. “My sixth-grade teacher was the best. She was very encouraging of me, of every student.” Her teacher also created a positive, collective classroom culture. “We’d sit at tables with plants that we were all responsible for caring for.” Engagement, personalized attention, and collaboration are all evident in her classroom today.

So, what I like is going through the research process with students. I think that’s why I love these project-based lessons and units because it allows me to have really personalized conversations with students about what we’re studying within the discipline of history. Not that I’m not interested in them personally, but it’s like we’re really excited about this topic and we’re looking at [it] together and they’re finding sources and they’re excited to show me.

Claudette finds teaching, especially history, very rewarding. “I could see myself being happy in another social studies related field, but I really do like working with high

school students. And I think social studies is important. I can't see myself working in any other discipline.”

Working with others. Claudette's experience of working with students is very different from her experience working with colleagues of other disciplines and administrators. “I feel like other disciplines maybe don't value what we're doing [while] at the same time they tell us how to do our job. It is as if they are saying I'm really not doing a good job.” After the district and state introduced the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the mandatory assessment, there were multiple professional development workshops that focused on reading nonfiction text. Reading nonfiction text in all courses, especially at the high school, was expected by administrators. After a professional development workshop about CCSS, Claudette was approached by a colleague that taught English language arts.

The English teacher came to me she said, ‘We were talking at our English PD about nonfiction and really emphasizing how the social studies teachers are really gonna have to help with teaching reading.’ And I was like, ‘Yeah, no shit! What do you think we've been doing? Like I just have students hold documents up to their foreheads and let it sink in? I've been teaching reading for years. That's what we do’.

Claudette's frustration with colleagues' misunderstanding about how social studies is taught, extends to building administration. About her administrators Claudette says,

Administrators don't get it. They don't get the content or the discipline. Here's what I dream of...after an observation an administrator says, ‘I have a couple of

ideas that may help you get at that standard a little differently. Have you thought about this?’

Instead, the suggestions Claudette receives are general or about classroom management, such as how to pass out papers more efficiently. The disconnect extends beyond the classroom observation. The social studies teachers in her department often talk about staffing inequities between disciplines:

For example, social studies is a four year graduation requirement but we have one fewer staff member than the science department which is a three year graduation requirement. And when we compared numbers, we have slightly more students taking social studies classes than science classes. So [the building administration’s] rationale was like ‘Oh, we hired an extra science teacher because lots of students double up on science’. But students are doing the exact same thing in social studies--double, tripling, quadrupling. I mean [my social studies colleagues] go crazy.

Required curriculum and assessment. Secondary social studies teachers are certified to teach multiple content courses such as history, civics, geography, economics and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Claudette has taught civics, economics, financial literacy, legal process, contemporary issues, U.S. history, world history, AP Psychology, and AP U.S. History. She finds that the state standards for social studies are important in “guiding my practice” especially the history standards which are “all about the skills that historians have.” She builds her courses so that skills are gradually taught throughout the year. “In my U.S. history courses, I sacrifice more and more content to build research skills, but the payoff has been huge.”

Her experience with and planning for AP courses is different. AP doesn't have the "flexibility" that district courses have. The College Board defines the content that is to be taught in the AP courses. But even with the strict curriculum, Claudette seeks unique ways to teach the prescribed curriculum. For example, in AP Psychology, "we had a big panel discussion debate on the legal driving age. Students discussed the issue from different perspectives: parents, teens, psychologists, neuroscientists, insurance companies, etc." The district supports students taking AP courses by allowing any student interested in taking an AP course to do so, even if their past academic efforts are not the best. Claudette is committed to making sure students have the content to do well on the AP exams. She recognizes that some students may struggle with the rigorous reading that is required. "Sometimes you have students signed up for AP who don't have the skills in place and then I'm asked by the administration why they didn't do well. Well, give me a crate of broken eggs." She is accepting of all students and she will do her best to help students do their best.

The state has required mathematics and reading assessments, taken by all students in Grade 11, that is used in calculating school and district accountability scores as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Claudette knows that test scores drive school accountability and understands that

I'm charged to help with those [scores]. But in my heart of hearts, I really don't care. If they're doing a warm-up and looking at a document, I will ask a question that asks how a word is being used in the text or context.

She uses her own assessments to analyze the progress and academic growth of the students. "This is going to sound bad, but I don't care about the grades. I mean I do

grade their work. I use the lower grades to send the signal, ‘Hey, this skill wasn’t where you need to go.’ They usually come around.”

The purpose of social studies is to develop skills. Claudette does not see social studies as having a single purpose, but several. One purpose is to create “an informed citizenry, which is important for democracies. Students should be thinking about the structure of our democracy and how that compares to governments in other countries.” Another purpose is “to show the diversity of voices and to broaden our understanding of what it means to be an American. There isn’t just one narrative. There isn’t just a white narrative, and a black narrative—there are so many narratives.” Her lessons evolve around “authentic, problem-based projects” that use the skills of social scientists such as political scientists, economists, psychologists, and historians.

Above all, it was clear that Claudette values the skills that can be taught through social studies. She shared the many different skills that she highlights through her classes, skills that: develop the whole person, teach critical thinking, explore multiple perspectives, and identify bias in sources.

Claudette ended our first interview with the following:

I think that by the time a student graduates high school, he or she should be able to read, interpret, and analyze many forms of text. I feel in a social studies classroom, you get an opportunity to look at so many different types of text, right? Art, photography, documentaries, datasets, written documents...like all these different types of text and hopefully [students] get lots and lots of opportunities to practice reading those and thinking about them.

I think students should graduate being able to formulate an argument and support that argument with evidence. And we get lots of practice doing that in social studies classrooms. So, I think those kind of critical thinking skills are just important in a well-educated population.

I haven't touched much on civics because I don't teach civics currently, but I hope our students go and vote and I hope they stay informed about politics and participate in the democratic process in a way that's meaningful to them. They don't get as much of that in my classroom as they will in their other classes. But I think that that's really, really important. [pause] And I think we need people, not everyone who graduates, but hopefully some of the students who actually genuinely do love social studies and love history, to go and work in our museums and preserve our past in meaningful ways...to continue to look for opportunities to tell stories that matter.

Claudette feels that "social studies provides the skills to develop the whole person. And I think it's really important in our democracy that our students have a rich social studies education." She advocates for social studies earning its place in the high school curriculum by supporting students with various projects that earn them recognition outside of the school.

I think the teachers in my department advocate for social studies by doing a really good job, particularly with National History Day. Knowing that if our students do well, particularly at the national level--which hasn't happened yet--that maybe we're going start to get some attention. And by our students doing well, I think

it's a way of saying to the administration 'Hey, like this is good for our students. This is good for our department and we want your attention'.

Diane's Profile

Of all the participants in this study, Diane has the most classroom teaching experience. She has been officially teaching for 18 years, but her experience as a teacher began "when I was the mom that helped out the room." Diane has a bachelor's degree in sociology with minor degrees in history and anthropology. She also has a master's degree in education technology. Teaching is her second career. Before being "outsourced", she worked in business.

Growing up in a politically active family. Diane's interest in social studies began as a child,

when you say social studies, the first thing that comes to mind is political in a sense, because I was raised in a very politically active family. My parents were involved in the Democratic Party. I remember being dragged along to the Democrat Club to stuff envelopes for mailings. My parents were always talking about current events and we always had to watch the news at night.

Along with being a parent volunteer, Diane served on a district site-based decision team and as an elected school board member. These experiences built a foundation for her stated purpose of social studies, "to be civically responsible."

Until recently, her formal teaching experience was at the high school level where she taught courses in civics, economics, financial literacy, political issues, psychology, and a dual-credit sociology course for the local community college. At the time of the interviews, she was assigned to teach a seventh-grade comprehensive social studies

course that she called “A Year of the Global Citizen.” She is looking forward to teaching middle school and believes,

This year can be more fun than I’ve had in years because I don’t have some of that stress you have getting them ready for college...and yes, I mean they are hormonal and all of that, but it’s like seeing a little light bulb go off, or that little aha! moment, or they’re putting it together. Like ‘Oh! That’s what that means.’ I mean you can’t beat that. You can’t beat that.

Teaching students to be global citizens. Diane is concerned with the students’ lack of background knowledge. “That’s what I’m trying to start to build...the back story. In the future, they’ll have a foundation to read a book or look at it with an open mind.” To help build that foundation, Diane starts each class with a 10-minute news segment created for students from CNN. The topics are current and often drive the class discussion for the day. “I’m trying to instill in them some kind of passion for what’s going on in the world” and how it relates to the students on a personal level.

Diane shared an example of how the short news segments are important to building background:

One video on a given day could be about voting, then we’ll switch over to how crude oil prices have dropped. So now we’re looking at economics and international trade. Then they’ll switch over to a veteran that is building homes for former veterans that suffer from PTSD or the homeless. Then [the segment] may continue with a story about a high schooler who is a tennis superstar raising money to buy tennis rackets for poor students. So even though the content could be so varied among all of our disciplines of geography, civics, and economics—

the students are required to think about ‘How do I take that? How do I interpret that? How do I digest it?’

Additional supplemental materials Diane incorporates into her lessons come from online sources such as iCivics, Annenberg Learner, Teaching Tolerance, and The Constitution Center. Diane recognizes that the district has an official and required curriculum, but when the students have questions about current events she finds it is more important to encourage students to ask questions and take the time to explore the issue at the moment. For example, a student had a question about the relationship the United States has with North Korea after watching one of the news segments.

We had been discussing the differences between government structures and philosophies and a student stood up and said, ‘I’ve got to ask a question. I’ve got to make a statement and I’m going to get people upset--I don’t understand why we’re so worried about North Korea and why we even have to get involved with it. It doesn’t really affect us at all.’ I shared some history and we looked at a satellite view of North Korea at night. Another student then said ‘This is about humanitarianism. Those people are so poor.’ I ended up not teaching what I had planned. But I couldn’t let that go.

Diane feels the news segments have been a success. At a school open house event “a couple of parents told me that their children make the parents watch the news at home with them.”

Though the official seventh-grade curriculum includes units for civics, economics, and geography, Diane discussed teaching what she thinks is important “all of the units look like they’ll be fun to teach, but my passion has always been U.S. history.

And now especially with the crazy world, it's the civic responsibility, the voter suppression, the bipartisan majority, are also important." She found one way to incorporate history into her lessons by listing important events in history on the whiteboard. She believes the students enjoy looking for what events occurred on a given day to the point where students offer suggestions. Diane described how students contribute,

Three girls asked if they could add something. The girls took a long time to phrase exactly what they wanted to explain and describe the Hindu celebration of Diwali. [Laughs] They had to explain it to me. I've had parents tell me that their students come home and share the history events. That's what I want-- that history is interwoven into everything they do.

It is obvious that Diane's students are afforded multiple opportunities to learn social studies through varied sources and from each other.

Futile assessments. Required assessments occur on three different levels: state, district, and classroom. The state assessment for social studies has been administered since 2008. There have been several versions and in 2019 a new version will be administered to all public school children in Grades 4, 7, and 11. The results of this assessment will be used as a school and district accountability measure. Diane is aware of the assessment and understands that she may be questioned by school administrators if students do not perform well. "Testing is a Pandora's Box. I hate testing. If my kids don't do well, I'll probably get it. But standardized testing doesn't show me what a kid knows." The test scores for students will not be available to teachers until after they are promoted to the next grade. In addition, there is no student accountability directly related

to the scores. Lack of student accountability, postponed results, and questions that may not connect to content teachers deem important are all reasons that Diane says, “I don’t care about that test. I want them to learn the skills.”

District common assessments are required for Grades 6 through 11 in social studies. Over the course of several years, district teachers worked in grade level and course teams to create common assessments to be administered to students. Diane sees the purpose of the district common assessment to help the teachers. “If we have PD in June and we decide to rewrite a question because the kids struggled so bad...that’s what our common assessment is about. To help us try to find those bad questions.” On some level, Diane sees these assessments as useful in exposing students to the types of assessments they will experience on the state assessment, but she feels that she may not “learn anything other than my kids are getting more frustrated. I’m learning that my kids are tired of testing, even at the age of 12.” When students are given district assessments to complete, Diane observed that students “shut down” because the format is very similar to the state assessment in reading. During a district assessment administration, Diane noted that “a student blurted out that the assessment was just like [the state assessment]. All their shoulders dropped. These kids are sick [pause], they’re 12 years old and they’re tired of testing.” Diane says she has “no problem having them blowing the test because they just don’t have comprehension skills, but I don’t want them to blow the test because it is like the state assessment.”

Diane’s classroom assessments are different from the format used on the state and district assessments. She sees the state and district assessments as “anti everything we’re doing in here. We’re having fun. We’re learning. We’re exploring different ways.

We're doing it online. We're doing it on paper. And they say to me 'you let us be kids in here.'" The assessments Diane assigns for grading purposes are often project-based that incorporate technology. She designed an assessment for a unit on The Constitution where students will select one signer of The Constitution and "teach me about them. They're going to make a PowerPoint slide presentation, or I may have some students use Screencastify." She also creates questions for students to answer based on the short news segments that they watch at the beginning of class. Those questions allow students to grapple with open-ended questions, such as "Why do people migrate here? Why are asylum seekers coming to the border? What's the difference between someone who wants to immigrate here and someone who is seeking asylum?"

Diane summarized testing this way, "I don't give tests. A kid could memorize it for half an hour and forget it as soon as they're done with that damn test. Could they apply, inference? That's what I care about and that's hard to teach."

Civic responsibility. When asked about the purpose of social studies Diane quickly replied, "civic responsibility." She then expanded her answer with "I want them to realize the importance of the voting. To be interested in what is happening in the world. I want them to realize the importance of democracy." She models the importance of civic responsibility through her experiences. Diane advocated for social studies when she petitioned the district to change the high school Psychology course from a half credit to a full credit. Something that will benefit her current students in a few years. "I like this whole civic engagement curriculum. I am going to probably enjoy doing The Constitution. I'm going to definitely love the civil rights piece of the one unit because I lived it." Diane has plans to use John Lewis's graphic novel, *March (Book 1)*, with the

unit on civic participation and rights. No doubt she will have her own stories about that time to add.

Diane is passionate about social studies. She blamed students' apathy toward social studies on many things, especially over-testing and minimal social studies instruction in elementary schools. She's concerned by students' lack of understanding of social studies content. Having been a high school teacher, she knows how the social studies curriculum progresses through to graduation. Drawing on her experience of teaching high school psychology, Diane sees students at this age as developing morals. "I think the kids wanted to give their opinions [about North Korea] and show me their knowledge or how they know. They're starting to rationalize things because this is the age where your brain starts your moral development."

Though Diane has a negative point of view about standardized testing, she does have hope for the future of education. "People are starting to engage. Just look at the turnout of the midterms. Look at how women of color, races, ages...all minorities are voting and being elected." She believes that progress will be made as long as teachers "teach from the heart."

Kelly's Profile

Kelly has been teaching secondary social studies for seven years. She has a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Master of Arts in Teaching. Kelly has taught seventh-grade and eighth-grade social studies as well as civics, economics, and world history at the high school level. She has also taught high school courses considered elective courses which include: forensics, psychology, current issues, financial literacy, Advanced Placement (AP) Human Geography, and research. Kelly is a high school

sports coach and has contributed several lessons to an online database for educators. In addition to holding a social studies teaching certificate, she has a secondary English language arts teaching certificate.

An eclectic experience. Kelly worked as an archivist and in a bank before earning her master's degree. She wasn't interested in becoming a teacher. Not until, while working with college students as a writing tutor, a student told her that "no one ever sat down and taught me."

I never wanted to be a teacher which was weird because I love school. I love getting up early and being done relatively early. I like the rigidity of the schedule. I like how everything is planned out. I like that organization and I just like learning stuff all the time. But I, for whatever reason, I didn't associate that with teaching.

Her experience working in different trades and teaching multiple courses is not unlike her high school experience where the student body was more diverse than where she teaches now.

I hated where I went to school when I was there, but I really appreciate it now. I have an appreciation for different gender affiliations, races, and religions of all kinds. I compare my experience to people who grew up in really homogenous populations and I'm shocked by how little they appreciate other [cultures].

An appreciation of others is something that she works at developing in her students.

Appreciation and connections. Throughout the interviews, Kelly spoke of appreciation, "I want students to appreciate others, not tolerance, but appreciation." She creates lessons where students are exposed to the injustices of minorities. One activity or

simulation that she looks forward to implementing is a role play of the Red Scare of the 1950s, where students are assigned to be either a communist or a non-communist. Students read primary sources of propaganda on how to identify communists. Through interviewing each other about their daily lives, students identify who they believe is a communist and who is not. Often the students' speculations are incorrect. In the debriefing of the activity, students are then led through discussions about "what's happening [now] to minorities and we talked about different similar cases, like what happened with Muslim Americans and how it was so similar with scare tactics and things that were playing into that."

She sees great value in the discourse that often takes place in her classroom. Kelly shared another example from her Human Geography course. "We were talking about universalizing religions and ethnic religions. In this class, we have a Mormon, a Muslim, a Jew, a Catholic, and a bunch of protestants. Students were very open to sharing about their own religions." Kelly emphasizes through her lessons "an appreciation of how and why people live the way that they do. It doesn't have to be [considered] bad or weird just because it is different." She sees teaching how to be appreciative of others as an important concept. "I definitely have an appreciation for traditions while still having an understanding that times change and we need to adapt and move on with other things." In addition to lessons that reinforce acceptance, Kelly looks to make connections.

Kelly often uses current events to help her students see how their learning of social studies connects to today.

I try to bring in something practical. I was in the car and on the radio they mentioned Ukraine's Church was breaking away from the Eastern Orthodox Church of Russia and we happen to be going over religion in class. This literally happened three days ago. I told students, 'You wouldn't know the implication of that if you didn't know the history of Christianity.'

Kelly tries to move beyond the linear, dominate history that she sees as often being taught by others. Instead, she makes connections to other perspectives within a specific event or context. She uses the dominate history as a "concrete timeline but then putting in other ideas and perspectives and stories from other people." For example, while teaching about the Battle of Antietam she goes beyond the facts and figures of the battle by having students inquire:

Who was there? How were they impacted? What about the nurses that were working at the camps? And what about the people who were involved, but not soldiers? I feel that is more valuable than knowing that it was the 'bloodiest battle in history', but more about the implications of that event on others.

Kelly does not hesitate to discuss issues of race, religion, culture, or poverty in historical or modern contexts. She helps students to make connections to those issues that are relevant to them. The only issue she sees as problematic in discussing is politics.

I try my absolute best to make it impossible for the kids to know where I sit politically...Outside of school, I'll talk politics all day, but in the classroom, I don't like it because it polarizes the kids too. There's usually one or two [students] that tend to dig their heels in and refuse to see anybody else's opinion.

When an issue “could be interpreted as being political”, Kelly tries to provide students with sources on all sides of the issue. For example, when discussing immigration, she will assign articles that “talk about the positives of immigration and an article that talks about the negatives of immigration” allowing students to draw their own conclusions.

Disorder of social studies course sequence. Kelly’s experience with teaching many different courses and grade levels provides her with an insight into what she sees as a lack of scaffolding of social studies courses throughout the secondary schools. She sees the order in which social studies courses are taught as problematic. “I think geography should be taught before World History. Today, kids were looking at maps and were asking if the Ottoman Empire covered Turkey or Iraq. They had no idea because they haven’t had enough time with maps.” Kelly’s ideal course sequence would be to have students master the skills of geography and civics by the end of middle school. Then in high school students would have two sequential years of U.S. history followed by world history. She would support two years of world history in addition to the two years of U.S. history. “Middle school is a good time to lay the foundations of skills, mapping skills, and an understanding or background of basic civics. Once students have those skills—here’s the rest of the world!”

The social studies certification allows a teacher to teach any number of courses. Teachers can be assigned to teach many different courses. Kelly talked about how “my first or second year here I taught psychology. I only took one psychology class in college. That was all I had.” Kelly sees course assignments as problematic in other ways as well. “When I taught eighth grade, I had one or two preparations. Last year I had to

prepare for five different courses. You can't be a good teacher because you're constantly thinking about the next thing you have to do." Although other teachers in her school may have more than two preparations, she sees a difference when social studies teachers have many preparations. She explained with an example, "If I am teaching psychology and U.S. History, I'm teaching two completely different courses. Whereas a math teacher may be teaching Algebra 1 and Algebra 2, at least the skills and concepts are similar." She said the courtesy extended to other content teachers about teaching different courses within the same discipline may not be afforded to social studies teachers. "It is like asking a biology teacher to teach aerospace science—they are two completely different classes." Kelly doesn't predict that a science teacher in her school would be assigned to teach both those courses at the same time, but it does happen in social studies.

Kelly sees social studies courses as having a common link that other disciplines may not. Teachers of other disciplines have stated to her that they need to "change it up. That they can only teach this [subject] for so long." They become bored with and apathetic toward their subject. Kelly sees social studies as always current and that "you're teaching something different all the time." Inserting current events and topics keeps the course fresh, contemporary, and interesting.

Creating better humans. Kelly described the value and purpose of social studies to "create better humans." She requires students to not only seek the similarities between cultures but wants students to be cognizant of their own actions. She tells her students that "you may be pretty and talented, but if you're mean to others, they will never forget that." Social studies helps students be "more aware of their own beliefs and actions." Breaking down barriers is key. To help students recognize those barriers, Kelly wants

students to look for similarities. “I feel like people are always looking at the differences. There are a lot more similarities.” The ultimate goal is for students to “be more harmonious and accepting.”

Kelly believes social studies is also ...incredibly practical. Everything you do in social studies has some sort of implication to where, how, and why you are living the way you are today. I think that's really the most exciting thing. It applies all the time to everything that's happening everywhere.

When asked what students should take away from her social studies courses, Kelly compared the value of social studies to other courses,

I really hope that they see that there is value in it, that it's practical. Social studies is something that you use every single day as opposed to calculus or lab reports or science. Only so many people will go on to use that, but history is every day. Like civics is every day of your life. Economics is certainly every single decision that you make. All decisions stem from an economic decision, so that's the practical side of it. Students should come to understand that social studies is not scary and it's not all about memorization. That is what a lot of students come in thinking—it is all memorization of dates and names. I mean those are good to know, but I'd rather that they leave my course knowing themes and concepts and how those are all tied together.

Rachel's Profile

Rachel is beginning her fifteenth year as an educator. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. In addition,

she holds multiple teaching certificates which allow her to teach exceptional children in K-12 and a secondary social studies certificate.

Teaching elementary, secondary, and exceptional children. Rachel's teaching experiences cover a wide range from first grade through high school. These various teaching assignments provide her with insights into the K-12 experience that other secondary social studies teachers may lack. As an elementary teacher, she was able to incorporate social studies content, especially historical content into her lesson plans by using historical fiction and materials. Rachel shared that while teaching fifth grade, she taught a unit on the Civil War,

I tried to do a jigsaw with my kids, but I think I was a little overzealous because I gave them books that I had collected throughout the years. The books were probably a little too [difficult] for them. But we did real history projects using reading materials.

Until recently, she has taught social studies special education classes almost exclusively. Teaching social studies in a special education setting has unique circumstances and issues. Many of the recommended lesson plans, especially for teaching economics, are simulations and the small class sizes of special education students make conducting a whole class simulation difficult. She is looking forward to teaching larger classes,

This year I have two college prep classes of 25 and 30 students. I'm a little excited to see if I can do those [simulations] that I couldn't before because of small class sizes. I didn't do them before because it just wasn't feasible for 10

kids. It wouldn't get the same effect or you had to modify it so much that you couldn't get the whole thing. You'd be lost. So, I'm looking forward to that.

When large group learning activities are not feasible, Rachel relies on using text to support her lessons. Reading is important in her personal life as well as in her profession. Rachel is an avid reader and often alternates between several books. "I tend to read the same types of books—historical fiction and historical fluff. That's what I call the novels and biographies." She prefers "books to social media." In the classroom, she uses text as the foundation of her lessons. She teaches students how to manipulate and find information from factual sources such as the *CIA World Factbook* (see <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>). Her background and experience as an English language arts teacher and an elementary teacher have helped her to supplement the curriculum with text. Rachel explained,

It's not hard for me to understand that I'm teaching reading. I just use different sources. Whereas, social studies teachers that didn't come from an elementary background have always been this single subject social studies teacher. They don't see that they're a reading teacher too.

Challenging curriculum sequence. Rachel has very strong opinions about the sequence of high school social studies courses. She worries that the real focus is on "earning credits and graduation rates" and not about what she sees as a logical or practical course sequence. Rachel feels that English and mathematics are more sequential, but the lack of logical sequencing of the social studies classes is troubling. "[The administration] can throw the courses in wherever they want, so to speak. So,

we're kind of like the 'redheaded stepchildren'. I mean we are liked--but you know, if push comes to shove, we are sacrificed."

Rachel's ideal order of courses would include:

United States History should be taken in ninth grade because then you can refer back to eighth grade and say 'remember in eighth grade when you talked about this?' I think world history or geography should come in tenth grade. I'm kind of torn if it should be just a straight geography class or it should be integrated like we try to do [now]. I think 11th grade should be civics or economics or even geography then, because [the students] are driving. I mean I know that's not like a far stretch but at least it's a little bit different. And then in the senior year, students should take civics or economics.

Some of Rachel's disagreement over the district's sequence stems from the lack of substance covered in the district's mandatory professional development workshops. The district workshops tend to "focus more on what to do, than what we want to do." She did find the federally funded Teaching American History Grants extremely valuable in building her professional growth. The federal grant programs were "useful because I got to talk to other teachers. You get ideas and you collaborate with others." She is not able to find the time during the required school day to collaborate with other special education teachers throughout the district. Instead, Rachel finds herself often seeking out help from school colleagues who are easily accessible. About the other district teachers, she said "It isn't because we don't like each other. I think it is because we're in a bubble. You're more likely to go to people down the hallway." Although she has expressed her thoughts on changing the sequence of when social studies courses are offered with

colleagues, she does not feel the administration is open to discussing changes of the sequence and that the decision to change the order of when courses are taught is “made at a higher level.”

Mixed signals from administration. In the district, depending on the number of years taught, teachers are evaluated at least once a year by an administrator. Rachel does not see her school administration as being able to support her in the social studies because

The academic dean [does not have a background in social studies]. How is the dean going to help me as a social studies teacher? [The administration] doesn't know what resources we need or they don't know what we're supposed to be doing. How would they know that I'm doing my job the right way? They probably don't act that way with math or English teachers because those are the subjects that drive the school.

She hopes that the newest administrator, who previously was a social studies chairperson, will be able to work with her department to make changes that will benefit the department. “I never approached the administration about issues I was having. Instead, I would meet with my department chair.” Rachel feels that mixed signals are sent by administrators who set blanket guidelines for all staff to meet. Currently, every teacher is required to submit a 45- or 90-day plan. The expectation is that teachers will follow their submitted plans, while also teaching to mastery. Rachel sees a conflict. “If I am to teach, reteach, assess, reteach, etc., I may not be on my plan where the administration wants me to be.” Rachel believes that the role of “all administration

should be a lead for instruction” but she is frustrated that few have a background in social studies.

Another challenge to implementing the social studies curriculum is the state-mandated assessments. Rachel sees the biggest changes to education since she was in school are standards and assessments with “state tests driving everything.” There are changes in teaching social studies since she completed her student teaching. “Everything is standard driven now, which is sometimes good. But we also have become so test driven. We have to prove everything and there are teachers that just teach to the test.” She doesn’t feel the tests assess what is being taught in social studies accurately. Rachel explained the inaccuracy with an example from economics, “we spend so much time teaching supply and demand, but there are hardly any questions on it.”

Overall, Rachel is happy to be teaching social studies at the secondary level. She is especially happy to be teaching with teachers that are “a bunch of history nerds.” Her switch from elementary education to secondary social studies has been positive. The move allowed her to specialize in a subject that she enjoys. “In elementary, you’re just pulled in so many different directions and you can’t get into depth with any one thing.” Teaching a subject that provides the basics of being an adult is fulfilling as well.

Social studies is the basis for everything. Without hesitation, Rachel described the purpose of social studies as “preparing productive citizens.” Rachel sees her job as a social studies teacher as giving students “A basis. A base to be a productive citizen of society. I may give them that through the topics I teach, the standards I teach, the way I teach, how I conduct myself, or how I relate to my students. I want them to take away all of that.” Rachel’s lessons plans are based on making the content as relevant as possible

to her students. Social studies has many life lessons that are easily taught through the content. She uses as many real-life examples as possible, including her takeout coffee habit and coupon clipping. But the biggest take away is about how to protest.

I want them to understand that their voice does matter. That how they express that voice, not what they are saying, but how they express it can influence whether it gets heard or not. They have a voice, but that voice can get drowned out by the way you present it. And you have to know that shouting at someone or breaking something or doing all that...well, you'll get exposure, but others won't hear what you really want to say. They'll only see what you did.

During their professional learning meetings, Rachel and her colleagues often discuss how social studies "gets the short end of the stick." Rachel believes there is a long history with how social studies is seen as less than other content areas.

Social studies has always been the "redheaded stepchild" of every school and every district since probably the beginning of time. Because I guess the thought process is to make it in society, to function, you should at least be able to read and write and count your money. Society doesn't care if you know what your rights are. You know they don't. It doesn't matter if you understand why you're getting price gouged and the coupon is not really giving you any savings. You know it doesn't matter that the reason why slavery existed was because the Portuguese brought over slaves to Brazil because they'd already killed all the natives of that area. And then it became a cash business which set up why our society is still inherently racist.

Rachel has a very strong sense of the purpose of social studies. “I hope what I’m telling them is important in their lives. I want them to realize that they do not live in a bubble. Everything they do has ripple effects to family, community, and even the world.”

Thomas’s Profile

Thomas is an 11-year veteran secondary social studies teacher. He has taught at the high school and middle school levels in two different school districts. His undergraduate degree is in history education and he has a master’s degree in education.

Early experiences start with family. Thomas’s love of history, especially military history, stems from family vacations to historical sites and from teachers that were “engaging storytellers.” When he found certain social studies topics interesting, he would often seek out additional information in the adult section of the local library. Not only is he an avid reader of history, but he is a runner. He is the cross-country coach at his school and easily intertwines running with teaching, “running has lessons: perseverance, how to deal with losing, working hard, and being part of a team. I think coaching is like the most pure form of teaching that there is.”

His favorite teachers “never allowed me to settle for anything less than my best” and are fondly remembered. For Thomas, being the teacher that shows an interest in his students and who pushes them to be their best are the most important aspects of teaching. Teaching for Thomas is based on two foundations: an ability to teach history and to work with young adults as a mentor. His high school coach was an important aspect of his teenage years, who taught him the value of “treating people the right way, doing the right thing, and helping people out.” Money is not a main motive for being a teacher, but

instead, at the end of the day it is whether he “left more people better off coming out of my class than when they came in.”

Difficulties and barriers. Currently, Thomas is teaching in a public magnet middle school where the students and their parents choose (or choose to) that school. Prior to teaching middle school, Thomas’s teaching experiences were in public high schools. He feels as though the middle school students he has now have positive family supports that his high school students did not. He recognized that the high school students came from very different backgrounds than his own and found it hard to relate to his former students. Those students often could not commit to studying due to the responsibilities of taking care of younger siblings or a lack of transportation to attend after-school sessions, including sports-related events. In addition, Thomas experienced indifference and lack of support for teaching social studies from school and district administration, fellow teachers, and the state department of education. He describes this experience as

First, it's a little frustrating because I feel like the school district makes it seem like you're not as important as others. Just because English and mathematics are supposed to be like [pause] because of testing purposes. English teachers are the quote, unquote ‘the most important people’, which is a bunch of crap. But that’s what your school accountability is all graded upon.

In addition, he finds that the students have adopted this viewpoint and often describe social studies as irrelevant to their lives, not important, or that students prefer the sciences more than the humanities. Fellow staff members also see teachers of non-tested subjects as “second class.” Conversations at grade level meetings often focus on how to

improve reading or mathematics scores. There is a sense of middle school teachers being not as valuable as high school teachers. Thomas described that relationship,

A lot of the high school teachers think the middle school is the country club and anybody could [teach middle school]. They think the kids are just there. The kids are perfect and the teachers.... I don't think we get a ton of respect. I don't think anybody would come out and say this to you publicly, like if you got someone to video it. But, yeah, I feel like we don't get a lot of respect because they are the ones working with difficult kids, and we aren't. High school teachers think we just give [the middle school students] the work and the kids will just do it.

Although there isn't the state testing pressure on social studies like there is on reading and mathematics, there is a course pre- and post-test that is mandated by the state and is used as a measure of teacher effectiveness. Thomas sees that test as unfair and easily manipulated by individual teachers in terms of when it is administered, how teachers score the tests, and how it is administered. Thomas sets aside 30 minutes for students to complete the pre-test and then allows for unlimited time for completion of the post-test. The state only mandates the test, not the testing procedures. Thomas believes the test is "there to make teachers jump through hoops." Though a state test with school and district accountability attached to it may make a difference in the perception of the value of social studies, Thomas can see how not having a mandated test is positive.

I don't want to say since [the administration] doesn't pay attention to us [pause] that we have a little more freedom, but I think we can be a little more creative.

Instead of having to read a certain book because your school, district, or state

requires it [pause] I think we can have a little more of an interesting experience [for students].

The perceptions of administration, staff, and students do weigh on Thomas, but he also realizes that

I'm still just gonna do the best I can regardless of what the school district says it prioritizes. So I'm going to do the best I can. And you just have to keep on treating it like it is important. And it is the most important subject in my eyes.

Purpose of social studies is to learn about people. Thomas sees the purpose of social studies as many things, but he wants, above all else, for students to enjoy the content, to have a positive experience in his class. American Colonial History is his favorite. Second to that are the skills that students use to analyze documents and historical materials. When he first began teaching, he “taught from notes and questions”, but his current pedagogical style is more aligned to an inquiry model, from which history is treated as a mystery for students to solve. Thomas shared the following about the purpose of social studies:

First of all, I just think social studies is awesome. I love social studies. I love teaching it, particularly history. I just think it's an amazing subject. Just to be able to connect to things in the past. To see how people live their lives. Like, why did our country come to be the way that it is today? What are those events? Who are those people? When did somebody just step up and do something that really made a lasting impact, good or bad? What are those little moments where history changed? And what if something happened differently? Take the Battle of Trenton. What if the Americans got there a little bit later in the day and the

Hessians were awake? The Americans probably would have gotten wiped out by them. Would we be saying 'God Save the Queen' every day? Who knows?

But I think social studies allows you to understand why people do what they do in a lot of different contexts, in a lot of different ways. And I think it gives you skills that you can apply to the real world right now. Take decision-making skills. What might have motivated Washington to do this or Lincoln to do that? Sometimes that goes into that version of history where you just think of only the famous or well-known people are the ones that impacted everything. And you forget about the regular folks. Sometimes I guess I am guilty of that.

But if you are teaching Civics, you can discuss why our government operates the way it does and how can you make an impact? Economics asks how money has motivated things and teaches students about making choices....The kids have a hard time realizing you not just making choice about money all the time. Instead, you're thinking economically any time you're making decisions. And geography. How does [geography] impact people's lives all around the world? Asking questions about where you live, where you came from, how can you see people living their lives differently for various things? So, I think social studies is you know--all about people.

I guess we do a good job of applying it to the real world sometimes. It's all about people and how they live their lives. And I think social studies gives you a lot of tools to understand. I guess those tools can be used for good or for evil. There are a lot of issues that we have in our country. If we had more educated citizens in all areas, but particularly in the skills that we teach, maybe

some of those issues could be solved. Or maybe we wouldn't be in the situation that we're in now [pause] without getting too political.

Social studies is interesting. Thomas's enthusiasm for social studies is obvious. He became more animated and talked quickly when given an opportunity to talk about social studies, especially history. It is easy to see how his students would be eager to be in his class because he is so excited about social studies. Rather than administer traditional tests, Thomas has been assigning creative projects like short videos and living museums that he says his students enjoy. Thomas summed up his current experience as

I think you can take just about any issue that's happening or has happened in our world and analyze it using one of the tools of social studies. I'm sure there are mathematical tools that you can use to discuss elections or science tools to discuss impacts of global warming, or in English class, they can break down a document, but social studies is unique—we have such a wide umbrella of topics. We ask questions like: Why do you act the way that you do? What motivates you? How do you think? and How can we actually make changes? I think we have a lot of different tools in social studies that can address these questions. And we don't have all the answers but at the end of the day [pause] I just think it's super interesting. And I hope that at least some of that comes off to the kids in my social studies classes.

Key Themes in Social Studies Educator Experiences

Any analysis of experience is limited to the participants involved in that particular study. As Hycner (1985) explained “the phenomenological researcher is seeking to illuminate human phenomena and not, in the strictest sense to generalize the findings” (p.

294). This analysis should not be viewed as a generalization of all secondary social studies teachers, but instead, this was an analysis of seven stories of seven individuals.

No doubt those reading this study will recognize aspects of their own experiences, but not in its entirety, for experiences are as many and as unique as there are people.

Similarities in Learning and Teaching Experiences

This section of my analysis identified “themes common to most or all of the interviews” (Hycner, 1985, p. 292). There were several common themes within the learning and teaching experiences: learning habits, view of required assessments and curriculum, and control over how courses are sequenced.

Personal learning habits. How the participants learned about the issues and topics of social studies were related to their personal learning habits. All the participants were interested in staying engaged with national and world current events. They spoke about how they would plan lessons from current events to help students make connections to learning. The questions that are posed to students by the participants go beyond having students identify basic facts. The participants spoke of being avid readers from a very young age, except for the researcher whose experience was that mathematics and science which were prioritized both at home and at school. Several of the participants spoke about how reading historical fiction and informational text as the reason why they became social studies teachers. Diane talked about the various book subscriptions her mother had purchased. “Remember I told you that last time about how I could read? My mom had the encyclopedias, Book of the Month Club, the Scholastic books...?” The interviews were held in each participant’s classroom and each had large bookshelves full of teaching materials, but mostly books that could be used as historical

references. The participants' historical understand did not come from textbooks or college courses, it was developed from childhood and from many sources. The participants discussed developing an interest in history at a young age. All the participants, except Kelly, described being avid readers of historical fiction today.

Mandatory assessments and curriculum. Participants stated how much they disliked mandatory assessments, except for Kelly who said "I think common assessments are smart. I think it makes sense. And if you just kind of go into it with an open mind on being able to make adjustments then it's not a big deal." Rachel and Diane were quite vocal about their dislike of the mandatory assessments by explaining that they have "opted out" their children from taking the assessments. Some acknowledged the tests but also stated that they did not feel that the assessments helped to inform their practice.

When participants were asked to describe a lesson that they enjoyed teaching, none of the participants described lessons that were part of the state recommended curriculum or related to the state and district assessments. The lessons offered as examples by the participants were found on the Internet or heavily modified from a recommended unit. The common characteristic of the lessons they enjoyed teaching was that they were lessons in which the students had an "aha!" moment. Claudette enthusiastically described lessons about building research skills and the crowning moment of those lessons came when the students sought out historians, scientists, or lawmakers that were considered primary sources for an event.

Four participants had taught Advanced Placement (AP) courses or dual-credit courses and accepted the fact that those classes were designed to teach to the test. Claudette commented about AP assessments, "I don't know anyone that is doing a

project-based curriculum with AP U.S. History. There might be, but I've reached out and can't find anyone doing that." In Claudette's case, there were significant pedagogical differences between the way AP was taught and her school courses. In the case of AP, everything was dictated by College Board, which Claudette said she was not able to "establish the desired outcome for the AP class."

Course sequence. The sequence of courses taught was another area of concern to the participants, though they all had very different ideas about this. Their dream sequences were similar to Paul Hanna's, *Expanding Communities* curriculum of the 1930s (Stallones, 2003) where the focus of the curriculum begins with skills. Then the focus becomes regionalized with learning about the United States and then the world. Other core social studies disciplines, especially civics and economics would be taught toward the end of a student's high school career. Although several of the participants felt very strongly about adopting a different course sequence, they did not have a clear plan of action for how to accomplish or how to begin to effect this change. Diane stated that in order for a different sequence to be created, "social studies teachers would have to band together and somehow, you know, get the Department of Education to listen. I think if we became a unified voice." The state only requires that three social studies credits, with one credit in U.S. History, are to be earned in order to receive a state high school diploma. Rachel said that she had shared her ideas with the district social studies supervisor.

Differences in Learning and Teaching Experiences

The differences in experiences among the participants did not appear to be as great as the similarities. There were differences in the undergraduate degrees earned by

the participants with only the male participants having earned history education degrees. Four of the five females in the group had earned degrees in specific disciplines of history, sociology, and economics. Rachel had earned an elementary education degree, but she entered college with aspirations to be an athletic trainer.

In addition, it was the male participants that knew from an earlier age that they wanted to be teachers—specifically history teachers. The females, on the other hand, made decisions to be teachers based on job market fluctuations. I had made the decision to earn a teaching certificate after having a child and I saw teaching as a means to allocate time between being a mother and a professional with ample time to spend quality time with my child. Rachel, the only elementary certified participant, made the move from elementary to secondary school because as an elementary teacher she was “pulled in so many different directions.”

There were differences in how the participants viewed working collaboratively with others, both within social studies and in other disciplines and roles. Only Kelly mentioned that working with social studies teachers that are the “older teachers” can be problematic because those teachers have routines and traditions that she sees as not “helping students to become learners.” But overall, the participants liked their social studies coworkers and saw them as, Diane described, “a sisterhood, a brotherhood.”

There were differences in how the participants experienced working with administrators. Diane spoke about how her administrator was leading the charge “to do a program here where social studies and English get married so to speak. And I’m fine with that. I think it’s great.” Kelly did not mention administrators at all during the interviews. The other four participants had very strong opinions about the role of

administrators as instructional leaders. They saw administrators as not having a social studies background or an understanding of how social studies was taught. They saw the focus of the administrators as narrow and only focused on testing in reading and mathematics, leaving them without leadership and feeling undervalued. The contradiction being that administrators are focused on high-stakes testing subjects of mathematics and reading, which means that social studies is not under constant scrutiny by administrators. Testing may not be the only reason for this lack of attention to the discipline. Before the push for mandated testing in mathematics and reading, there was a call for a change in the status of social studies (Thornton & Houser, 1996).

Fallace's (2017) Model of Social Studies Orientations

In this section, the third question will be addressed:

Q3 How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations?

Thomas Fallace (2017) identified “three ideological orientations to the social studies—traditional, disciplinary, and progressive—that have consistently been present since the turn of the 20th century” (p. 42). Fallace defined each orientation as “the traditional approach to the social studies as any attempt to transmit a body of predetermined and prescribed content to students, regardless of the social and/or political outlook of the author” (p. 44), “the disciplinary orientation focuses on the thinking, procedures, processes, and acts of disciplinary experts” (p. 45), and “the progressive orientation focuses on the emergence of knowledge from real-world problems and the application of knowledge to real-world issues” (p. 45). Given these definitions, all the participants, except one, provided interview statements about the purpose of social

studies that were disciplinary. Several participants also made statements that would identify them as also having additional orientations.

It is important to understand that although participants shared their experiences of social studies over a lifetime, this analysis was conducted at a discreet time, at the conclusion of the interviews. This analysis was therefore reflective of a specific period and was not intended to be a label placed on individuals, but instead was conducted as an interpretation of how experiences can be related to a model.

In this section, I will provided an analysis how all participants interpreted and articulated the purposes of social studies by identifying “general and unique themes for all interviews” (Hycner, 1985, p. 292). I identified interview excerpts that related to Fallace’s (2017) three ideological orientations to social studies. Data sources for this analysis included: observable outcome, learning theory, and assessments. From Fallace’s model, I created a matrix of the ideological orientations and the corresponding components, including the characteristics of each.

A matrix and visual representation of how each participant’s experiences, interpretations, and descriptions related to Fallace’s (2017) model were provided. The visual representation were created by calculating an RGB hexadecimal code (see https://www.rapidtables.com/web/color/RGB_Color.html) that corresponded to the data from the interviews. For each orientation, there were four possible levels of saturation. For example, if a participant’s learning theory aligned with a behaviorist approach that would correlated to one level under the traditional approach. If the participant also implemented assessments on factual knowledge, then the participant had a total of two levels under the traditional approach. There were four possible levels of saturation under

each approach, the fourth level was the absence of evidence of that approach. Using an RGB hexadecimal coloring scheme, it was possible to indicate a color that represented the total sum of levels under each orientation for which there was evidence. There were 54 possible outcomes with a four (levels) by three (orientations) matrix.

In this section I first presented the matrix of the characteristics of Fallace's (2017) model of orientations (see Table 3), then provided a completed matrix and RGB visual for each participant followed by a deeper analysis with evidence from the interview data.

Although there are many different empirical sources for the purposes of social studies, I selected Fallace's (2017) model for this study because he provided insight into the learning theories and assessment types that are characteristically found with each purpose or orientation. Fallace described the characteristics of three major components of teaching: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Table 3 is a bulleted matrix of the characteristics found within each orientation.

Table 3

Fallace's (2017) Model of Social Studies Orientations

Characteristic	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmission • Retention of Information • Teacher/Textbook centered • “Correct” or “True” • Predetermined • Prescribed • Memorization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural • Thinking • Acts of Disciplinary Experts • Cognitive and Epistemological Growth • Inquiry • Understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation • Knowledge from Real World • Transdisciplinary • Interdisciplinary • Fosters Social Progress • Seek and Enact Solutions • Relevant
Learning Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviorist Approach • Conditioned • Reinforced • Teacher-centered • Textbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Approach • Developed • Transformed • Challenged • Epistemological Shift • Students Construct Own Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated Approach • Connect Knowledge to his/her Immediate Concerns and Issues • Questioning • Skeptical • Critical
Assessment Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess Factual Knowledge • Paper and Pencil • Short Answer • Traditional Testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess Growth and Skills • Open-ended • Inquiry • Multiple Sources • Arguments and Evidence • Warranted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application to Real World • Student-developed Questions • Immediate Application to Local, Social, Cultural Context • Solving Social Problems

Each participant's interview transcript was evaluated for evidence linking to the components and characteristics of Fallace's (2017) model. In the case of the researcher, I

evaluated my pre-study statement of my experiences and descriptions of social studies that served as my “bracketed” bias (Creswell, 2013; Hycner, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014). A table and graphic or color visual of each participant’s analysis precede the profile explanation for the analysis. The participant data appears in alphabetical order next to their pseudonyms.

Becky

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	--	X	--
Learning Theory	--	X	--
Assessment Type	X	--	--

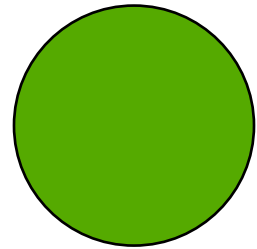


Figure 3. Matrix and visual of Becky’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Of the observable outcome proponent, I specifically mentioned the core disciplines, “There are core content areas of civics, economics, geography, and history as defined by current state standards and national frameworks.” The skills that are mentioned are the disciplinary practices of historians, “skills that are practical, such as being able to identify, analyze, and evaluate sources for varying perspectives and point of views.” I discussed the key social studies skills by referencing practices found in the disciplines of economics and political science, such as “to be active in and aware of government policy- making; to be discerning consumers of goods, services, and

information; and how to be reflective and civil in their acts of communicating with one another.” Overall, the component observable outcome was disciplinary.

The learning theory I subscribed to would be considered a cognitive approach. Though not specifically identified in my essay, I went through an epistemological shift as I changed positions from classroom teacher to social studies specialist. The role of social studies specialist afforded me the time to learn and think more deeply about the characteristics and purposes of social studies. I do not believe that my approach was a situated approach as Fallace (2017) described because it was my responsibility to ensure that the state standards were being implemented in the classroom. The state standards are disciplinary standards. My responsibility then was to evaluate and disseminate materials to teachers that meet the discipline standards and required students to think like historians, economists, geographers, and political scientists. Overall, my learning theory closely aligned to that of a cognitive approach as I sought to teach students how to think like geographers, economists, political scientists, and historians by applying the tools and skills found in those disciplines.

The assessment types that I commonly used as a classroom teacher and as a specialist were, for the most part, traditional. Though I wrote many short answer questions to serve as examples and exemplars, the questions were often not open-ended. The questions I wrote emulated the type of short answer questions that were on the state assessment. Students were required to answer the questions and then support their answer with an example or explanation of their own, or by providing evidence from a source given to them. As a classroom teacher, I assigned projects to students that had

crude grading rubrics that scored students on compliance and structure and occasionally content. Overall, the assessment types I used were traditional.

The visual in Figure 3 illustrates how I aligned to a disciplinary orientation, except for the types of assessments making the visual a “dark green.” Students may not be assessed in their understanding of the work of social studies scientists. Results from the traditional assessments may measure students understanding of transmitted information, but traditional assessments do not require students to apply or transfer knowledge to new situations. The grades from the traditional assessments that were assigned were not reflective of the instruction.

Clark

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	--	X	X
Learning Theory	--	X	X
Assessment Type	--	X	--

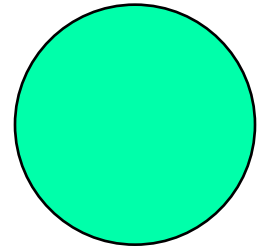


Figure 4. Matrix and visual of Clark’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Clark’s observable outcome identified him as a disciplinary and progressive teacher. He provided students with the practices of the different disciplines, especially history: “we’re working with informational text and [social studies teachers] have the training, environment, and structure that is specifically built to do this.” His statement,

“we’re teaching people how to empathize and interact with the past, socially, politically, and environmentally” was an example of approaching the content in an interdisciplinary manner and dealing with real-world problems. In terms of the observable outcome component, Clark was following both a disciplinary and progressive orientation.

Clark’s learning theory was also based on two approaches, cognitive and situated. The most poignant evidence of the cognitive approach was found in his lesson activities. Clark’s students used the skills and tools of historians as they researched and presented conclusions. Students constructed their own knowledge. Other history projects students completed were based upon their own immediate concerns and issues. Clark described the topic selection process as “they can find a research topic for anything and they have so much more success when they research something that is meaningful and interesting to them” which aligned with the situated approach. Therefore, his learning theory aligned with both the disciplinary and progressive approaches.

The assessments that Clark administered and used for grading purposes were created by him as opposed to those mandated by the district or the state, were project-based. His project-based inquiries required students to use multiple sources and students created arguments that were supported with evidence from primary and secondary sources. Clark stated that he wanted his students to become healthy skeptics and that he wants “them to be able to question the world around them in a variety of ways.” Though Clark may be considered progressive in observable outcome and learning theory, I did not find evidence that the assessments he assigned are acted upon or applied to solve problems. Therefore, in terms of assessment type, Clark aligned solely with the disciplinary approach.

Clark's overall statement about wanting students "to be able to question the world around them in a variety of different ways" aligned well with Fallace's (2017) definition of having a disciplinary orientation. But in the interviews, Clark also expressed "one of the greatest values that social studies can teach is the value of being able to create change." He provided examples from local history that had significant impacts on the laws and education today. Clark's statements distinguished him from the other participants as being oriented to both disciplinary and progressive purposes of social studies. However, Clark did not assess students' ability to evaluate or analyze current local, cultural, or social issues.

The "spring green" color of the visual in Figure 4 illustrates that Clark's teaching wholly aligns to a disciplinary orientation and he also teaches in a progressive manner that reflected the "predisciplinary, transdisciplinary, or interdisciplinary nature of reality" (Fallace, 2017, p. 45). The assessments he administered required students to apply the work of social studies disciplinarians.

Claudette

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	X	X	--
Learning Theory	X	X	X
Assessment Type	X	X	--

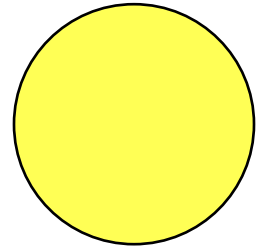


Figure 5. Matrix and visual of Claudette’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Claudette’s experience was unique in that she fully aligned to both the traditional and disciplinary approaches but not by choice or exclusively aligned to her beliefs. Overall, Claudette was very discipline oriented given her nearly year-long history project that required students to use the disciplinary practices of historians, but she also taught several AP courses which were taught from a prescribed curriculum and assessed in the same manner. The Advanced Placement (AP) courses she taught would be considered traditional under Fallace’s (2017) model. The observable outcome was prescribed and predetermined by the College Board for both AP U.S. History and AP Psychology. The learning theory associated with the AP courses was behaviorist in nature and was heavily teacher-centered. Claudette commented in the interviews that she could “lecture in my sleep.” The AP assessments were formulaic in that students know how many multiple choice and essay questions would appear on the final assessment. Claudette identified the differences between AP courses and district courses by discussing the balance

between content and practices with “well, it depends on what course I’m teaching because in AP I don’t have the flexibility that I have in U.S. Honors.” In the case of the AP courses that she taught, her teaching aligned to the traditional approach. However, that is not true of the district courses she taught.

Claudette had students working on the disciplinary practices of social scientists, especially the practices of historians. In addition, the inquiry-based projects students completed were arguments supported by evidence of multiple sources. “I think social studies teaches you to consider things from multiple perspectives. I think it allows you to integrate information from all different pieces...It gives us the tools to grapple with issues like present-day issues.” Her dedication to providing students the opportunity to learn from multiple perspectives indicated that her learning theory was situated “in the context of real-world problems and the application of knowledge to real-world issues” (Fallace, 2017, p. 57). Teaching multiple perspectives from a critical viewpoint was evidence of teaching students to be skeptical and to question. To her credit, she sought a way to incorporate more skills-based instruction into the AP courses. “That’s the piece of the puzzle I can’t figure out yet. I can’t find anyone who’s doing a project-based curriculum with AP US.” In all fairness to Claudette, perhaps there should have been a Claudette AP and a Claudette B.

As seen in Figure 5, Claudette’s teaching aligned fully to two orientations, traditional and disciplinary, while the addition of one component from the progressive orientation “lightens” her visual to “yellow.” When teaching AP courses, she followed the syllabus set by the College Board and assessed students’ progress by administering and evaluating in a manner similar to the AP exams that are provided by the College

Board. When Claudette was teaching the official district curriculum, she followed a disciplinary approach by teaching the disciplinary practices of historians and assigned a comprehensive assessment that followed the guidelines set by the National History Day organization.

Diane

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	--	X	--
Learning Theory	--	--	X
Assessment Type	X	--	--

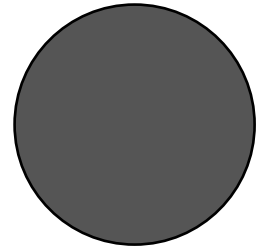


Figure 6. Matrix and visual of Diane’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Diane identified with all three approaches but by different components. The observable outcome that Diane identified in the interviews aligned her with the disciplinary approach. She spoke often about the different units she will teach during the school year, units that were based on civics, economics, and geography. Her wide-ranging educational background and various courses that she taught made her a solid candidate for the disciplinary approach. When asked where ideas for her lesson plans come from she replied, “First, I’m an avid reader. I go online. I go to different sources.” She understood the practices of many disciplines, especially sociology, psychology, history, and anthropology. She took many “Black Studies” courses in college, and when

combined with her lived experience during the late 1960s and 1970s, analyzing issues with a critical lens was not unknown to her.

From the evidence gathered in the interviews, Diane associated her approach with a situated learning theory. The lessons she chose to talk about were based on current events and designed to help students “to inspire them to care about their history and how it relates to their lives right now.” A situated approach requires that students make real-world connections and to “combat the forces of mindless socialization caused by mass media and consumer culture” (Fallace, 2017, p. 60). Her example of the questions she asked students about the impact of immigration was evidence of connecting to immediate concerns and issues. Diane’s unit about “fake news and how to interpret the news” was additional evidence of her alignment with an approach of a progressive orientation, where “addressing controversial...topics directly in the classroom” (Fallace, 2017, p.60) were important in exposing students to multiple viewpoints other than the dominant viewpoint.

Lastly, Diane’s assessment methods were somewhat outdated and very traditional. Although she incorporated technology, the projects that students completed were little more than the substitution of electronic or computer programs for paper and pencil. The projects could easily be completed on paper and required students to recall knowledge. Diane shared a worksheet that students completed on an iCivics (see <https://www.icivics.org/>) module and the questions were fact-based and recall questions. It is possible that as she continues to grow into her new role as a middle school social studies teacher she will become more progressive with her testing objectives and products. From the evidence gathered for this study, Diane was considered traditional, using traditional assessment methods.

The “grey” visual in Figure 6 illustrates how Diane aligned to one component in each of the orientations. She saw value in the different disciplines of social studies while encouraging “an epistemological shift in their thinking” (Fallace, 2017, p. 45). Students’ understanding and knowledge were assessed for the content knowledge gained, but not for transfer or how to apply new learning. Diane acknowledged the district’s disciplinary curriculum orientation, wanted students to think critically about social studies issues, yet assessed on low-level knowledge gained.

Kelly

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	--	X	--
Learning Theory	--	X	X
Assessment Type	X	--	--

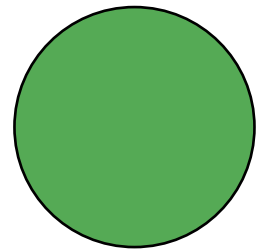


Figure 7. Matrix and visual of Kelly’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Kelly’s observable outcome component was disciplinary as evidenced by her lesson plans that incorporated the practices of disciplinary experts especially historians and geographers. Her lessons focused on providing students sources from different perspectives and points of view. Her Red Scare activity and discussions around different religions were examples. In both these activities, students were exposed to various perspectives but fell short of being progressive as policy formation was not an observable

outcome. Policy formation is a key characteristic of a progressive approach and would need to be “fluid, responsive, and reconfigured in a more effective way towards the understanding and solving of societal problems” (Fallace, 2017, p. 58). It was tempting to identify Kelly as a progressive social studies educator because the topics discussed in her class were often topics considered controversial and taboo and Kelly said, “I do not have a problem talking about [race and racism].” If Kelly had planned for students to brainstorm and communicate proposals to solve societal issues and problems she could be considered progressive as well as disciplinary.

Kelly shared how she gathered sources of various text types when creating instructional plans. For her AP Human Geography course, Kelly described using population pyramids, graphs, documentaries, maps, and text. Students developed an understanding of migration patterns from these various sources, in effect, they constructed their own knowledge and came to understand how that knowledge was constructed. Kelly shared that students were offended and shocked when learning about a new culture,

In Human Geography we’re looking at ethnic groups or ethnic minorities in folk culture. And a lot of times [the students] are saying, ‘Oh, that’s so weird. That’s crazy.’ and I tell them that’s because they’re looking at it from an ethnocentric point of view.

Instilling a sense of cultural humility and the way biases are created are characteristics of being disciplinary minded. Because Kelly’s lessons provided students with an opportunity to “connect knowledge directly to his/her immediate concerns, issues, and problems” (Fallace, 2017, p. 46) her learning theory was also founded on a

progressive-situated approach. Kelly's learning theory approach was interpreted as being both cognitive and progressive.

Kelly's assessment type was traditional. She used grading rubrics often and likened using rubrics to "giving students options." However, the options appeared to be only how well the student wanted to progress on the rubric. To her credit, Kelly was reflective about the rubrics she created. Kelly shared a rubric she created for an assignment and claimed the rubric "isn't clear enough about what kind of evidence should be in the essay. My rubrics sometimes aren't content specific enough." Except for the research class she is taught, Kelly did not talk about students selecting their own sources. Instead, the evidence she asked for on an assessment came from sources that she provided. There was little student choice in the assessments she created and administered.

As seen in Figure 7, Kelly's teaching aligned with a disciplinary orientation as seen by the dominance of "green" in the visual. Kelly's lessons were created from the district's disciplinary curriculum where social studies topics are focused on individual disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history. She also focused on the "thinking, procedures, processes, and acts of disciplinary experts" (Fallace, 2017, p. 45). She stated that students should learn about issues that are "fluid, dynamic, relevant, and introduced in the context of real-world problems" (p. 45). Kelly's assessments were traditional by requiring students to explain their answers citing evidence from the sources she provided.

Rachel

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	X	--	--
Learning Theory	X	--	--
Assessment Type	X	--	--

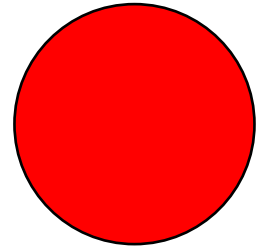


Figure 8. Matrix and visual of Rachel’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Rachel discussed the instructional regiment that she followed. She established a routine for students in her small special education classes where students completed “guided notes. I wrote out the notes and they copied everything. Again, when you write things down you tend to remember them. A couple of my students last semester [wanted] fill in the blank notes.” Aside from notes, Rachel used other sources for the content she taught. Traditional textbooks, online textbooks and videos, online mapping programs, and databases are some of the sources she discussed using during the interviews. Rachel shared that students sometimes used transcriptions of primary source documents to gather and compare information. Evidence of a traditional observable outcome was found in the manner in which Rachel planned lessons from a textbook. “I’m going to make the questions myself versus using the pre-made stuff from the textbook. That way I can manipulate it. Because it’s all open-ended for them and I can scaffold with a little bit more knowledge.” During the 20th century “teacher-and-textbook-centered instruction in

single academic subjects dominated the curriculum in both classroom practice and course offerings” (Fallace, 2017, p. 55). Rachel’s observable outcome aligned with a traditional approach.

Her learning theory was also traditional and based on a behaviorist approach. A characteristic of using a behavioral approach lies in where the knowledge conveyed to students originated. Rachel’s lessons were teacher- and text- centered. In addition, the way that students learned was conditioned and reinforced. While describing her instructional routine, Rachel shared that to transition from the daily refresher to the main instructional section of her lesson she will reward teams of students who answered correctly with “our PBS tickets or candy, depending on what mood I’m in to give them ...if I want to deal with more sugar in them or not.” Using an immediate reward system for correct answers is a behaviorist approach and therefore considered a traditional social studies approach as well.

Rachel spoke about mandatory, required testing. She was very clear about not being a supporter of mandatory testing. Her memories of elementary school evolved around a report on the State of Kentucky that she completed in fourth grade. She described a similar report that her students completed on “somebody from the Renaissance or the Reformation.” Rachel talked about wishing that social studies had curriculum kits similar to the kits science teachers receive. The science kits are prepared for teachers by the state science coalition and contain lesson plans, all materials and consumables, and assessments. Rachel did not incorporate hands-on activities or simulations because “it’s very hard for me to come up with ideas sometimes for my kids, especially in civics and economics--sometimes they’re just art things.” When Rachel

spoke of “my kids” she was referencing that she teaches students who were grouped into a single, small class and they all had documented learning disabilities. Rachel’s beliefs and statements aligned to what Fallace (2017) called the “neo-traditional critics and policy makers” (p. 55). Neo-traditionalists, like Rachel, believe that the schools “have a responsibility to present this essential knowledge, because students—especially disadvantaged and impoverished ones—are unlikely to get it from anywhere else” (Fallace, 2017, p. 55). Teaching basic knowledge was what Rachel talked about when she said that students need “a basis...they need to have that basis of knowledge whether they realize that they’ll use it or not.”

Rachel was the only participant that fully aligned to a single orientation. The visual in Figure 8 is “pure red” or traditional. Fallace (2017) described the traditional orientation as focusing on the “transmission and retention of prescribed facts, narratives, images, and content that ought to be committed to memory” (p. 44). Rachel’s commitment to providing students with an understanding of “the basis” was further evidence of her alignment to a traditional orientation.

Thomas

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	X	X	--
Learning Theory	X	X	--
Assessment Type	X	--	--

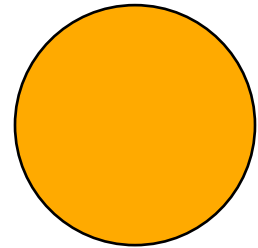


Figure 9. Matrix and visual of Thomas’s data to the Fallace (2017) model.

Evidence from the interview data aligned Thomas’s perspective to both the traditional and the disciplinary orientations. Thomas discussed an activity where students read a primary source about the Battle of Lexington. Thomas asked students to “give me a summary based on the documents of what took place. Is Document A trustworthy? Why would you say it is not trustworthy? Why would you say Document B is trustworthy?” Here he focused on a single skill of determining trustworthiness that is important to historians. In another example he offered, he again used a single primary source and asked questions directly from the source without questioning the source. Thomas used facts and factual information to build a story which aligned to a traditional orientation. Thomas described his love for teaching social studies in terms of being “able to connect things in the past...you know, when did somebody just step up and do something that really made a lasting impact, good or bad?” This indicated that Thomas taught history as “transmitting a celebratory or critical account of the past...leading

students towards the “correct” or “true” answers” (Fallace, 2017, p. 44). Thomas spoke quite a bit about the value of other social studies disciplines of civics, economics, and geography. He identified the values of each of those disciplines as separate disciplines.

Thomas’s learning theory evolved from when he first became a teacher. Early in his career, he felt pressure to “cover this material and get through as much as I can. The easiest way is for me was to lecture or do some book work.” The pattern of lecture, notes, recall, and content questions from a textbook are examples of the behaviorist approach to learning associated with the traditional orientation with the “transmission, memorizing, and repeating of information” (Fallace, 2017, p. 45). On the other hand, Thomas saw the way he taught as a new teacher as a product of not “having skills to do other things.” The middle school projects his students completed were group projects and standards-based. The standards being the disciplinary standards of civics, economics, geography, and history. Thomas’s development of a more cognitive approach was evident in his description of a favorite lesson, “one of my favorite things is to do an investigation of who fired the first shot at Lexington and Concord. I don’t tell them until the end that we still don’t actually know.” This was a strong example of the type of work historians do and evidence of his shifting practice to be more aligned to a disciplinary approach. Thomas still spoke about social studies in more traditional terms, especially with assessments.

Thomas used commercial programs such as the DBQ Project (see <https://www.dbqproject.com/>) as student assessments. Programs such as these require students to use multiple sources to answer a question asked of them. Traditional testing provides students the questions, rather than having students develop their own questions.

In addition, the sources are provided to the student rather than having the student seek and question the credibility of the source. In Thomas's case, his instruction had become more disciplinary, but his assessments had not.

Figure 9, with its "orange" visual, illustrates how Thomas teaches from traditional and disciplinary approaches. Fallace (2017) described teachers like Thomas as "not opposed to the transmission of content, but they view facts as context for discipline inquiry" (p. 45). The assessments he administered were traditional. He evaluated student knowledge of how different social scientists conduct their studies as opposed to applying the tools and practices of the different disciplines.

Composite of the Group to Fallace's (2017) Model of Social Studies Orientations

This group of educators had very unique experiences with social studies. It is not surprising that they also aligned with Fallace's (2017) model in unique ways. There were over 50 possible alignments and visual representations when aligning to Fallace's model. In this study, no single participant aligned like another. But as a whole group, most of the participants described the purpose of social studies as disciplinary. Fallace (2017) stated, "As we move forward into the 21st century, the disciplinary perspective may be the most politically viable approach to take..." (p. 61).

Characteristic/ Orientation	Traditional (Red)	Disciplinary (Green)	Progressive (Blue)
Observable Outcome	3	6	1
Learning Theory	3	5	4
Assessment Type	6	2	0

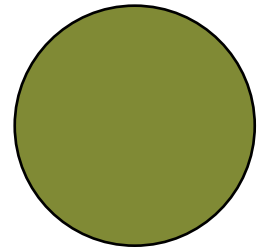


Figure 10. Summary count and visual of participant’s alignment to the Fallace (2017) model.

As seen in Figure 10, this group of participants, including myself, aligned most often with a disciplinary observable outcome and learning theory, but the type of assessments implemented by the participants were traditional. The visual in Figure 10 is a “dark green” and indicates the dominance of a disciplinary orientation. All participants, except for Rachel, aligned to more than one orientation. Fallace (2017) stated, “The three-orientation framework was more of a continuum than distinct categories, so your color scheme captures this idea well, perhaps even better than a linear continuum” (T. Fallace, personal communication, December 4, 2018). In addition, Fallace described the assessment type as being a key distinguishing factor between the different orientations. Fallace felt that assessment was the most important factor when thinking about the orientations,

To me, the most important thing is what teachers assess, because that is ultimately what they value. For example, a teacher may transmit a lot of info to students, but s/he would not necessarily be traditional if the info was in service to a disciplined

inquiry or application of knowledge to an issue or problem (T. Fallace, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

The purpose of this study was not to question why there may be misalignment but using Fallace's (2017) model and the rating system I developed could be used by social studies specialists, social studies methods professors, and teachers. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine why teachers' philosophies of the purpose of social studies were not consistent within a specific orientation, though the question of consistency has been addressed in other studies (Olsen, 2014; Thornton, 1985). Instead, it is my hope that this study will add to the existing literature by providing detailed profiles of teachers' experiences so that others will see similarities in their own experiences. In addition, I believe that social studies teacher educators and specialists will find value in employing the methods used in this study to open the discussion to implications of how experiences align and misalign to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This is only one implication for future work. I discussed additional implications in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how social studies educators experience the teaching of social studies. This chapter includes a discussion of the major findings as related to the experiences of secondary social studies teachers, teachers' interpretations and articulations of the purposes of social studies, and how teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to a specific model of social studies orientations. Also included is a discussion on the implications of the methodology and general limitations of this study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for researchers wanting to conduct and extend a similar study and areas for future research.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

- Q1 How do secondary teachers experience learning and teaching social studies?
- Q2 How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?
- Q3 How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's (2017) model of social studies orientations?

Discussion of Findings

Participant Experiences

When the participants shared their early experiences of learning social studies they talked quickly, interjected laughs and giggles, and smiled with broad grins. Their experiences were happy and positive. Only Kelly started telling of her early experiences

with a negative, “the earliest memory is in fifth grade when I failed a history test. I got a 58. And I absolutely loved that teacher. He was fascinating.” Even with an experience of receiving a poor grade, she refocused later in the interview on the positive of the teacher and the stories of history he told. The participants that were history majors in college talked about the experiences of learning history through lectures that they found exciting. Clark, Diane, Kelly, and Thomas discussed the impact specific teachers had on their learning and the personal connections they made with those teachers. Clark and Claudette spoke about learning about each student’s personal interests and how they provided students guidance with selecting history research projects based on student interest. All participants shared experiences of when students produced exemplary products or contributed to lively class discussions. The experience of learning and teaching social studies is more than the content, it is also about developing relationships with students. However, participant experiences with learning and teaching social studies were not always positive.

Four participants, Clark, Claudette, Rachel, and Thomas shared their experience of being seen as less than equal to teachers of other disciplines and by administrators. They did not experience the inequity from a personally directed attack but as an assault on the discipline of social studies. Rachel described the experience as being treated as “redheaded stepchildren” and Thomas described a feeling of being “second class.” These experiences stem from structural inequities (Eisner, 1992). High-stakes mandatory testing in reading and mathematics often result in educational resources and materials being allocated to those tested disciplines before other disciplines (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Grant, 2007; Hahn, 2017). An example from this study was the newly acquired

textbook and supplementary programs purchased for English language arts and mathematics. Shifting of funding occurred at other levels as well. Bruce Lesh (2018) discussed the implications of a lack of federal support in testing social studies in terms of how “monetary resources have shifted to the tested areas” (p. 168). In terms of manpower, Rachel shared how the social studies and science were each represented by a single administrator at the district level, where other disciplines, special education services, and English language learners had a cadre of teacher specialists to assist teachers. Claudette and Diane discussed the inequity of staff assignments to teach subjects other than social studies.

District promotion policies in middle school did not require students to earn a passing grade in social studies to be promoted to the next grade. School class schedules in middle school often planned for social studies classes to meet every other day, while reading and mathematics classes met every day. At the high school level, some social studies courses were scheduled for a semester, rather than a full year like reading and mathematics. And in one school, the number of staff assigned to teach reading, mathematics, and science was greater than the staff assigned to teach social studies even though the number of students enrolled in those courses was similar.

Clark, Claudette, and Diane discussed how social studies teachers were called upon to teach reading in their classes. While Diane saw this as an opportunity to work collaboratively with teachers of other disciplines as a “marriage”, Claudette was insulted to think that the English language teachers thought reading did not happen in the social studies classrooms. When confronted by an English teacher in her building to incorporate reading in her classroom, Claudette was silent, but wanted to reply, “What do

you think we've been doing? Like I just let students hold documents up to their foreheads and let it sink in? I've been teaching reading for years. That's what we do." These experiences of being seen as less than equal to others resulted from structural issues and financial considerations. This was similar to what Thornton and Houser (1996) discussed in their study of elementary social studies classrooms and called for "policy makers need to address directly the issue of status. Social studies (and science) are clearly regarded by practitioners—and most likely by parents and the public—as "enrichment" or second-rank subjects" (p. 32). It appeared as though little has changed for these social studies teachers.

Participants did not share experiences of advocating for social studies during the interviews. Diane shared that she was instrumental in having the Psychology course at her school changed from a half or semester credit to a full credit, but also added that additional major changes to course sequencing or curriculum would require action from the state or district level. When participants were asked about their experiences of discussing the purpose of social studies, they were at a loss to provide examples. Thornton (2005) explained the importance of the purpose of social studies discussion as, "aims talk is not a luxury in which only outside "experts" and ivory-tower academics—who have time on their hands—engage, but is essential for thoughtful classroom teaching" (p. 47). Opportunities to discuss the purposes of social studies were not discussed by the participants, not provided for teachers, nor organized by the teachers.

Purpose of Social Studies

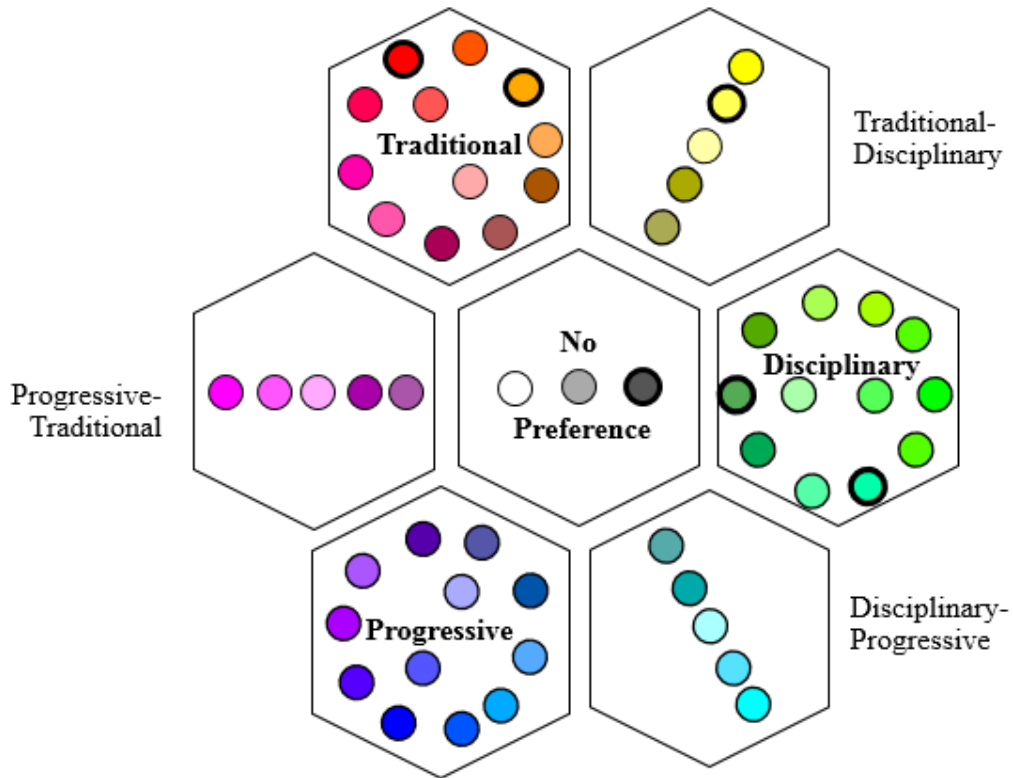
The second research question asked, "How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?" All participants related the purpose of social studies to what

they enacted in their classrooms. Rachel discussed how she presented real-world, adolescent problems to students, such as: why the most up-to-date smartphone was not necessary, how economics was about making wise choices, economic choices were decided by students every day, and how the responsibilities of citizenship included voting. Clark, Claudette, and Kelly discussed the purpose of social studies in terms of the disciplinary practices and tools found in the social studies and how those practices and tools can be applied in the future—mostly in college. Clark and Claudette discussed how the processes of thinking and knowing of economists, geographers, and historians can be applied to other situations, especially when determining the credibility and reliability of primary and secondary sources. Clark called applying those processes as being “healthy skeptics.” Thomas discussed the purpose of social studies as creating lifelong learners, especially learners of history who, like him, will seek out more information about our historical past on their own. Diane discussed that the purpose of social studies was to develop an interest in current events, to be aware of how current events—no matter how remote--impact us. Only Clark discussed how other disciplines can be integrated into social studies. He discussed the value of the arts and English language arts as supporting expression of the social studies. Each participant shared that they enjoyed discussing social studies through the interview process, but rarely if ever had discussed the purpose of social studies with others. Each participant discussed the purpose of social studies with a unique description. Like their descriptions, I found that each participant aligned to Fallace’s (2017) model of social studies orientations in unique ways.

**Alignment with Fallace's (2017)
Model of Social Studies
Orientations**

The third research question builds upon the first two questions and examined “How do teachers’ experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace’s (2017) model of social studies orientations?” Fallace described three orientations as three major ideas about how and why the social studies is taught. The traditional orientation to the social studies focuses on the transmission of cultural heritage; the disciplinary orientation focuses on socialization into discipline-specific ways of thinking; and the progressive orientation focuses on the application of knowledge to real-world problems (p. 42).

Within each orientation, Fallace (2017) highlighted three components observable outcomes, learning theory, and assessment types. Using the interviews as evidence to align teachers’ experiences, interpretations, and descriptions with Fallace’s model of social studies orientations resulted in six different results. There were 54 different possible outcomes when aligning teachers’ practice and beliefs in the manner that I did (see Figure 11). Fallace (2010) stated that “teachers can and do employ aspects of all three orientations in their instruction, sometimes in the same lesson” (p. 24). So that there were six distinct results did not come as a surprise. Figure 11 represents all 54 possible orientations with each of the participants’, not including the researcher’s orientation, highlighted.









Representation	Participant
	Clark
	Claudette
	Diane
	Kelly
	Rachel
	Thomas

Figure 11. Composite visual of group data aligned to the Fallace (2017) model.

In Figure 11, there are 12 circular representations within each orientation. There are five representations for each combined alignment of orientation, and three representations where there is no preference in orientation. The further from center a representation is located, the more components there are of that orientation than any other. For example, Rachel aligned to the traditional orientation as did Thomas. Rachel

did not align with any component of the disciplinary or progressive orientation and is represented by a circular representation that is the furthest from the center. Like Rachel, Thomas aligned to the traditional orientation in all three components, and he also aligned to two disciplinary components. Thomas's circular representation is located in the traditional hexagon closer to the center than Rachel and closer the disciplinary orientation than the progressive orientation. Furthermore, Claudette and Diane aligned with two or more orientations equally. Both Kelly and Clark aligned strongly to the disciplinary orientation while each also had some alignment to another orientation.

Social studies orientations have been represented in other ways. Barr et al., (1978) identified three teaching traditions: citizenship transmission, social science, and reflective inquiry. They also created an instrument, the "Social Studies Preference Scale" to assist pre-service teachers and classroom teachers with identifying and answering the question: "what social studies tradition [do] you follow?" (p. 141). When the researchers "tested this preference scale on both students and teachers from selected universities, and elementary and secondary teachers, six patterns of response have emerged" (p. 148). The six participants in this study do not represent each pattern that Barr et al., (1978) found, but the implications of how a teacher aligns to the orientations can be discussed here.

Rachel was the only participant to fully align with a single orientation. Her complete alignment with an orientation resulted in a consistent message to students that her method of learning and knowing social studies is important. Her belief that "social studies is the basis" may be evident in her instruction and assessment. Barr et al., (1978) described a teacher that followed a single tradition as having "a basis upon which to make meaningful, consistent classroom decisions about purpose, method, and content. In

other words, you have a set of standards by which to guide your teaching decisions” (p. 151).

In contrast, the other participants aligned with several orientations. This can be problematic and they may find that they “wind up asking students to do things, to think and to behave in ways that are inconsistent and contradictory” (Barr et al., 1978, p. 141). The problem is not with which orientation a teacher aligns, instead the problem is the lack of consistency. Evans (2010) explained how his social studies methods students explored four different approaches to social studies and then “[made] a choice” (p. 27) regarding an approach that was consistent with the student’s beliefs. Similarly, Fallace (2010) provided his pre-service teachers with documents and examples from three approaches and required his students to “[defend] the orientation with which they most agree” (p. 24). According to Barr et al., (1978) if teachers do not focus on a single orientation they run the risk of having students become “cynical, turned-off, resentful, and hostile” (p. 141). Teaching is hard work. Having students that are disinterested or apathetic toward learning social studies aggravates the situation.

Only two participants in this study, Clark and Claudette, fully aligned to a disciplinary approach. Given that the state standards for social studies follow a disciplinary approach and likewise the state assessment, there is a reason for concern if the state assessment is considered the ultimate measure of social studies’s significance and contribution to students’ academic growth. There are other measures used to determine district and school accountability such as student grades, graduation rates, and contest awards, but those are not as public as the state assessment. Since the state social studies assessment is the sole accountability measure for districts and schools of the

impact of the discipline on students' academic growth, it carries an important concern with implications beyond the scope of this study.

Implications for Practice

The district is required to align the curriculum to the state social studies content standards. Currently, the state social studies standards are disciplinary standards of civics, economics, geography, and history. Other social studies courses, for example, psychology, sociology, and anthropology do not have official state standards, but guidelines for these courses are included in the *C3* framework (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017, pp. 68-81). There are 15 sets of state content standards. All content standards are assessed, with assessments separate from the state assessment. The results of the separate assessments are an integral part of each teacher's annual performance. In addition, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies standards are assessed with a state-wide assessment. The assessment results from these state-wide assessments in the four content areas are used as a measure in determining the overall district and school rating for ESEA compliance.

The state assessment for social studies is designed to measure two different sets of standards: the state social studies standards and the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies (CCSS-HST) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The questions designed to assess the CCSS-HST are often based on students' ability to use multiple sources of information to compare, corroborate, and make inferences. The test items that assess students' knowledge of the social studies standards often include a graphic or text and are multiple-choice items. Other item types are also used to assess

social studies knowledge. Items that require students to sort characteristics into two or three columns and maps where students select locations are also used. Both these alternative types are scored as correct if a student completes the entire task accurately. In other words, no partial credit is given. Whether multiple-choice items used as an assessment of learning is valid is currently being debated in the field (Smith, 2018; Wineburg, 2018).

Given that the state assesses the social studies content standards with high-stakes, disciplinary assessments, it would seem logical to expect that teachers' lessons would follow a disciplinary approach. The state and district provide teachers with curriculum and sample assessments that are aligned to a disciplinary approach. However, the participants from this study did not wholly or solely align with a disciplinary approach. Except for Rachel, who aligned with the traditional orientation, each participant aligned with a component or two of the progressive orientation.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defined the purpose of social studies as “to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, p. 3). The state official curriculum does not directly align with this purpose but instead requires students to learn and apply the skills and knowledge of disciplinary experts to solve problems. These practices, tools, and knowledge do not specifically address that we live in a “culturally diverse” society. A teacher in this district (and state) may be taking professional risks if they choose to teach with a traditional or progressive orientation. Teacher risks include being placed on a rigid improvement plan or being dismissed.

Not all states follow a disciplinary approach. The State of Nevada, for example, has social studies standards that align with a progressive approach. The Nevada standards require that “students will need to be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives with an understanding of how cultural differences impact the interpretation of events at the local, state, national, and international levels” (State of Nevada Department of Education, website, retrieved March 2, 2019). In 2015, Nevada created and added multicultural standards to the traditional four core social studies disciplines. The multicultural standards are to be implemented at all grade levels, kindergarten through twelfth grade. These standards include requiring students to respectfully engage with and discuss the contributions of diverse people. Students are also required to develop social consciousness and action. All the participants of this study discussed developing a respect for differences of people as an important purpose of social studies.

Fallace (2010) stated that “teachers can and do employ aspects of all three orientations in their instruction” (p. 24). However, if a teacher does so without an awareness of teaching from multiple orientations, then they run the risk of what Barr et al., (1978) cautioned as “opening yourself up to some of the problems we have described—your students will not know what to expect” (p. 152).

Teacher and administration discussions and learning, much like the discussion that occurred in the interviews for this study, will help to bring to the forefront the issues of purpose (Barr et al., 1978; Evans, 2010; Fallace, 2010, 2017; Thornton, 2005). I argue there are instances when a traditional, disciplinary, or progressive approach is the best approach to meet a specific lesson goal. As an explanation of when to use a single approach, I offer lesson examples from high school geography. If the goal of a lesson is

to establish principles used by geographers, then a traditional approach would be best. An assessment for this lesson could require students to describe which principle is demonstrated in a specific situation. If the lesson goal is to use maps and other geographic data to decide where to build a new hospital, then a disciplinary approach should be used where students practice the skills of geographers. An assessment for this lesson could include identifying geographic principles and processes applied in making a final decision. If the lesson goal is to create an argument for whether a government funded school for students with substance abuse issues is warranted, then a progressive approach is best. An assessment for this lesson could include presenting varying viewpoints from students, parents, taxpayers, land-use engineers, and teachers. Additionally, demographic, economic, land-use, legal, education, and health sources could be referenced as evidence to support the argument of whether to build a school for students with substance abuse.

Being able to recognize and apply aligned outcomes, learning strategies, and assessments to learning goals are essential to students' academic and social growth. By planning lessons that align to a specific approach, the lesson objectives, lesson activities, and lesson assessments are made clear and obtainable for both the teacher and student. I argue that there is value in each orientation or approach when applied to specific units of study. Unlike Barr et al., (1978), I agree with Fallace (2010) who stated that "teachers can and do employ aspects of all three orientations in their instruction" (p. 24). At times the orientations overlap as Fallace (2017) stated, "Like disciplinarians, progressives are not opposed to the transmission of content, nor are they opposed to knowledge produced

by disciplinary experts” (p. 45). What is important is that the assessment used to measure student understanding aligns with the goal.

It is necessary that students learn the shared language of social studies. To accomplish this, a traditional approach is needed. There are specific terms that students should know. When teaching these terms, using a traditional approach with a traditional assessment of a “single correct answer” (Fallace, 2017, p. 45) is appropriate. To learn “to appreciate the complexity of understanding the social world of the past and present” (Fallace, 2017, p. 45) a disciplinary approach is required. Economists, geographers, historians, and political scientists all bring a different lens to view situations. The *C3* example of how “Liberty” is analyzed by different disciplinarians is a useful example (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017, p. 30). Assessments of students’ understanding that require students to correctly apply the tools of social studies disciplinarians to justify their claims are appropriate. A progressive approach where students begin by developing their own questions about a specific event, location, or situation is appropriate when, as described by Fallace (2017):

Rather than committing correct answers to memory as in the traditional approach, or developing along a predetermined cognitive course as in the disciplinary approach, students acquire knowledge and skills that can be applied immediately to their local community and sociocultural context. In the progressive orientation students explore their social surroundings in the elementary grades, and in the middle and high school grades they engage in the discussion, deliberation, or debate of social issues or take action to address these issues (p. 46).

Assessment of progressive units of study require students to describe a problem, disclose their questions, present evidence of their findings, and “enact a solution” (Fallace, 2017, p. 45). Assessments of this type are not easily graded nor evaluated and require time that teachers may feel that they are not afforded. The issues of evaluation and time are the types of discussions that can be included when teachers collaborate and discuss the issue of the purposes of social studies and when specific approaches are to be implemented and carried out.

The participants in this study reported that they did not experience having discussions about the purpose of social studies. Having discussions or “aims talk” in a manner as described by Thornton (2005) is a first step in reestablishing social studies as a core discipline. Without thoughtful discussions and actions, the social studies continues running the risk of being thought of by all stakeholders as the “redheaded stepchildren” as Rachel described.

Methodological Implications

Using a phenomenological research method proved well suited to this study. In order to answer my research questions, it was important to “understand several individuals’ common or shared experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 81) of teaching and learning social studies. The social studies experiences of teachers expanded over a lifetime and to fully capture those experiences was difficult at times. During the interviews, teachers often elaborated on other issues associated with teaching or provided extensive profiles about their experiences with learning social studies. While transcribing the data, I found myself captivated by their stories, but eventually I was able to extract excerpts that related only to their experiences with social studies. How teachers’

experiences, interpretations, and descriptions aligned to a model of purposes of social studies helped to search through the interview data for relevant excerpts and provided a succinct focus. The number of participants selected for this study was more than most other phenomenological dissertations I researched (see Table 2). But because each participant described their experience uniquely, I found myself able to distinguish rather quickly who said what. I had learned to identify each participant by their selected pseudonym and representative “color.” And because each participant was candid about their experiences, I was able to retell their stories in a phenomenological manner or in “the way we experience the world...in which we live as human beings” (van Manen, 1990, p. 5). The participants’ displeasure and disagreement with the standardized testing and their experiences of being treated as “second class” citizens, as expressed by Thomas, are just two examples of how using the phenomenological method of in-depth, semi-structured interviews resulted in a competent rendering of the experience.

Seidman’s (2006) Three Step Interview Series protocol gave focus to each of the interviews by establishing a purpose. The protocol helped in concentrating on a specific time within the total experience of teaching and learning social studies in chronological order, first learning about social studies, then before becoming a teacher, and then teaching social studies today. The profiles written for each participant were then written using this order of experiences. I conducted a pre-study interview with two colleagues and their comments from the interview and about the interview process were helpful in modifying the questions for clarity and emphasis to ensure that I was able to collect the data needed to address my research questions. In this study, participants’ experiences evolved over a lifetime. By remaining focused on the experience of teaching and

learning, as well as the research questions posed, the retelling of their experiences as related to social studies made the retelling manageable.

Moustakas's (1994) data analysis process of phenomenological reduction; imaginative variation; and findings and significance were used to analyze the data. In addition, following Hycner's (1985) guidelines for analyzing interview data were helpful. There is a concern among phenomenologists that to adhere to a strict process defeats the purpose of a phenomenological account (van Manen, 1990). Hycner (1985) expressed, "There is a reluctance on the part of phenomenologists to focus too much on specific steps in research methods for fear that they will become reified as they have in natural sciences" (p. 279). I found comfort as a new researcher in employing Hycner's steps. The overall phenomenological analysis of experience was not lost using prescribed steps, and I found myself analyzing the data as a whole, then in parts, and then as a whole once again.

While conducting the phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation processes of my data analysis I asked a colleague, who is a doctoral candidate and social studies teacher in another state, to review my analysis of one of the participant's interview. She and I agreed on many of the horizons and meanings that I had developed from the interview. It is possible that others would disagree with my interpretations. To ensure that I had captured the essence of an experience accurately, I emailed each participant their profile (see Appendix G) and asked if there was something about their experience I misinterpreted.

The last step in my data analysis was to align excerpts from the participants' interview data to a model of social studies purposes. I selected Thomas Fallace's (2017)

three major ideological orientations model. Other models could have been used for this portion of the analysis. I selected Fallace's model as he provided details of each orientation in terms of observable outcomes, learning theory, and assessment types. He also responded to my emails about my idea for representing an individual participant's preference of an orientation by the use of an RGB color. The decision to use Fallace's model was based on his delineation of actions and beliefs that social studies teachers exhibit.

Though social studies scholars have discussed multiple purposes of social studies (see Table 1), there is a risk that as the social studies discipline evolves, new purposes may be acknowledged or studied. Fallace (2017) concluded "although it is difficult to discern what ideological framework will follow the age of diversity, certainly the continued emphasis on outcomes, standards, and accountability have shaped and will continue to shape social studies education in the years to come" (p. 61). Inclusion of instruction and curriculum topics such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ); immigration; social and economic equity; media usage; information obtainment; political polarization; etc. may very well disrupt current models. This study is situated in a distinct time, when the model selected was reflective of current thought in the field. In addition, the use of a color visual is static, or fixed in the time of the interviews. How participants will align in the future is unknown.

A phenomenological study is more than the retelling of experience. A phenomenological study, this study included, provides profiles of participants' lived experiences and provides a description of the experiences that render a full appreciation and understanding of what that experience is like. The researcher is instrumental in

capturing the essence of the experience and representing it in a manner that is accessible to the reader (Creswell, 2013; Hycner, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014).

Contributions and Limitations of This Study

The findings from this study have contributions and limitations. I will discuss the contributions and close this section with the limitations.

Contributions

Using an interview method was important in order to extend participants thoughts and allow for elaboration. The participants were candid, occasionally sharing examples that could be interpreted as being non-compliant. Because the interviews were one on one, the participant had all my attention. The participants commented that they enjoyed talking about their experiences. Participants were given an opportunity to challenge the profiles (see Appendix G). I provided my own experience, not only to bracket my opinions but to share my experience with the reader and to make my beliefs and point of view public. In addition, I have included my personal reflection about conducting this study (see Appendix H).

Another strength was using Seidman's (2006) Three Step Interview Series protocol. The protocol followed the chronology of the experience of being a social studies teacher by asking about their experiences before, now, and reflective questions. Each interview discussed and focused upon a specific time period in the experience. Although Seidman recommended a single interview should be approximately 90 minutes long, the actual discussion time of the interviews for this study was between 60 to 80 minutes in length.

Lastly, I believe the inclusion of Fallace's (2017) model was important to this study. Fallace's model not only described the purpose of three orientations but also connected the orientation to a learning theory and assessment type. Other writings about social studies purposes and orientations that were researched for the literature review did not include these characteristics. His detailed description provided guidance in using the interview data in a way that I did not foresee at the onset of my study. I was very fortunate to have a conversation and subsequent email communication with Dr. Fallace about my idea of using a color representation to show how participants aligned to his model. Fortunately, I received his approval for my idea. Connecting the participants' alignments to a "color" (either red, green, blue, or a combination of those colors) permitted me to provide a visual representation of the orientation. I feel this added representation is a strength of my data analysis and findings and contribution to the field.

Limitations

Though the size of the participant group was well within the range of my anticipated and ideal size for research purposes as stated in my dissertation proposal, the data in this study is only representative of a specific group. Though a similar study could be conducted, it is likely that the data gleaned from the interviews would be very different. In other words, this study cannot be replicated in order to get the same results. Instead, as Giorgi stated,

The chief point to be remembered with this type of research is not so much whether another position with respect to the data could be adopted, (this point is granted beforehand), but whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as

articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it (as cited in Hycner, 1985, p. 298).

The interviews provided a sufficient amount of data for me to analyze, but I was new to phenomenological interviewing. I conducted a pre-study interview with a peer and received information that made me rethink some of my interview questions. I discovered Fallace's (2017) work on orientations after I had conducted my last interview. Had I found his work earlier I would have asked additional questions about teachers' experience with assessment. Several participants showed me their assessments, but collecting documents was not considered in my proposal and so I did not require it of the participants. Because Fallace placed emphasis on assessments, additional data about assessments could have strengthened the trustworthiness of my analysis.

In addition to textual and tabular data presentations, I presented my data visually. Attempts to represent the data visually using a two dimensional representation proved difficult and I chose a multi-dimensional RGB color visual. The selected color scheme allowed for 54 color possibilities. The location of each participant's color visual in the color field (see Figure 11) further represented their experiences to each other and all possibilities. However, "color is in the mind of the viewer" (Shevell, 2015) and may be misunderstood if only the color visual is reviewed without the understanding of the intended purpose. For example, after the interviews, Claudette asked what "color" she was. I shared that her data was represented with a "pale yellow" color. She expressed that she was disappointed that she wasn't more "blue". Together we viewed her data and she understood that her experiences aligned with the purposes of both traditional and disciplinary orientations and that she did not assess in a manner of the progressive

orientation (see Figure 5). For this study, the purpose of the visual representations was to provide the reader with evidence of the participants' experiences in addition to the textual and tabular findings. Without careful consideration of the data as a whole, the color visual may be misinterpreted and viewed as stagnant, fixed, as a label, or problematic.

My data collection method was limited to interviews but provided rich data. Avery and Barton (2017) promoted the use of multiple data collection methods. Additional methods such as classroom observations, card sorts, forced-choice tasks, and participant created analogies may have helped in supporting my analysis. Time constraints, participant size, following Seidman's (2006) interview protocol, and my focus on collecting data of the participants' experiences steered me toward trustworthiness of the data by clarifying my biases, providing a rich and thick description, and seeking peer review.

Most of the participants had college degrees in history. The participants focused on their personal interest in teaching history. There was little opportunity to explore whether other core social studies disciplines of civics, economics, and geography would have resulted in similar findings. Fallace's (2017) model, though stated as a model of social studies, was written from a historical perspective. Fallace is a historian and his writings are often about the history of social studies.

Overall, the strengths and contributions of this study outweigh the limitations. There are many opportunities for future research. This study on social studies teachers' experiences will not be the last. There is still much to learn, digest, and act upon.

Recommendations for Future Study

Aligning participants' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions to Fallace's (2017) model has prompted me to wonder about the negative consequences when a teacher's orientation does not align with official curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments. Negative consequences and risks include those realized by teachers, students, and the field of social studies education. Further studies on whether the official curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments are aligned and misaligned to a single orientation are also possible. Additionally, social studies education programs at all levels could also be evaluated for alignment using this approach. Thornton (1985) referred to this alignment as "curriculum consonance [that] allows looking beyond what happens to how and why it happens" (p. 181, emphasis in the original). He concluded that "curriculum consonance informs curriculum practice and improvement, teaching and its evaluation, and is a useful addition to curriculum theory. In these ways, it is one step toward the ongoing task of improving the quality of education" (p. 181). The possibilities are endless.

Social studies educators, both future and current, would benefit from discussions and actions around the purpose of social studies if social studies is to remain one of the four dominant disciplines. When curriculum, instruction, and assessment are not aligned to a single purpose, the anticipated learning target may be missed. Without thoughtful discourse about and advocacy for the value and purpose of social studies, there's a risk of losing prominence in the curriculum. As Rachel said, "we're kind of like the 'redheaded stepchildren'. I mean we are liked-- but you know, if push comes to shove, we are sacrificed."

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Institutional Review Board

DATE: July 9, 2018

TO: Rebecca Reed
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1246035-1] EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES
EDUCATORS

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: July 9, 2018

EXPIRATION DATE: July 9, 2022

REVIEW TYPE: Exempt Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Exempt Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of July 9, 2022.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or Nicole.Morse@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Becky -

Thank you for a clear and thorough IRB application. Your protocols and materials are verified/ approved exempt and you may begin participant recruitment and data collection.

Best wishes with your dissertation research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Megan Stallino, UNC IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNC) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B

Initial Participant Request Letter

SUBJECT: Social Studies Research Participant Request

Dear Esteemed Colleague,

As you may be aware, I am currently seeking a doctoral degree through the University of Northern Colorado's Educational Studies program. It is now time for me to begin my research and that is why I am reaching out to you.

My research focus is, of course, social studies with an interest in how secondary teachers experience teaching social studies. I am asking you to consider sharing your experiences of teaching social studies with me. The method of data gathering will be through one-to-one interviews, to be held at a time and place that is convenient for you. At this time, I anticipate three meetings of no more than 90 minutes each with each participant.

If you are interested in participating, I ask you to complete the attached form and return it to me. Returning this form does not mean that you are committed to being a participant in my study, nor does it guarantee that you will be a participant. Submitting this form is an indication that you are interested in learning more about my study. Once I have reviewed the returned forms, the selection process will begin. If you are not selected for the study, I will contact you. If you are selected, I will contact you to set up a time for us to review the study and the participant consent form and responsibilities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Becky Reed

APPENDIX C

Potential Participant Information

Thank you for considering being a participant in my doctoral research study. To aid me in selecting a diverse pool of participants for my study, I ask you to complete the form below and return to me, either in person or you may email the form to me at:

reed6376@bears.unco.edu

Please note that returning this form does not guaranteed that you will be selected for my study. If you are not selected for the study, I will contact you. If you are selected, I will contact you to set up a time for us to review the study and the participant consent form and responsibilities. If you are selected for my study, the information collected on this form will not be used to identify you in the final reporting. This form will only be used to select a diverse participant group.

Thank you,
Becky Reed

Name _____

Current Teaching Position:

School _____

2017-2018 Course Load _____

2018-2019 Course Load (if known) _____

Past Teaching Experience:

Number of Years of Teaching Experience _____

Previous Courses Taught (content/grade level) _____

Education/Certification:

College Degrees/Courses _____

Certifications (current) _____

APPENDIX D

Participant Demographic Data

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in my doctoral research study. Please note that the information collected on this form will not be used to identify you in the final reporting or presented in a way that can be used to link back to you. This information is being requested of all participants for comparison purposes.

Thank you,
Becky Reed

Name (not to be disclosed in final reporting) _____

Pseudonym selected (first name only) _____

Current Teaching Position:

2018-2019 Course Load (if known) _____

Past Teaching Experience:

Number of Years of Teaching Experience _____

Previous Courses Taught (content/grade level) _____

Education/Certification:

College Degrees/Courses _____

Certifications (current) _____

APPENDIX E

Consent Form for Human Participants in Research



Institutional Review Board

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Experiences of Secondary Social Studies Teachers

Researcher: Rebecca N. Reed, Department Education and Behavioral Sciences

Phone number: (302) 562-1066;

e-mail: reed6376@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Dana Walker, PhD, Department Education and Behavioral Science

E-mail: dana.walker@unco.edu

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Northern Colorado. I am interested in the experiences of secondary social studies teachers. Your contribution to this study will benefit other educational institutions that have social studies teacher preparation programs, currently employed social studies teachers, and social studies curriculum specialists. Therefore, your experiences and perceptions are very important.

As a participant in this research, you will 1) complete a demographic form, 2) participate in three individual face-to-face interviews lasting no longer than 90 minutes each. There may be a need for a fourth meeting to clarify data gathered from the three interviews. The interview will be audio-recorded to make sure I capture your perspective as accurately as possible.

For the demographic form you will be asked to provide your gender, current occupation and course load, information about your post-secondary education, educational certificates possessed, and past educational work experience. I will ask you to select a pseudonym (fake name) or I can choose one for you. Only I will examine your individual responses. The results of the study will be presented in a confidential way so that results cannot be linked back to you.

Potential risks in this study are minimal and are no greater than those normally encountered during regular employment as a social studies educator. The interview questions are not about sensitive personal matters, but instead are about your experiences with social studies as a student, and your experiences as an educator. The potential benefits to you include gaining insight on your interpretations of the purpose of and experiences with social studies, learning something about yourself, telling your experiences to an

interested listener, and the possibility of helping other educators to further their understanding of the social studies.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

Interview Guide

Interview #1 (Beginning – Leading to Becoming a Social Studies Educator)

Let's begin with your experiences of social studies education before you became a teacher.

What can you tell me about your experience with social studies prior to becoming a social studies teacher?

Describe a memorable experience with social studies.

How do your experiences with social studies prior to becoming a social studies teacher connect to today?

How did these early experiences impact your decision to become a social studies teacher?

Tell me about when you decided to become a social studies teacher.

In what ways did your experience as a pre-service teacher impact you? What was memorable? What did you take away from that experience?

Have you taught other subjects? If so, how do those subjects compare with social studies?

How do other subjects impact social studies?

How does social studies add to a student's academic knowledge? Why is that important?

Could you describe the value of social studies?

Interview #2 (Middle - Current)

Tell me about your daily experience from the beginning to end as a social studies educator. Could you describe for me a memorable social studies experience?

What made it so memorable?

Describe a successful lesson that you have taught.

Why was that lesson successful?

How have you taken that successful experience and applied it to new or other situations?

Describe an unsuccessful lesson.

What content do you enjoy teaching?

How did [the unsuccessful] experience cause you to make changes to your instruction or teaching?

What content do you find the most difficult to teach? What factors make teaching that content difficult?

How does your school's or district's administration influence teaching social studies?

How do you see the community influence the teaching of social studies? What do you hope students/others take from social studies?

How do you insure [that] happens?

What do you believe is the purpose of social studies?

Interview #3 (End – Reflection)

Given what you have said about your life before becoming a social studies educator and the work you do now, what is it like to be a social studies educator?

Describe your ideal social studies program.

What would have to happen to make your ideal a reality?

What do you think social studies means to students?

When you meet with other social studies educators, what do you talk about?

When meeting with others have you ever discussed the purpose of social studies? [If yes]

Tell me more about those discussions. [If no] Why do you think that the purpose of social studies is not discussed?

As a social studies educator, what are your professional goals?

In what ways have you advocated for social studies?

What advice would you give to a new social studies teacher?

Do you have anything else you'd like to add about your experience with social studies education?

APPENDIX G

Member Check Email to Participants

Happy February! Goodbye, dreary January.

I'm glad you want to take a look. One way I can validate my data is to conduct a "member check." So I'm looking to see if I've captured "you" and your experiences teaching social studies. Like I said you gave me a lot of great information. I couldn't use it all and I want to make sure I've presented your beliefs about teaching social studies accurately. It is hard to get 3+ hours of great discussion on paper.

I wrote a section for each participant. Each is about 5-6 pages long. In these sections I'm answering the following questions:

Q1 - How do secondary teachers experience learning and teaching social studies?

Q2 - How do teachers interpret and articulate the purposes of social studies?

I have a third question. I will answer it using the interview data. I haven't finished those sections yet, but the question is How do teachers' experiences, interpretations, and descriptions relate to Fallace's model of social studies orientations? I can send that section to you later if you like.

So, thank you in advance for letting me know if I captured your experience. If I've included something that you feel identifies you in a way that might "harm you" and you would like me to remove it, please let me know. Also, it would be nice to know if I typed something stupid...like I used "emphasize" instead of "empathize", but caught it. I took one of those dumb online grammar tests... it is not my strong suit. I have to run the profiles through Grammarly, but a second set of eyes would be awesome!

Thanks again for participating in this study. I look forward to hearing what you think.

Regards,
Becky

APPENDIX H

Personal Reflection

I appreciated being afforded the time to listen to teachers' social studies experiences. Using an interview method required that I remained open-minded. That was an important practice to adhere to as there were times when a participant's response would cause my body to twitch—perhaps the supervisor portion of my brain was triggered. But I learned to accept such admissions as the participant feeling at ease and comfortable talking to me. No matter how hard I tried, I had a notion of what I might hear from each participant might not be as candid as it could be because I had worked with them as their content supervisor and had a personal relationship with them.

At the time of the interviews, I had been retired for two months. The new supervisor had barely time to hang her coat in her new office. The participants had not had time to make an adjustment. But the questions that were asked, especially in the first interview, seemed to relax the former boss-worker relationship that we previously had. Food helped too. I provided lunch or a snack for us each time we met. In order to conduct a member check and to assure them that I would not intentionally repeat something that may harm them professionally, I sent each participant a copy of their profile and asked for comments (see Appendix G). Only three participants replied. One simply stated, "It looks good to me. Glad I could help you out a bit." Another sent a text that said, "I read it! For a moment I forgot that I was reading about me, and I was thinking, 'yes, I completely agree with that!' Haha." And the third texted, "I really

enjoyed being in the study. I didn't realize..." and then stopped. I asked him in an email if he would elaborate. He said,

I think in particular several of my comments about my social studies upbringing surprised me. I think that throughout my life I have generally looked upon the teachers I had as good, impactful teachers. However, in reading my responses I feel as though maybe I have generally romanticized for a long time. They were generally charismatic and entertaining, but I think they were more concerned about developing people who think like them than people who can think critically.

Initially, I was surprised that several of the teachers volunteered to participate in my study because my interactions with them, at times, were not very positive. I learned to respect and appreciate each of them more than I thought possible—what a great group of wonderful teachers. I believe that I have captured the essence of their experiences for others to enjoy and learn from.

I was impressed by how much detail participants provided when asked about their ideal social studies program. Perhaps because they were history educators and accustomed to thinking in terms of chronology, but each began with the changes that they would like to see at the elementary level. They had keen insight into the problems of scheduling and being overshadowed by reading and mathematics that had plagued me as a supervisor. They also had solid reasons for wanting to change the order in which the high school social studies classes were taught. Absent from their proposals were the implications of changing teaching materials and doubling class sections that occurred the last time a change was made, but their reasonings were solid. If they are successful in advocating for change, at least this time the change would not be to accommodate the

state assessment. The last time a change was made it was because the state assessment was an end-of-course assessment and it meant that the district's freshmen would be compared to other districts' juniors.

But the best part for me was to hear the stories. Like the participants, I enjoyed just listening to someone retell the past. At times the stories were long, but as the interviewer, I allowed it because I was entertained and engaged. Unfortunately, many of those stories did not make the "final cut" only because they did not directly answer the research questions.

I did find myself disappointed when I asked participants if they ever advocated for social studies. One participant tossed me a compliment by saying that she never advocated for social studies to the degree that I did when I was the supervisor. I thought that maybe some of the participants would talk about advocating for better class size, more seat time, new teaching resources, change in course sequence, or improved status. Some of these things were mentioned as wants, but no one identified taking action to effect change other than mentioning their wishes to administrators. In other words, they were not very active or, as may be necessary, aggressive in their actions. One regret I have is not asking each participant about what needed to happen to have those wants realized. I did ask once—during the last interview. The participant stated that change would have to come from the state level. I interpreted that as meaning she felt powerless to influence such change.

I do have concerns about my final product. At first, I was terrified, doubtful, and concerned about using phenomenology as my methodology. The social studies research that used phenomenology as the methodology that I read, often focused on the experience

of implementing a new program or the participants' experiences during a short time period. In addition, phenomenology studies were not as prevalent in the social studies as mixed-methods, case studies, ethnographies, and grounded theory studies. The experiences of social studies teachers develop over a lifetime. Asking questions during interviews that captured the entire essence of being and becoming a social studies teacher proved to be a difficult endeavor. Participants were reflective of their experiences, rather than sharing the in-the-moment experience. I am concerned that I have used phenomenological methods, rather than strictly following a phenomenology methodology. I have, as Barton (2006) described of research in the social studies, "a lurking self-doubt, a fear that we are doing something wrong" (p. 4). Part of my angst lies in phenomenology as research and practice. I found literature that discussed the "constructiveness" of phenomenology, but my research did not find agreed upon detailed procedures to follow when conducting phenomenology research. Instead, I found myself circling back to my research questions. By revisiting my questions, I changed them multiple times so that I concentrated on the experience of teaching social studies. Posing research questions, written from a phenomenological perspective, helped to focus my data analysis and findings. I have become more convinced that using phenomenological methods was appropriate and successful. The result, this final report, does answer the research questions.

Overall, I am satisfied with my study and findings. With so much written on social studies education, I was excited when I saw a way to incorporate Fallace's (2017) model in my study. I feel that having teachers align themselves to his model as I did, it will be possible for a teacher to "move" their practice. Even the one participant that was

fully aligned to the traditional approach may be encouraged to think and plan differently. Participants that were partially aligned may reflect on the model to understand how they could become fully committed to a single orientation—if even for a single lesson. Those that feel they are aligned to a specific orientation, especially a progressive orientation, may come to realize what changes are needed to make this a reality. Throughout this study, I have been thinking about my alignment and how I can become “bluer.” A movement to a new or different orientation may be difficult for some as changing teacher beliefs requires what Kagan (1992) described as a “dramatic disequilibrium” (p. 78). The teachers in this study did mention how intense training through supplemental programs provided by the local colleges and professional organizations positively impacted their teaching. I hope that this study will inspire and initiate discussion about the alignment of intended purpose of social studies to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

My research goal was never to uncover the *one true* purpose of social studies, a problem that has plagued the social studies for over 100 years, but to add to the research and discussion that already exists. I do see many possibilities for future research. In the future, I intend to share my study at social studies conferences. For now, I am satisfied with introducing the “three purposes” to pre-service social studies teachers. They are our future. I hope they will enter the profession with a better understanding of the purpose(s) of social studies than I did.