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Thinking Beyond the Text: Examining Teachers' Dispositions of Critical Thinking in Elementary Social Studies Classrooms Through the Use of Socratic Seminars

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Thinking Beyond the Text: Examining Teachers' Dispositions of Critical Thinking in

Elementary Social Studies Classrooms Through the Use of Socratic Seminars

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Fall 2019

Abstract

Research shows that students need opportunities to engage in strategies that will enhance their critical thinking skills. With pressure on teachers to prepare students for state assessments, teachers teach to the test, not giving students chances to dialogue with their peers. To produce citizens in a genuinely democratic world, the voices of students is crucial. Socratic Seminar is a classroom methodology that can foster critical thinking skills and cultivate a democratic learning environment. The purpose of this participatory action research study is to examine teachers' dispositions of critical thinking in elementary social studies classrooms as students think beyond the text. This research also examines coaching considerations, teachers' provisions of coaching, and challenges faced when executing Socratic Seminars.

Keywords: higher-order thinking questions, critical thinking, Socratic Seminars, coaching

Dedication

     This dissertation is dedicated to the late Wilbur "Mook" James, Sr. (my dad), and the late Marolyn Hunter (my aunt), who both passed away during this process within months of each other. It has been a long, rough journey with me being unmotivated to even turn on the computer and type anything during these last few months. My heart aches as they both unexpectedly left this Earthly world. I find comfort in knowing that they would have wanted me to keep pushing forward and striving for excellence. As my dad would say whenever we talked, "I'm proud of you baby." He was indeed one of my greatest supporters. As Aunt Marolyn would say, "You got this chick!" As a teenage mom, Marolyn saw greatness in me when I did not see it myself. Their continuous encouraging words are part of the reason why I continue doing the best I know how. Continue to rest in peace, dad and Aunt Marolyn. This one is for you both!

Acknowledgments

I give all honor to God for the completion of this dissertation. There were days that I could not think of anything to write. Because of His grace and mercy, I am at this phase of my educational journey. He answered my prayers, and words would begin to flow abundantly. I am forever grateful and pray that I remain Your humble servant.

I am thankful for the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Erin Adams, Dr. Daphne Hubbard-Berry, and Dr. Theresa Alviar-Martin, whose expertise, feedback, and supportive spirits helped me complete the task at hand. Thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Erin Adams, for answering all of my questions via phone and email, encouraging me throughout this journey, and providing thorough written feedback. I want to thank Dr. Alviar-Martin for serving as my dissertation committee member and for suggesting relevant reading expanding my topic and my thinking. I would also like to thank Dr. Hubbard-Berry for serving as my dissertation committee member and providing detailed feedback.

To the participants of the study, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to learn something new and to provide your dispositions of the learning and coaching process. It was a pleasure working with each of you. Your students are blessed to have such professional and dedicated educators. Your district is blessed to have educators who are self-directed and have a genuine interest in student success.

To my daughters, Jakedra and Jasmine, thank you for encouraging me and being my biggest cheerleaders. The two of you are "my why." Giving birth to you both during my teenage years, served as my motivation for continuing to push forward. Regardless of any obstacles before you, know that you can do anything, and I do mean anything, in which you put your minds.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for your support during this journey. When I needed to vent or ask for help, you were always a phone call away. I would not be where I am today – personally or professionally – if it wasn't for your inspirational words and profound knowledge.

Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction of the Problem

"In this age of information explosion where students are inundated with different and conflicting viewpoints, it is imperative for them to be equipped with intellectual tools to have an informed perspective" (Menachery, 2018, p. 226). As citizens of the world, students need to learn independently and engage in the humanities and arts to think critically (Berliner, 2009; Nussbaum, 2010). Nussbaum (2010) explained that schools affect students' hearts and minds based on the curricular content and pedagogy offered. Schools can "develop student's capacity to see the world from the viewpoint of other people" and "vigorously promote critical thinking, the skill and courage it requires to raise a dissenting voice" to produce citizens in a healthy democracy (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 45). How often do we encourage students to think beyond the text? In this study, beyond the text refers to outside of the written literature. We want students to think outside of the written works. How often are students allowed to challenge what someone else says, including the teacher? How often do students question their own beliefs and values? In our increasingly complex society, students need opportunities to engage in dialogue with their peers as they learn to express their views of the world around them. In a testing-intensive school culture, there is often little room provided for discussion and critical thinking. Socratic pedagogy utilizes discussion and critical thinking as tools of gaining knowledge. Living in a free and democratic world, American politicians call for schools to assist students in developing citizenship and the humanities (Berliner, 2009; Nussbaum, 2010). "An inquiring mind and critical faculties are clearly important tools that any citizen must hone in order to be effective in a genuinely democratic system" (Burns, Couto, & Becker, 1996, p. 6). In short, society needs critical thinkers for democracy to thrive. Although there are many methods that develop critical

thinking, one of the most potentially effective is Socratic Seminar, which allows questioning and reasoning to form knowledge. Thus, Socratic Seminar might be a way to begin to address the critical thinking crisis in public education.

The Skill of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a multifaceted skill that leads to active participation in classrooms, schools, and society. There are numerous ways to define critical thinking and various purposes of critical thinking. For the sake of this study, the definition of critical thinking is the ability to reason, analyze, and evaluate to transform knowledge. According to Menachery (2018), the purpose of critical thinking is for students to "question and strengthen the underlying reasoning of knowledge" (p. 227). Critical thinking helps students develop essential life skills such as gaining information, forming independent opinions, questioning one's views, critiquing information, and increasing tolerance and flexibility (Berliner, 2009; Florea & Hurjui, 2015). Critical thinking allows individuals to question information that is posted on social media or websites, not believing everything they read, hear, or see. This is an important skill because students have to suspend judgments and question the validity of the information presented. For instance, it is not enough to know a political candidate's platform. As informed citizens, students need to be able to see through politician's rhetoric, recognizing fake news and logical propaganda. Critical thinkers can discern truth and deception.

I have a profound interest in critical thinking. As a gifted resource teacher, I serve students in Kindergarten through fifth grades using the pull-out model. Students are pulled out of their homeroom one day per week to receive gifted services. One of the Core Curriculum Strands of Gifted Education is "problem solving/critical thinking skills." Yet, my students are continually saying how boring some classes are. The fact that students are bored in classrooms sparked my

interest in the topic. Social studies is one content area that does not interest students (Thornton, 2006). Some teachers value silence over student inquiry, and students lack opportunities to engage in academic discourse. There seems to be an overall fear of letting students talk. Talking is stigmatized. In the event an administrator walks into a teacher's classroom, it appears as if the teacher lacks classroom management when students are talking. Other teachers view quiet classes as a sign of good teaching.

Additionally, teachers feel students get off task and talk too loud when engaging in discussions, so they are told to be quiet. Yet, the opportunity to engage with other people is the hallmark of public education. I can help teachers have orderly discussions that utilize critical thinking, discussions, and dialogue by coaching them throughout the process. Without sacrificing order, the teacher continues to hold students to high expectations, emphasize the importance of being on task, and monitor the students during all lessons. As a gifted teacher and teacher leader, it is my responsibility to provide support to teachers. This support includes sharing pedagogical knowledge and strategies with teachers, so the students reap the benefits of active learning in a rigorous learning environment.

As a teacher leader, other teachers look up to me. Thus, it is important to adhere to and emphasize curriculum mandates. The curriculum exposes all students to the grade level content needed for academic success. This success leads to life relevance as teachers prepare students to be critical thinkers in a global society.

Statement of the Problem

Critical thinking is a non-negotiable in the district in which I teach. Although critical thinking is an essential skill in educating the whole child, problems affect the teaching of critical thinking. One problem lies in the lack of training received by teachers to teach the skill. When

conducting classroom observations, district leaders expect teachers to implement strategies to enhance students' critical thinking skills in all content areas. This expectation derived from the curriculum and instruction department six years ago, along with other non-negotiables, as a means of improving student performance. The problem that exists at one school in the district is a lack of knowledge and a lack of agreement regarding the definition of critical thinking. During a general faculty meeting, school administrators informed the teachers that critical thinking across the curriculum should occur in all classrooms, yet, teachers never received training on what critical thinking - "looks like" - nor were they informed on what district leaders would look for when conducting classroom observations. To get an idea about how teachers felt about the critical thinking mandates, I casually asked three elementary teachers, "How do you feel about professional learning related to implementing critical thinking in the classroom?" One individual commented by saying, "Unfortunately, I have not heard of or received any professional training for implementing critical thinking in the class." This anecdotal finding is consistent with other studies that suggest a similar problem (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Tran, n.d.). For example, a study of 172 college professors revealed that 89% of the professors lacked a clear understanding of the meaning of critical thinking but felt as though they taught it to their students (Tran, n.d.). Dewey (1933) refers to critical thinking as "reflective thinking" (Zare & Mukundan, 2018). Paul and Elder (1997) define critical thinking as taking charge intellectually and applying to one's thinking. Critical thinking develops logical reasoning and personal judgment to support suspicious thoughts (Padmanabha, 2018). However, it is not enough to mandate that children think critically, teachers must be critical thinkers if we want students to think critically (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Teachers need coaching in critical thinking to allow individual and small group support, collaboration, and application of learning.

Another problem with teaching critical thinking is the culture of testing and measuring learning. Berliner (2009) argues against multiple choice paper and pencil assessments. This culture of testing does not support the discussion and discourse needed for critical thinking in a democracy. In classes I observed in the past, the format of most questions are the typical multiple choice and true/false questions which requires lower level thinking. For example, a benchmark assessment administered to students in grades 3 – 5 consisted of 48 multiple choice questions and two constructed response questions. The multiple choice and true/false questions reveal lower level thinking because there is only one "right" answer. The assessments fail to require students to analyze, construct, or evaluate. Teachers choose multiple choice and true/false questions on assessments for reasons of efficiency. With a class of 30 students, teachers want test formats that are the quickest and easiest to grade. Teachers' plates are full of deadlines and responsibilities, such as demanding parents, mandatory meetings, and writing lesson plans. It is more challenging to grade 30 constructed responses tests, as opposed to 30 multiple choice tests. The format of test questions poses a problem due to students merely recalling information. In today's digital world, students can simply Google the facts they want to know. Recall is not always very useful on these tests, especially in social studies. Students need opportunities to read and analyze a scenario as well as find relationships between concepts, as "curricular content has shifted away from material that focuses on enlivening imagination and training the critical faculties toward material that is directly relevant to test preparation" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 134). Furthermore, standardized testing consists mainly of multiple choice questions, primarily due to the costs associated with scoring valid critical thinking assessments (Berliner, 2009). Despite pushing critical thinking, teachers resort to multiple choice and true/false questions because this is ultimately what students see on standardized tests.

Democracy and education

That today's citizens live in a democracy poses a final problem for the need of critical

thinking in elementary classrooms. The world needs citizens who make democracy survive and

thrive. As citizens of the world, students engage in the humanities and arts to think critically

(Berliner, 2009; National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2015; Nussbaum, 2010). The

use of social studies content strengthens critical thinking. Social studies in classrooms allow

students to expand their knowledge of the world making more logical and rational decisions in

life (Stanley, 2017). According to the National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS] (2015),

social studies "equips students with the knowledge, values and attitudes, skills, and dispositions

to be engaged, reflective citizens and responsible, aware members of the world community" (p.

161). In a democracy, we need citizens who can analyze, judge, and evaluate the world around

them. These citizens question the thoughts and beliefs of others as well as themselves. Socratic

teaching encourages such questioning and thinking. Teachers' dispositions are essential in

building a more democratic society. Encouraging students to engage in discourse and question

the world around them can appear threatening to elementary teachers. These teachers want

students to listen to them and not question their authority. Democracy can flourish with the

"academic freedom" of discourse (Evans, 2006, p. 320). As a result, it is essential to gain the

dispositions of elementary teachers as we rectify the problem of students merely living in a

democratic society.

Every Student Succeeds Act Legislation

Signed in December 2015 by former President Barack Obama, The Every Student

Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA) that replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Dennis, 2017; United States Department of

Education, 2017). States have an opportunity to reshape their ESSA plan to meet the needs of the

state and students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). For example, Georgia's School

Superintendent Richard Woods (2017) states, "Georgians are demanding a more holistic

approach to education, centered on the whole child and focused not only on preparing students

for colleges and careers but also for life" (p. 2). Under the ESSA, flexibility in the delivery of

instruction returns to the hands of individual states and systems. ESSA acknowledges the need

for teacher development (Dennis, 2017). Professional development is necessary for supporting

social studies education (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2017). To educate the

whole child, the use of critical thinking is necessary. In turn, students who are critical thinkers

live and compete in a global society building a more democratic society.

Purpose of the Study

Research suggests that Socratic pedagogy and seminars can be an effective way to

implement critical thinking in classrooms (Paul & Elder, 1997; Zare & Mukundan, 2015).

Socratic pedagogy stimulates students' abilities to think critically and adds value to democracy

by promoting the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for democratic citizenship

(Nussbaum, 2010). Socratic Seminar entails students engaged in discussions and questioning one

another based on assigned readings. American reformer Horace Mann believed educated, active

citizens lead to a democratic society (Nussbaum, 2010). John Dewey, an American philosopher

of education, introduced Socrates into American classrooms and believed children need to take

charge of their own thinking (Berliner, 2009; Nussbaum, 2010; Walsh-Moorman, 2016; Zare &

Mukundan, 2015). The thought-provoking questioning and reasoning process of Socratic

teaching addresses the problems mentioned above. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to

conduct an in-depth investigation of teachers' dispositions of Socratic Seminars in hopes of

gaining insight that will positively impact elementary social studies classrooms. This links the role of Socratic Seminars to infusing critical thinking in classrooms by allowing students to reason and analyze forming their own knowledge.

Significance of the Study

The gaps in research regarding critical thinking support a need for the study. There are a limited number of studies centered around enhancing critical thinking in elementary social studies classrooms (Stanley, 2017). Few studies examined teachers' preparation, dispositions, and practice of Socratic Seminars as an approach to critical thinking and impeding contextual factors in elementary social studies classrooms. Challenges of implementing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms include a lack of time to teach the content and teachers' lack of knowledge of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars. Current research studies mainly focus on increasing critical thinking skills among high school and college students (Menachery, 2018; Reed, 1998; Weissberg, 2013).

This investigation addresses the gaps in research. One of the contributions of this study is the ability to inform educators, stakeholders, policymakers, and the community when making decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. On the local level, teachers define critical thinking, share their dispositions of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars, and determine challenges that may arise in elementary social studies classrooms using Socratic Seminars. On the state and national levels, educators gain knowledge from this study, and researchers replicate or add to this body of literature. The results of this study benefit the community and nation by producing critical thinkers who are in turn responsible citizens (Stanley, 2017).

Definition of Terms

The study used the following terms.

Critical thinking. Critical thinking is the ability to reason, analyze, and evaluate to transform knowledge. Students take charge of their thinking and learn independently in doing so (Berliner, 2009; NCSS, 2015; Paul & Elder, 1997).

Socratic questioning. Socratic questioning is the methodology used by Socrates to develop student's ability to reason logically. Students fully understand facets of an issue through the use of Socratic questioning (Menachery, 2018).

Socratic Seminar. Socratic Seminar is a teaching strategy used to encourage dialogue and to provoke discourse. Students engage in dialogue by connecting ideas to their personal experiences, citing evidence from the text, or asking additional questions (Carter, 2013). Students dialogue towards a shared understanding of the text (Carter, 2013; Walsh-Moorman, 2016). Socratic Seminars are not the same as debates.

Dispositions. Dispositions are behaviors, actions, and attitudes that impact the learning environment (Stephens, 2019). Knowledge, skills, and dispositions are critical in developing democratic citizenship (Misco & Shiveley, 2010).

Research Questions

The following four research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What are elementary teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking prior to receiving formal coaching?

2. What considerations should be made in coaching teachers to implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?

3. How does receiving coaching in social studies change teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking?

4. What challenges do elementary teachers say that they encounter when employing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?

Context of the Study

I used a qualitative participatory action research design to conduct this study. The study explored three elementary teachers' dispositions of critical thinking using Socratic Seminars. Hearing teachers' dispositions added value to the study. In the study, I coached teachers on the use of Socratic Seminars. Students needed opportunities to question the world around them to enhance their critical thinking skills. The study revealed some of the challenges that teachers faced when implementing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms. Through professional learning, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, journaling, and questionnaires, this study investigated elementary teachers' perceptions in a large suburban school district with over 54,600 students. The study's setting was Lincoln Elementary (pseudonym) in Georgia. The school was located in the center of the community and called "the community's school." The school consisted of 2 administrators, one counselor, 40 certified teachers, and 21 staff members. The student population was 723 students with 100 percent of the students receiving free lunch. Students in Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade attended the school. The student body was 58% African Americans, 25% Hispanic Americans, 5% Caucasians, 5% Bi-racial, 4% Asian American, and 3% categorized as "Other." Twenty percent of the students received Early Intervention Program (EIP) services, 26% received services from the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Department, 11% received services from the Department of Exceptional Students (DES), and 4% of the students received Gifted services.

Curriculum Requirements

NCSS outlines social studies standards used around the world for curriculum development (2017). According to NCSS, students need social studies knowledge in their early years building a strong democratic foundation and preparing them to be productive citizens (NCSS, 2017; Stanley, 2017). This rigorous social studies curriculum encourages students to think critically and apply the learning to authentic situations (NCSS, 2016).

Local policies require students in all grade levels to receive social studies instruction based on the standards identified in the Georgia Standards of Excellence and district pacing guides. Georgia recognizes four disciplines of social studies on the elementary level - history, geography, civics/government, and economics. Elementary teachers have a limited amount of time to teach social studies often leading to them teaching social studies and science in rotation. This rotation includes teaching social studies every other per day or even one week on and one week off. Alternating the teaching of science and social studies is a conscious decision by school administrators. Teachers have a substantial amount of teaching time (ranging from about 70 -120 minutes each day) to teach Mathematics, Reading, and English/Language Arts, with teaching sometimes going well past the allotted time (Berliner, 2009). This means that social studies, if taught at all that day, receives 40 minutes at most. Thus, teachers marginalize the time spent teaching social studies, particularly on the elementary level (Thacker, Friedman, Fitchett, Journell, & Lee, 2018). Pacing guides show what to teach and the time to teach the content in preparation for high stakes testing, regardless of whether or not student mastery occurred. In the state of Georgia among grades 3 – 5, only fifth-grade students complete the social studies portion of the Georgia Milestone Assessment System (GMAS) End-of-Grade Test (Woods, 2017). In turn, students in Kindergarten – 4th grades may or may not lack exposure to their grade level

curriculum in social studies. Not testing in social studies places the subject area on the backburner in non-tested grades (Passe, 2006).

Conceptual Framework

This study draws on critical thinking as viewed from the Socratic tradition, Bloom's taxonomy, and democratic socialization. These traditions merge effortlessly in enhancing critical thinking skills among students. In turn, the concepts form the blueprint of the study as teachers take on a constructivist approach. Furthermore, the merging of Socratic tradition, Bloom's taxonomy, and democratic socialization form a graphic representation to demonstrate what is going on within the study.

Socratic Tradition

People can hardly master critical thinking (Weissberg, 2013). Weissberg (2013) is not saying that people are not smart enough to master critical thinking, but that engaging in the thought processes associated with critical thinking is a challenging task. The concept of critical thinking is complex, with roots in the Socratic tradition. Greek philosopher, Socrates, became known as the founding father of questioning (Zare & Mukundan, 2015). The Socratic teaching style posed problems that challenged the individual's inability to justify their claims to knowledge. Conventional teaching methods of rote memorization, listening to lectures, and sitting for tests proved ineffective (Zare & Mukundan, 2015). Students need opportunities to engage in discourse in which they are making sense of their own learning and applying their knowledge to real-world situations. Teachers need to ask questions that do not require a final answer to improve student's critical thinking skills (Zare & Mukundan, 2015). In encouraging democratic citizenship, open-ended questions are more feasible. This includes the teacher and students asking these types of questions.

Bloom's Taxonomy

The revised version of Dr. Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Skills is applicable in justifying the conceptual framework for this study. The six domains are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Cole and McGuire (2012) state, "The highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy require critical thinking" (p. 15). The domains of analyzing, evaluating, and creating develop students' critical thinking skills (Cole & McGuire 2012; Duron, Limbach, & Waugh, 2006; Florea & Hurjui, 2015; Wang, 2017). Students can reach these higher levels of cognitive objectives as they develop their critical thinking skills. Analyzing, evaluating, and creating encourage more thought provoking responses in which students transform their knowledge and understanding of information. Bloom's Taxonomy demonstrates the conceptual framework through the use of the domains – analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The ability to reason, analyze, and evaluate the content is evident, leading to students who can transform knowledge.

Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. I selected the three levels of the revised taxonomy – analyzing, evaluating, and creating – due to the levels focusing on higher levels of questioning when engaging in Socratic Seminars. In analyzing, the material breaks into parts and determines conceptual relationships (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Analysis involves comparing, explaining, and differentiating. The creation of surveys, spreadsheets, or graphic representations illustrates the mental function of analyzing (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). For instance, a unit on representative democracy may result in students analyzing the text read by creating a pretend survey for the House of Representative and Senate members. The other students in the classroom can complete the survey questions. The student who created the survey can share the survey results, thus engaging in academic discourse. In evaluating, forming judgments occur. Verbs to

consider when evaluating are rank, conclude, or assess. To demonstrate the process of evaluating, students critique or complete reports based on a specified topic or question (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In creating, components are put together to form something new. Verbs for creating include plan, compose, or generate. Students may design graphics to explain the phenomenon of interdependence and trade.

Democratic Socialization

The work of democratic theorist and educator, John Dewey, is influential in emphasizing the need for students to be reflective thinkers. Dewey's approach to education involved the application of intelligence and the "analysis of social problems" (Stanley, 2005, p. 283). As democratic citizens, students learn how to "respect one another, listen to one another, think critically together about common problems and issues, arrive at solutions to mutual problems creatively in a community setting, and work together in implementing those solutions" (Burns et al., 1996, p. 18). Democratic socialization entails individuals who can engage with others voicing their thoughts and opinions. Education plays a vital role in developing democratic values (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018). A democratic education can transform students' attitudes and behaviors, internalizing and integrating democracy into real-life situations (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018). Schools can help students the importance of democracy and how it can be improved (Stanley, 2005). Teachers can cultivate students' values by allowing them opportunities to engage in discourse regarding real-world challenges and issues (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018).

Teachers' Perceptions

The role of teachers in teaching critical thinking through Socratic pedagogy is learning alongside the students. The teacher refrains from answering questions for the students and provides opportunities for the students to engage in discourse with one another. The teachers'

role includes serving as a facilitator in the learning environment. Perceptions form based on the teachers' roles. Teachers construct their own knowledge based on the implementation of Socratic pedagogy. Self-directing learning is evident as teachers learn during the coaching process. It is imperative for teachers to share their dispositions with others as they learn and grow professionally. Furthermore, teachers acquire knowledge and improve their teaching practices throughout the process.

Conceptual Connection

Socratic tradition, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, and democratic socialization accompany one another. The overarching goal is to develop critical thinkers in an elementary social studies setting. Socratic tradition leads to inquiry in which students engage in thoughtful questioning and answering. The skills espoused in Bloom's Taxonomy help students "do" Socratic thinking by asking higher-order thinking questions. Democratic socialization further builds academic discourse among students. By combining the concepts of Socratic tradition, Bloom's Taxonomy, and democratic socialization, the result is critical thinkers who are capable of living in a democratic society. The components of analyzing, evaluating, creating, questioning, and dialoguing unite to form critical thinkers (Figure 1). These components apply to real-world situations. The concept map begins with an umbrella (critical thinking). To establish critical thinking, analyzing, evaluating, creating, questioning, and dialoguing merge. In actuality, a person holds the umbrella, possessing the components shown, and taking on the title of a "critical thinker." Therefore, the concept map shows a relationship between Socratic tradition, Bloom's Taxonomy, and democratic socialization. Students think about the text assigned to them and engage in dialogue with their peers. In thinking about the text, students formulate higher-order questions and respond to the questions of others in a thought-provoking manner.

Critical Thinkers

Analyzing Evaluating Creating Questioning Dialoguing
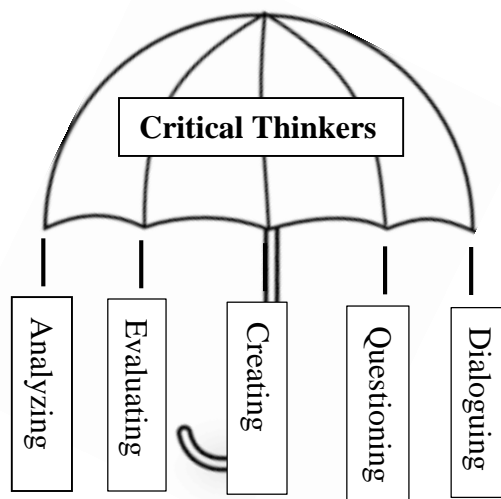
Figure 1: *Concept Map of Effective Critical Thinkers*

Summary

The demand to prepare students to live in a democratic society places added pressure on teachers as some teachers see it as "another thing to do," instead of what they are already doing. District leaders and administrators ask teachers to incorporate critical thinking in their classrooms, often without the necessary knowledge and support. "Professional development can give educators additional knowledge and skills to use research-based practices" (Wood, Goodnight, Bethune, Preston, & Cleaver, 2016, p. 161). To address this need, teachers need to engage in professional learning opportunities with side-by-side support of a coach. The use of effective coaching can offer the support needed by teachers.

Organization of the Study

This document contains five chapters. Chapter 1 explains the problem. It includes the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, research questions, and the context of the study. Furthermore, the chapter presents the conceptual framework, definition of terms, and

organization of the study. Chapter 2 provides the literature review used to form the basis of the investigation. It outlines the rationale for using a constructivist theory and adult learning theories used throughout the study. Chapter 2 delves deep into professional learning, critical thinking, social studies, and Socratic teaching. It explores Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking skills in social studies. The chapter further explains the theory to practice and the implications of the literature. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology utilized to conduct the investigation. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Chapter 5 discusses the findings, examines limitations, and explores future implications of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The overall topic of this study is the implementation of Socratic Seminars to enhance students' critical thinking skills. The topic focuses on teachers' perceptions of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars during coaching. The topic is of importance due to teachers' lack of knowledge as it relates to critical thinking and teachers' lack of research-based strategies to enhance critical thinking in elementary classrooms. It is important to define critical thinking clearly and to gather teachers' perceptions before, during, and after professional learning opportunities. My interest in the topic stems from me working in the capacity of a gifted resource teacher. Students would complain of boredom in their homeroom classes and want to remain in the gifted resource room. Additionally, the topic is of interest to me due to my passion for ensuring teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach critical thinking. I desire to shed light on the topic by addressing teachers' perceptions of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars before, during, and after the coaching process.

The goal of this literature review is to provide the theoretical framework of the study and to connect the research to coaching teachers, understanding critical thinking, and implementing Socratic Seminars. The literature review begins with setting the stage to demonstrate the theoretical perspective, constructivist learning approach, and adult learning strategies used to form the basis of the study. The literature review explains the need for professional learning among teachers to show how the researcher can coach teachers throughout the study. The review continues providing insight into critical thinking, including definitions from various theorists, benefits, and research trends. Additionally, this literature review addresses the impact of social studies in developing democratic citizens among students. The review of literature goes on to

examine Socratic Seminars and its effectiveness in schools. Furthermore, the literature review emphasizes theory to practice and implications based on previous research.

Theoretical Perspective

Creswell (2013) explains, "Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 44). The overall framework of this literature review includes historical knowledge of critical thinking along with cognitive knowledge of Socratic Seminars. A constructivist teaching approach forms the basis of the literature review. Based on the information presented in this chapter, individuals can construct their own knowledge and apply knowledge in similar contexts.

Constructivist Theory

"Constructivist learning environments contribute to the creation of a democratic climate in the classroom by enabling discussions on conflicting views, cooperation, and the development of critical thinking skills" (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018, p. 3). As students develop their critical thinking skills, they are better able to live and compete in a democratic society. A constructivist approach to learning encourages students to be self-motivated, focusing on cognitive skills (Florea & Hurjui, 2015; Stanley, 2017). Students respond and acknowledge the viewpoints of others, often reevaluating their values and beliefs in a constructivist environment.

Adult Learning Theories

Andragogy and self-directed learning serve as adult learning theories for this study. Adults need opportunities to be involved in the planning and evaluation of classroom instruction (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). Adults who can contribute to the learning process take

pride in their professional growth and development. They recognize the ultimate goal of student achievement.

The Theory of Andragogy. The concept of andragogy shaped my understanding of adult learners. I was more conscious of adult learners and their needs. The process by which adults learn is known as andragogy (Corley, 2011; Knowles, 1975). In teaching adults, it is necessary to explain why learning takes place (Ayodele, 2018). Knowles (1975) identified six principles of adult learning in which adults: 1) are self-directed and motivated, 2) bring knowledge and experiences to learning, 3) are goal-oriented, 4) are relevancy oriented, 5) are practical, and 6) desire to be respected. The assumptions are adult learners increase their ability to become self-directed learners, takes on new roles, applies the new learning immediately, is intrinsically motivated, and draws on prior experiences to foster learning (Corley, 2011; Knowles, 1975). Through the use of andragogy as an adult learning theory, the teacher leader takes on the role of a facilitator when teaching adults (Ayodele, 2018; Corley, 2011; Knowles, 1975). Learners self-reflect as a means of bringing theory into practice. (Corley, 2011).

The adult learning theory of andragogy applies with participants engaging in professional learning, observing the implementation of Socratic Seminars, and modeling the use of Socratic Seminars to their students. In sharing the concept of Socratic Seminars with the learners, participants have permission to share the new knowledge with other teachers. Having a constructivist approach to leading, teacher leaders construct knowledge based on personal experiences. As a means of critical thinking, constructive feedback provides opportunities for adult learners to challenge their assumptions (Corley, 2011).

The Theory of Self-Directed Learning. The concept of self-directed learning focuses on the learner in the learning process (Cox, 2015). Self-directed learning is "any self-teaching

project in which the learner establishes his specific goal, decides how to achieve it, finds relevant resources, plans his strategies, and maintains his motivation to learn independently" (Cox, 2015, p. 18; Tough, 1967). During professional learning sessions, a learner-centered environment is evident in self-directed learning taking place (Corley, 2011). Self-directed learners take the initiative for their learning as they seek to improve their teaching practices. Teachers reported back to me as the researcher regarding the implementation process. The use of journaling allowed the teachers to keep an accurate account of the Socratic approach and their perceptions in between meetings. A benefit of self-directed learning is that learning can occur when it's convenient for the learner on a daily basis. Knowles (1975) categorizes self-directed learning as a process where individuals take the initiative for learning, understanding their learning needs, determining learning goals, and implementing and evaluating strategies (Cox, 2015). A self-directed learning environment supports the constructivist worldview and accepts the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Dewey.

Professional Learning

The concept of professional learning is critical in staying abreast of changes in education and educators growing as professionals. Professional learning encompasses coaching and is synonymous with professional development (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). The purpose of coaching is to "build teacher capacity through the implementation of effective instructional practices," which increases student learning (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016, p. 2). Using coaching as a means of professional learning, teachers acquire skills and strategies that they can apply in their classrooms (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). In turn, these teachers take charge of educating the "whole child" (ASCD, 2018; Woods, 2017, p. 2). The Whole Child Initiative was released in 2007 by ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum

Development) to provide support and development for the success of children (ASCD, 2018). Giving states more autonomy to meet the needs of students, ESSA demands professional growth among teachers by engaging in and leading professional learning (Dennis, 2017; Fennell, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The state of Georgia is one state implementing its ESSA plan and addressing the comprehensive needs of students. Georgia state superintendent Richard Woods (2017) points out that the focus is on preparing the "whole child" (p. 2) for colleges, careers, and life. To fulfill the goal addressed by the state superintendent, teachers need to engage in professional learning. The current teacher evaluation system – Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES) – encompasses professional learning in the state of Georgia. Teachers document their involvement in professional learning throughout the school year. This professional learning is continuously supported by teacher leaders who take on the role of coaches in which they facilitate these professional learning opportunities.

Professional Learning Defined. Defined by Muijs and Harris (2003), professional learning is participating in leadership, making decisions, sharing a sense of purpose, collaborating, and accepting joint responsibility. Professional learning helps teachers grow professionally and requires all members working towards a common goal. As valuable as it is, professional learning aids in the acquisition of content, pedagogy, and leadership skills (Jones & Dexter, 2014; Sato, Hyler, & Monte-Sano, 2014; Thacker et al., 2018; Vermont Agency of Education, 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Effective professional learning is "intensive, ongoing, connected to practice, focuses on student learning, and aligned with school improvement practices" (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016, p. 4).

Professional Learning Benefits. Research by Hobson and Moss (2011) revealed numerous components of empowering professional learning. The components included, but are

not limited to, meets the needs of teachers, connection to prior knowledge and experiences, administrator participation at all sessions, long-term professional learning, and active involvement (Hobson & Moss, 2011). Professional learning allows for collaboration among teachers and administrators and is useful according to a study of National Board certified teachers (Sato et al., 2014). Teachers' expertise and experiences take into account professional learning (Easton, 2011). These teachers may even be the presenter of the professional learning session. The expectation is that knowledge acquired during professional learning supports classroom instruction and data collection determines the effectiveness of the concepts presented.

From professional learning (as a whole), smaller groups called professional learning communities (PLC) form. Administrators communicate how the professional learning communities are formed – among the grade levels or departments, for example. Research shows professional learning communities transform schools and empower teachers (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Teachers are contributing members of this egalitarian process. Professional learning communities provide opportunities for teachers to build relationships, collaborate, engage in dialogue, plan rigorous learning tasks, and support their peers (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016; Jones & Dexter, 2014; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). By engaging in PLCs, teachers take on a constructivist approach to learning. Members of the professional learning communities work toward the school's vision if they have common goals.

Teachers need a thorough understanding of new initiatives, and professional learning can lead to this understanding. In helping teachers implement a new practice, it is vital for them to gain a clear understanding of the method they are executing. Holdsworth and Maynes (2017) emphasize that teachers need a conceptual understanding of new innovations to implement and

maintain these practices. Increased student learning and a more positive school culture are the end result of professional learning (Hobson & Moss, 2011).

   Professional Learning Action Research Studies. A study by the Vermont Agency of Education (2016) revealed a positive impact on teacher efficacy and effectiveness as a result of professional learning. Characteristics of effective coaches include knowledge of best practices, builds trust and relationships, skilled communicators, leaders, and researchers (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). Coaching increases instruction with teachers applying the knowledge gained and reflecting on their teaching practices (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). The teacher and coach collaboratively improve teaching and learning (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). The process of coaching depends on "instructional practice, student achievement data, teacher efficacy, and coaches' development to determine its effectiveness (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016, p. 12). The research findings are clear. "By implementing coaching as a practice for embedded, ongoing professional learning, schools and districts can take action to ensure high-quality support for both educators and students" (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016, p. 13).

   ESSA offers grants to school districts to support research on rigorous educational strategies (Wood et al., 2016). Teachers reported feeling unprepared due to a lack of professional development (Wood et al., 2016). The study by Wood, Goodnight, Bethune, Preston, and Cleaver (2016) discusses professional development and coaching as an extension. The topics covered during professional development should not be a one time session. Opportunities to revisit the professional development session should occur. Teachers need opportunities to learn about the topic, implement the topic with students, share their perceptions, address questions and concerns, and continue making adjustments and collecting data as necessary. Research proved

limited opportunities for quality professional development, and professional development on a topic occurred only once (Wood et al., 2016). Effective professional development is "coherent, content-focused, active, and collaborative" (Wood et al., 2016, p. 161). The study indicated teachers need more than one professional development session (Wood et al., 2016). Through the use of coaching, teachers receive additional support as they implement newly learned strategies (Wood et al., 2016).

A mixed methods study by Ayodele (2018) recommends professional learning for teacher effectiveness and efficacy in South Africa and Nigeria. Purposive random sampling examined 80 teachers, 20 focus group teachers, and six heads of department. Quality education drives society (Ayodele, 2018). As such, in-service professional development builds competent teachers (Ayodele, 2018). The reasoning behind professional development is to provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to educate the youth (Ayodele, 2018). The experiences gained in professional development allow the teachers to "increase learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for optimum performance in society" (Ayodele, 2018, p. 160). In-service professional development utilizes visual aids, is learner-centered, rigorous, and collaborative (Ayodele, 2018). The challenges of in-service professional development were activities that were a waste of time, a limited number of participants selected for trainings, and a lack of workshops applied in certain classrooms (Ayodele, 2018). The study proved that in-service professional development increased teaching instruction resulting in academic improvement.

These studies on professional learning contribute to the broader field of education by providing cognitive knowledge for teachers and researchers. Individuals have a deeper understanding of the impact of professional learning. There is a need for professional learning on a specific topic to occur over a period of time to delve deeper into the topic (Ayodele, 2018;

Wood et al., 2016). The studies mentioned above failed to discuss how teachers can improve their teaching practices through self-directed learning and teachers' perceptions of professional learning. Therefore, conducting a study on teachers' dispositions of Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking allows teachers to implement the instructional strategy with their students as they take the initiative for their learning. A study of this magnitude further takes place over an extended period of time allowing the teachers to understand the strategy of Socratic Seminars fully. Teachers also have the opportunity to share their perspectives on critical thinking and Socratic Seminars as implemented in the elementary social studies setting.

Critical Thinking

The roots of critical thinking date back to the times of Socrates, some 2500 years ago (National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 2017). It was during that time Socrates discovered people could not justify their claims to knowledge (National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 2017; Weissberg, 2013). Throughout the years, the economy and society rapidly changed. While the economy and society are changing, one thing remains the same – that is, people still struggle to justify their claims to knowledge. The use of critical thinking is necessary as we improve the world in which we live, work, and play. Critical thinking is the foundation for "effective democratic citizenship and economic productivity" (Weissberg, 2013, p. 322). Educators and researchers agree that critical thinking is essential and that students need to think critically (Berliner, 2009; National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 2017; NCSS, 2016; NCSS, 2017; Weissberg, 2013).

Critical Thinking Defined. Various researchers and theorists defined critical thinking. According to Dewey (1933), "Critical thinking is active, persistent, careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further

conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). Ennis (1962) described critical thinking as reflective in nature with individuals deciding what to believe or do. "Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" as stated by Scriven and Paul (1987, p. 1). Florea and Hurjui (2014) defined critical thinking as a fundamental skill learned through practice resulting in increasing one's knowledge. The trait shared among the definitions is that critical thinking is "an ability to use reason to move beyond the acquisition of facts to uncover deep meaning" (Weissberg, 2013, p. 318). Hence the definition used for this study, critical thinking is an ability to reason, analyze, and evaluate to transform knowledge.

Critical Thinking Components. Problem solving, effective communication, and participation in a democratic society foster critical thinking skills. According to Weissberg (2013), "Critical thinking can be seen as having two components: a set of information and belief generating and processing skills, and the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior" (p. 318). Similarly, in Tuzlukova, Busaidi, and Burns (2017), Glaser (1941) identified the components of critical thinking as one's experiences and knowledge of "logical inquiry and reasoning" (p. 618). The most referenced components of critical thinking in a study by Tuzlukova et al. (2017) were analysis, evaluation, rational, reflection, suppression of bias, and problem solving. In addition to cognitive skills, critical thinking involves dispositions toward learning and the application of skills.

Critical Thinking Benefits. The development of critical thinking is beneficial to students and the world. Former Presidents Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson wanted a broader curriculum than what was encouraged in NCLB (No Child Left Behind now

referred to as ESSA) (Berliner, 2009). Franklin wanted an emphasis on history to encourage students to think about right and wrong issues (Berliner, 2009). Washington and Jefferson believed schools should teach students how to understand their rights as citizens (Berliner, 2009). "The democratic tradition of this country deserves an equal place in the elementary classroom. The founders of this country would expect nothing less" (NCSS, 2017, p.1).

As teachers, it is crucial that we improve our practices to impart critical thinking in students. However, research shows that teachers do not know how to teach critical thinking with an emphasis on high-stakes testing in reading and mathematics (Berliner, 2009). As critical thinkers, students can live and compete in a global society. Critical thinking leads to a more democratic society. Students need to learn to question themselves and the world around them, not believing everything they see or hear. The benefits of critical thinking lead to students' abilities to contribute to a global society.

Research by Duron et al. (2006) emphasized a need for active learning among students to enhance critical thinking skills. Active learning includes tasks in which students are role-playing, debating, peer teaching, and dialoguing. Duron et al. (2016) reject the idea of lecturing to build critical thinking skills. The learning environment is student-centered with the students constructing their own knowledge. Research proved students need opportunities to reflect and actively do something with academic content (Duron et al., 2006).

Students who are critical thinkers show interest in being independent learners (Berliner, 2009; Yen-ju Hou, 2018). These students do not wait for teachers or other individuals to tell them to read a chapter in the textbook. They see the benefit of learning and may read in advance to learn about topics that are of interest to them. Critical thinkers "suspend judgment in the absence of sufficient evidence to support a decision" (Berliner, 2009, p. 133). They are not quick

to jump to conclusions. Students who are critical thinkers can problem solve by applying what they have learned in other contexts (Berliner, 2009; NCSS, 2017; Yen-ju Hou, 2018). As a result, critical thinking benefits the learners as they learn and grow in a democratic society.

Critical Thinking Action Research Studies. Research supports a need for critical thinking in classrooms and society (Berliner, 2009; Rashid & Qaisar, 2016; Tuzlukova et al., 2017; Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018; Yen-ju Hou, 2018). A study by Tuzlukova et al. (2017) examined 24 teachers' responses based on the implementation of critical thinking in the classroom. The investigation revealed critical thinking played a significant role in the effectiveness of teaching and pedagogy (Tuzlukova et al., 2017). Ninety-four percent of the teachers felt as though critical thinking improves classroom instruction, actively engaging students and preparing them for real-world situations (Tuzlukova et al., 2017). Based on the works of Nussbaum (2010) and Berliner (2009), students prepared for the real-world are more equipped with critical thinking skills and knowledge.

A study by Rashid and Qaisar (2016) focused on examining the effectiveness of questioning in the development of critical thinking among 4th grade elementary students. Socrates believed rational questions drive thinking (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016). Through dialogues, Socrates thought intellectual brains develop (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016). Findings suggest the use of questioning is an effective method for promoting critical thinking (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016). Consistent interaction with questioning showed more logic, accuracy, and relevance (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016).

"Democratic values are an important component of the events, contexts, and relationships that individuals experience socially" (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018, p. 2). The study by Ulucinar and Aypay (2018) proved there was a significant correlation between critical thinking and democratic

values. The presence of democratic values and attitudes can develop students' ability to think and behave critically (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018). While the study occurred in Turkey, research proved constructivist theory methods such as discussions among students foster critical thinking (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018).

Another study sought to determine whether student-centered or teacher-centered instruction impacted critical thinking skills among students (Yen-ju Hou, 2018). Driven by an educational system focused on testing, Taiwan is like the United States in that regard (Yen-ju Hou, 2018). In a student-centered environment, students take responsibility for their learning thus learning how to think (Yen-ju Hou, 2018). A teacher-centered environment results in the teacher disseminating information teaching students what to think (Yen-ju Hou, 2018). This study proved the student-centered instructional group performed better in their critical thinking scores than the teacher-centered instructional group (Yen-ju Hou, 2018). Research suggests more opportunities for students to ask and answer open-ended questions (Yen-ju Hou, 2018).

These studies on critical thinking contribute to the broader field of education by providing pedagogical knowledge of critical thinking. The studies also emphasize characteristics to enhance critical thinking in schools such as fostering democratic beliefs, student-centered instruction, and questioning. The studies reference higher level questioning as a means of increasing critical thinking. The basis behind Socratic Seminars is asking thought-provoking questions. Thus, the use of questioning is the foundation of Socratic Seminars. The studies mentioned above failed to study critical thinking in the United States. The studies occurred in the Sultanate of Oman, Pakistan, Turkey, Taiwan (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016, Tuzlukova et al., 2017, Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018, Yen-ju Hou, 2018). A culture of testing affects the teaching of critical thinking for democracy. Critical thinking is a means to show a skill set that is necessary for

economic efficiency. This implicates the teaching of critical thinking because students lack opportunities to challenge printed text or what the teacher says. Standardized testing outcomes take precedence over delving deeper into critical thinking. Therefore, conducting a study on the implementation of Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking adds to existing literature and inform elementary policymakers, educators, and researchers globally and in the United States.

<div align="center">**Social Studies**</div>

Preparing students to become democratic citizens is a complex task requiring an extensive range of content (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2016). The content encourages students to "speculate, think critically, and make personal and civic decisions on information from multiple perspectives" (NCSS, 2016, p. 180). The Council for Basic Education focuses on "history, social studies, civics, geography, art and music, and foreign language" as they are not the focus of high stakes testing (Berliner, 2009, p. 130). "Elementary social studies should include civic engagement, as well as knowledge from the core content areas of civics, economics, geography, and history" (NCSS, 2017, p. 1). In these areas, students can ask compelling questions about the world around them (NCSS, 2017). Social studies enables students to make informed decisions regarding world issues (NCSS, 2016).

Social Studies in Elementary Schools. Social studies is necessary beginning in the elementary years. "It is in the social studies classroom that students develop the knowledge and skills they need to understand the important issues of our time" (Elder & Paul, 2008, p. 391). Students need opportunities to think critically about social issues in the world. In turn, it allows the students to be more democratic citizens. Exposing students to social studies early on prepares them for post-secondary and college level academic courses needed to enhance "critical thinking, problem solving, and collaborative skills needed for the workplace" (NCSS, 2016, p. 180).

Students should receive excellent instruction in social studies every day beginning in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade (NCSS, 2016). Social studies curriculum "supports students in developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, evaluating sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed actions as informed and engaged citizens of the world" (NCSS, 2016, p. 180). In the area of social studies, teachers should provide opportunities for "reflective thinking transforming American society" (Evans, 2006, p. 320).

 Social Studies Action Research Studies. A research study (Karabulut, 2012) sought to identify instructional practices in social studies to develop critical thinking skills. One hundred thirty-two articles examined methods to promote critical thinking in social studies (Karabulut, 2012). According to Karabulut (2012), "The result of this study revealed that the use of classroom discussions, writing activities, and questions should be utilized more in social studies classrooms to promote critical thinking" (p. 198). Classroom discussions allow students to engage in social interactions gaining a deeper understanding of the content. Writing activities enable students to reflect and write his or her thinking (Karabulut, 2012). The use of questions to promote critical thinking in classrooms allows students to ask and answer higher-level thinking questions and engage in discussions (Karabulut, 2012).

 The "elementary classroom should be meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active" to develop students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions (NCSS, 2017). Social studies instruction should meet the needs of students capitalizing on their diversity and interests (NCSS, 2017; Stanley, 2017). Engaging social studies instruction motivates students to learn the content at hand. Inter-disciplinary social studies instruction allows students to make connections in other content areas. "Thoughtful and deliberate classroom engagement related to controversial or

ethical issues provides opportunities for elementary students to practice critical thinking skills while examining multiple perspectives" (NCSS, 2017, p. 1). Research shows a need for students to question, challenge, and evaluate the information they read (NCSS, 2017). As students take on the role of active learners, the teacher takes on the role of a facilitator rather than a dictator (NCSS, 2017). Teacher preparation and engagement in professional development further assists in students receiving effective social studies instruction (NCSS, 2017). As a result, students become participating citizens in a global society.

These studies on social studies contribute to the broader field of education as we prepare students for colleges, careers, and civic life. The studies above failed to discuss the dispositions and challenges teachers encounter when teaching social studies. Therefore, conducting a study on the implementation of Socratic Seminars in the social studies environment gives teachers an opportunity to voice their thoughts and concerns. The study also encourages teachers to find the time to teach social studies daily. Through the use of a student-centered strategy, students are motivated and look forward to participating in Socratic Seminars where they have an opportunity to dialogue in the learning process.

Socratic Teaching

Students need an understanding of how the social world function, thus needing to learn components of social studies (Davis & Yeager, 2005). Western philosopher Socrates believed the process of engaging in dialogue was the surest way to gain reliable knowledge (Stabler & Janke, 2012). Socratic Seminar is this process of dialogue. Children should be talking, thinking, questioning, and figuring things out (Nussbaum, 2010; Stabler & Janke, 2012; Zare & Mukundan, 2015). Through the use of Socratic questioning, children learn citizenship and positively contribute to society (Eisen, 2007; Nussbaum, 2010). Teachers can teach Socratically

by encouraging children to be active and curious learners (Nussbaum, 2010). Students can carry

their knowledge into adulthood, resulting in a more democratic society if we teach them how to

think critically at a young age. In teaching students how to think, it is important that we avoid

forcing our beliefs and values on them. Students can form their own conclusions based on

evidence. A study by Mangrum (2010) found Socratic teaching "highly effective" (p. 43).

Teaching Socratically resulted in "significant improvement" in students' critical thinking

abilities (Zare & Mukundan, 2015, p. 260).

  Socratic Questioning. The work of Socrates is the driving force behind questioning

(Nappi, 2017). Socrates would ask thoughtful questions of others as well as himself (Nappi,

2017). Socrates believed we should not spoon-feed people but encourage them to think for

themselves. His rationale for questioning was to develop students with more scholarly views. By

questioning students, the teacher can train students to ask the same types of questions as they

develop their abilities to think critically (Elder & Paul, 2008). The goal of Socratic questioning is

to ask higher level questions that are open-ended. For example, how do the ideas in the text

relate to our lives? What is the author's perspective? Why is this information important? Socratic

questioning improves cognition (Zare & Mukundan, 2015). Furthermore, questioning plays a

vital role in critical thinking (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016; Wang, 2017).

  Process of Socratic Seminars. Socratic Seminar is a method in which students explore

and evaluate assigned text through discussions (Eisen, 2007; Keegan, 2013; Mangrum, 2010). In

Socratic Seminars, students seek an understanding of complex ideas through dialogue, not

debates (Eisen, 2007; Keegan, 2013; Stabler & Janke, 2012). By engaging in civil discourse,

students expand their view of the world. The teacher serves as the facilitator and supplies

thoughtful, open-ended questions (Keegan, 2013; Mangrum, 2010; Stabler & Janke, 2012). The

teacher prepares the questions in advance and includes three types of questions – opening

questions, core questions, and closing questions (Alfonsi, 2008; National Paideia Center, 1988).

Opening questions begin the Socratic Seminar session pointing out the main idea of the text

requiring a brief response (National Paideia Center, 1988). An example of an opening question

might be, "What is the most important phrase from the text?" The core questions allow students

to analyze ideas from the text providing evidence of their responses (Alfonsi, 2008; Mangrum;

2010; National Paideia Center, 1988). "What evidence does the author use to back up his point of

view?" is a sample core question (National Paideia Center, 1988). Closing questions require

students to apply the ideas and values to real world situations (Alfonsi, 2008; Mangrum; 2010;

National Paideia Center, 1988). An example of a closing question is, "How would our daily lives

be different without freedom of speech?"

     With Socratic Seminar, the reading of a specific text takes place by all individuals

(Carter, 2013; Walsh-Moorman, 2016). Students come prepared with any questions they may

have or any topics they want to address. Each student is an active listener and an active

participant in Socratic Seminars. The teacher compiles a list of open-ended questions to start the

dialogue among the students and as a means to continue the dialogue in the event students do not

have questions (Carter, 2013; Stabler & Janke, 2012; Walsh-Moorman, 2016). Students should

not ask questions requiring a "yes" or "no" answer in Socratic Seminars (Zare & Mukundan,

2015). The purpose of Socratic Seminars is to encourage students to think for themselves,

leading to a better understanding of the text studied (Zare & Mukundan, 2015). In classrooms,

Socratic Seminars can be used to analyze text related to the Civil War for instance. Socratic

Seminars can be used in after school clubs and organizations as students engage in dialogue

regarding the text read. In society, the use of Socratic Seminars can be used to address issues in the news.

Students read the text and have questions and text-based evidence to discuss during the structured conversations (Eisen, 2007; Keegan, 2013; Walsh-Moorman, 2016). In small classroom settings, students sit in a circle facing inward (Alfonsi, 2008; Stabler & Janke, 2012). In larger classroom settings, there may be two circles, an inner circle and an outer circle (Alfonsi, 2008; Stabler & Janke, 2012). Sitting in a circle encourages active participation and facilitates the seminar as students look at one another during dialogue. Students sitting in the inner circle engage in dialogue, while students sitting in the outer circle observe and take notes (Alfonsi, 2008). The teacher begins the seminar asking the opening question. Students take turns dialoguing being respectful of one another (Alfonsi, 2008; Eisen, 2007). Once all students respond to the opening question, core questions are asked by the teacher and answered by the students (National Paideia Center, 1988). To end the seminar, the teacher asks a closing question (National Paideia Center, 1988). The teacher requires the students to write a response to the closing question as a follow-up assignment (National Paideia Center, 1988).

The Teacher's Role in Socratic Seminars. The implementation of Socratic Seminars de-centers the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher takes on the role of facilitator. Students engage in thoughtful dialogue with their peers based on text previously read. In coaching colleagues to implement Socratic Seminars in social studies, begin by gaining trust and building relationships with the participants. As the researcher and professional learning coach, I share my expertise and beliefs with the participants. During the coaching sessions, I engage in dialogue to discuss the need for training on critical thinking skills in classrooms. The conversation with participants remains positive through coaching. Establish meeting norms for the professional

learning sessions. Increasing students' critical thinking abilities is a common goal to attain. Easton (2011) declares that utilizing the talent from within gets the buy-in from teachers leading to powerful professional learning. Gradually share knowledge with the teachers, so they do not feel overwhelmed. To put it briefly, coaching the participants result in a collaborative effort guiding students to think critically in preparation for colleges, careers, and life.

Benefits of Socratic Seminars. Socratic Seminars benefit elementary students as they learn to be responsible citizens in a democratic society. In Socratic Seminars, students gain insight into the text through thoughtful dialogue with their peers. Students develop critical thinking skills as they construct meaning from the text. Collaboration skills develop through the implementation of Socratic Seminars. Students feel safe and feel as though their ideas add value by communicating with their peers. Students need these skills to thrive in 21st century classrooms. Socratic Seminars advocate for a student-centered learning environment in which the teacher serves as a facilitator. Students develop multiple perspectives based on the questions and responses during the seminars and have a deeper understanding of others' views. Students cultivate new ways of thinking as they integrate others' ideas into their beliefs.

Socratic Seminar Action Research Studies. A study by Alfonsi (2008) sought to assess students' thinking through the use of Socratic Seminars. The teacher wrote a list of questions in advance to use during the seminars (Alfonsi, 2008). The study occurred with a class of college sophomores (Alfonsi, 2008). Students had an opportunity to discover something new developing and adjusting their own thoughts and beliefs (Alfonsi, 2008). This study gathered the students' perceptions after implementing Socratic Seminars over a period of time (Alfonsi, 2008). The four students explained that they enjoyed the seminars and enjoyed voicing their opinions (Alfonsi, 2008). The study found Socratic Seminars to be a thought-provoking approach in

which students explore topics in-depth (Alfonsi, 2008). Findings also revealed that seminars prepare students for life as they analyze other people's points of view (Alfonsi, 2008).

Mangrum (2010) conducted a study using Socratic Seminars at an elementary school with teachers. Located in the United States, the study took place in a challenging neighborhood (Mangrum, 2010). During a span of five mandatory faculty meetings, teachers engaged in Socratic Seminars focused on selected text (Mangrum 2010). Resources and materials came from the National Paideia Center (Mangrum, 2010). Teachers saw their colleagues in different contexts as they shared personal experiences related to the text (Mangrum, 2010). Based on teachers' perspectives, the study found Socratic Seminars to be "highly effective" (Mangrum, 2010, p. 43).

A study by Walsh-Moorman (2016) proved high school students preferred face-to-face Socratic Seminars over online discussion forums. Two literature classes participated in the study, and four of the student participants provided their input on the effectiveness of face-to-face seminars and online discussions (Walsh-Moorman, 2016). The researcher videotaped and transcribed face-to-face Socratic Seminars and archived online discussions (Walsh-Moorman, 2016). The study found the higher level questions challenged students to think deeper and make connections to personal experiences (Walsh-Moorman, 2016). The participants preferred face-to-face Socratic seminars as opposed to the online version (Walsh-Moorman, 2016).

These studies on Socratic Seminars contributed to the broader field of education by showing the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars and showing how students can engage in dialogue. The studies also revealed a high degree of student interest using the Socratic Seminar strategy. The studies mentioned above failed to mention the impact Socratic Seminars have on critical thinking and teachers' dispositions of Socratic Seminars before, during, and after

implementation. "Often, these research findings do not appreciate or even take into account teachers' points of view, the complexities of the teaching-learning process, or the practical challenges teachers must address in their classrooms on a daily basis" (Mertler, 2014, p. 22). Therefore, conducting a study on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking adds to the existing body of knowledge and determine the extent to which Socratic Seminars foster critical thinking.

Socratic Seminars focus on the process of dialogue. It is essential to understand the difference between dialogue and debate. Dialogue is a collaborative process in which students listen to the viewpoints of others (Stabler & Janke, 2012). Students suspend their beliefs (Stabler & Janke, 2012). They also change their point of view based on valid points from others. Dialogue allows for an open-minded way of thinking (Keegan, 2013; Mangrum, 2010; Stabler & Janke, 2012). On the other hand, debates are a close-minded way of thinking with students looking for weaknesses in others' positions. Affirmations, counter-arguments, and rebuttals are a part of the debating process. Debates end with a conclusion and the selection of a winner.

Challenges exist in implementing Socratic Seminars in classrooms. One problem lies with students who are generally quiet and reserved. They are not quick to engage in the discussions (Alfonsi, 2008). Another challenge involves time constraints to effectively engage in critical thinking methods (Stanley, 2017). Stanley (2017) further mentions a lack of student motivation as a challenge.

Theory to Practice

A direct relationship is evident in critical thinking and Socratic Seminars. To foster critical thinking, students need opportunities to interact with their peers to hear the opinions of others and to understand the text (Tran, n.d.). This interaction results in relationships being

formed and developing one's beliefs and values. As beliefs and values are developed or altered, students take on a more democratic role in society. In practice, Socratic Seminars are student-centered focusing on cognition and learning. The level of questioning sparks students' motivation leading to thoughtful, personally relevant responses.

Local, state, and national news tie in components of social studies. Engaging in discourse related to local, state, and national news transforms theory to practice (Ulucinar & Aypay, 2018). For instance, students witness the political platforms of presidential candidates. Based on political platforms, students can recognize potentially false propaganda. The teaching of social studies must return to elementary classrooms (Thacker et al., 2018). Learning social studies content is more meaningful due to the questions and answers involved with a Socratic approach. Socratic Seminars allow students to engage in collaborative discourse needed in a democratic society, and it aligns with the constructivist learning theory. Furthermore, the research findings inform best practices that can be used to inform teaching practices (Mertler, 2014).

Coaching Teachers. Research proves that coaching is a means of improving new innovations among educators and offering the support and feedback needed by educators. Reinke, Stormont, Herman, and Newcomer (2013) viewed coaching as "one promising approach to supporting teachers in implementation" (p. 150). Aguilar (2013) posits that when coaching "is enjoyable, even fun, the end result is more likely to be transformational" (p. xii). Coaching builds relationships, increases knowledge, fosters reflections, and encourages communities (Aguilar, 2013).

Summary and Implications of Literature Review

This qualitative study provides insight for educators, policymakers, stakeholders, and other researchers who wish to implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies

classrooms as a means of increasing students' critical thinking skills. Those wishing to implement Socratic Seminars in their classrooms have the perspectives of other educators as they learn what works and what does not work in the elementary setting. In this literature review, students can benefit from daily exposure to social studies content in which they question informational sources. Research studies show a need for critical thinking in classrooms (Duron et al., 2006; Mpofu & Maphalala, 2017; Nappi, 2017; National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 2017; NCSS, 2017; Rashid & Qaisar, 2016). While there are various critical thinking strategies, the questioning technique used by Socrates is proven to be effective (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016; Zare & Mukundan, 2015). This questioning technique is representative of questions used during Socratic Seminars. There is a lack of research studies that focus on enhancing critical thinking in social studies classrooms and an even greater lack of studies that emphasize Socratic Seminars in elementary classrooms. This study addresses these areas of lack through the use of coaching teachers on the implementation of Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms as a means of increasing students' abilities to think critically.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3 of the dissertation outlined the coaching of adults, goals, research questions, research tradition, and setting and participants. The chapter discussed data collection and data analysis procedures. The chapter continued with an explanation of trustworthiness, limitations, and ethical considerations. The study served as a reference for researchers who wish to replicate or further the investigation. The study benefited readers to know teachers' dispositions of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars to gain a clear understanding of teachers' views and to allow teachers to feel valued, noting their dispositions. The interview data addressed challenges teachers face through face-to-face, honest conversations with the participants.

Coaching Adults

Coaching teachers was critical in the age of educational reform. Organizations and support systems were available in helping teachers develop. Local, state, and national policies influenced the social contexts in which teachers develop. Cultural contexts also influenced teacher development in which teachers work to improve the school's culture benefiting adults and students. Just like students, teachers needed to know the benefits of learning. Coaching adults was a way for me to go above and beyond the call of duty, leaving a lasting impression in building the school's culture. In coaching adults, the coach and teacher formed positive relationships and gained trust and respect from one another. Coaching further served as an avenue for those aspiring to become teacher leaders. Many teacher leaders had no desire to take on the role of an administrator; some teachers were simply happy serving as coaches within and outside of the classroom. They enjoyed teaching students in the classroom and collaborating with their colleagues. Coachable adults took pride in knowing they have the support of their peers and sharing teaching experiences without fear of judgment or poor teacher evaluation ratings.

Goals

Goals are the end result one wishes to attain. Due to the nature of this study, these goals included my next steps as I strived to empower teachers through coaching on the implementation of Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking skills in elementary social studies classrooms.

Personal and Intellectual Goals. As a gifted resource teacher, I cringed at the idea of teachers lacking knowledge of critical thinking and effective strategies to enhance students' critical thinking. Before becoming a gifted teacher, I was in this same predicament with little to no understanding of critical thinking. During this time, teachers in my district learned that critical thinking across the curriculum was a non-negotiable. District leaders expected to see evidence of the implementation of critical thinking during classroom visits. On one occasion, a half day professional development occurred with only a few teachers in the school. The critical thinking training included a variety of strategies that could be used to enhance critical thinking. I regret to say that I cannot recall any of those strategies today. No one followed up after the workshop to answer any questions or address any concerns. I remembered feeling lost and overwhelmed, not making any changes to my teaching practices at that time.

Based on my personal experiences, my goal was to offer professional learning to teachers, in addition to coaching them throughout the process of implementing Socratic Seminars. For teachers to be effective, I provided effective coach strategies when working with them.

Practical Goals. Through this research, I hoped to serve as an advocate for dialogue and discussions in social studies classrooms. Aside from the typical quiet classrooms where students completed worksheets or silently read, I challenged evaluators (principals, assistant principals, district leaders, academic coaches) to reexamine the notion of quiet classrooms having positive

classroom management. It is imperative for schools and districts to consider this paradigm shift as students become critical thinkers.

Research Questions

The research questions driving the study were significant (Stake, 2010). Four research questions guided this qualitative study. The questions were: (1) What are elementary teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking prior to receiving formal coaching? (2) What considerations should be made in coaching teachers to implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms? (3) How does receiving coaching in social studies change teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking? (4) What challenges do elementary teachers say that they encounter when employing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?

Research Tradition

The overall design of this study took a qualitative approach. The participants' views and experiences served as valid points to promote critical thinking in social studies classrooms. A qualitative design investigated people's lives and feelings of a phenomenon (Stake, 2005). Qualitative researchers drew upon the participant's prior knowledge and asked open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2005). Human perception and understanding were characteristic of qualitative research (Stake, 2010). Additionally, data came from multiple methods in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013). This qualitative study intended to describe the natural setting in which teachers implement Socratic Seminars. Furthermore, the effectiveness of coaching the participants provided insight into the participants' experiences.

Participatory Action Research. The study used a participatory action research approach and investigated an in-depth understanding of teachers' dispositions of critical thinking. Participatory action research examined individuals' feelings "without control or manipulation

from the researcher" for the sake of change with a specific action (MacDonald, 2012, p. 34).

Through the use of participatory action research, participants identified common themes and

collaborated to improve the practice (MacDonald, 2012). Participants learned by doing with this

research design (MacDonald, 2012). Interviews and focus groups complemented participatory

action research as participants shared knowledge and dispositions. This "socially orientated

process" fostered communication and allowed participants to describe a phenomenon

(MacDonald, 2012, p. 41).

Setting and Participants

Setting. The research study took place in one of the largest urban school districts in the

state during the 2018 – 2019 school year. The district consisted of 37 elementary schools, 17

middle schools, and 12 high schools. There were a total of 54,600 students in the school district

with 100% receiving free lunch. The district served students in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th

grade. The research site was Lincoln Elementary School, a pseudonym, with a student population

of 723. There were a total of 2 administrators, 40 certified teachers, and 21 staff members. The

school housed students in Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade. Fifty-eight percent of the student

population included African-Americans, 25% consisted of Hispanic-Americans, 5% of the

population were Caucasians, 5% Bi-racial or Multi-Racial, 4% Asian American, and 3%

categorized as "Other." Eleven percent of the student population received services from the

Department of Exceptional Students. The English/Language Arts Department served 26% of the

students and the Gifted Education Department served 4%. Students came from working class and

middle-class homes. The school was known as the "community's school" as it sat in the heart of

the community.

The district and school levels offered professional learning. Teachers had the option to enroll in any district level professional learning sessions. Professional learning related to critical thinking did not occur at the district level at the time of this study. School level administrators chose professional learning topics at their discretion. Prior to this study, teachers at this school had not received training related to teaching critical thinking.

Participants. Faculty and staff at Lincoln Elementary received a survey via email. One of the questions asked was Would you be interested in participating in coaching sessions to learn a new strategy?

Participants engaged in two professional learning sessions with the researcher that took place after school hours. I coached the participants on the implementation of Socratic Seminars and provided sample questions to use during implementation. During the timeframe of this study, participants conducted Socratic Seminars at least twice per week during the social studies instruction. The participants involved students in a minimum of six Socratic Seminar sessions.

The participants of this study were elementary teachers who taught social studies at Lincoln Elementary School, a pseudonym. The participants were certified teachers in the state as determined by the Professional Standards Commission. The selection of participants involved a combination of purposeful sampling and maximum variation sampling. Those interested in the coaching opportunity were invited to see the researcher for further information and to ensure the individuals were social studies teachers. Participants selected taught social studies and were certified teachers characteristic of purposeful sampling. Individuals selected had open availability and represented diverse educational levels (i.e., Bachelors, Masters, Specialist, or Doctorate) and various years of teaching experience. Participants ranged in age from 26 to 35. Maximum variation allowed the researcher to coach a diverse group of participants (Creswell,

2013). Creswell (2013) suggested maximum variation sampling to explain the case from different perspectives. There were three participants engaged in the study. Participants' perceptions originated from one 4th grade teacher and two 5th grade teachers. The researcher obtained IRB approval from the local school district and Kennesaw State University. The district IRB form was available as an online application. Appendix A outlined the Kennesaw State IRB document. Participants provided written consent to engage in the study by signing the bottom portion of the Kennesaw State IRB document. During the implementation of the actual study, a table outlined participants' demographics, and pseudonyms were used (Table 1).

Participants	Age	Highest Degree Level/Years of Experience	Ethnicity	Grade Level(s) Currently Teaching
Helen	33	Masters/5 years	African American	5th Grade
Mallory	30	Specialist/5 years	African American	4th Grade
Stephanie	26	Bachelors/3 years	African American	5th Grade

Table 1: *Participants' Demographics*

     Helen. Helen was a 33 year old African American female. She taught fifth grade and had also taught Kindergarten. Helen had a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education and worked on a Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction. She had her gifted endorsement and science endorsement. In her younger years, Helen always knew she wanted to become a teacher. Raised by her mom and dad, Helen's parents were both educators.

     Helen was passionate about teaching. She admitted that she loved fifth grade and loved seeing students have that ah-ha moment. Helen struggled with requiring students to think on their own. She admitted she always wanted to help and found herself giving students the answer. Helen wanted to learn more about critical thinking as a means of having students think for themselves. She was unfamiliar with how to teach critical thinking and Socratic Seminars. Helen

was the grade level chairperson and served on the Leadership Committee at school. She also coached cheerleaders at another school in the district.

Mallory. Mallory was a 29 year old African American female. Mallory was new to the school and taught fourth grade science and social studies. She taught first grade for three years and fourth grade for two years. Mallory had a Specialist degree in Early Childhood Education. Mallory had endorsements in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Gifted Education. She was working to obtain the science endorsement.

Mallory was often the first to arrive at school and typically one of the last teachers to leave for the day. She was extremely organized and loved engaging students in hands-on learning experiences. Mallory became interested in critical thinking when she learned it was a district mandate. Throughout her years as an educator, she assumed she was teaching students to think critically. She later realized that she needed support to ensure her teaching practices were effective and to ensure she was preparing students for the real world. Mallory had heard of Socratic Seminars used on the high school level but was unsure what it was and unsure of seminar usage in the elementary setting.

Stephanie. Stephanie was a 26 year old African American female. She taught fifth grade science and social studies. At the time of this study, Stephanie had three years of teaching experience. She had a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education.

Stephanie was always seeking ways to add variety to her classroom instruction. She was very energetic, and it showed in her lessons. For example, she explained a time when she came up with lyrics and sang the song to teach students about the Civil War. As a novice teacher, Stephanie stayed late after work hours to ensure she had the next day's lesson planned and ready for her students. In addition to staying late to prepare lessons, she also led the dance team having

afterschool practice twice per week. Stephanie considered herself a critical thinker and believed she encouraged critical thinking in her classroom. She was unfamiliar with Socratic Seminars.

These informants were selected as they met the requirements for the study. They all taught social studies which was a requirement of this study. They had little to no knowledge of critical thinking or Socratic Seminars. The participants represented various grade levels, ages, experiences, and educational backgrounds. The researcher selected a diverse group of individuals to accomplish maximum variation sampling.

Data Collection Procedures

The research questions addressed teachers' understanding and dispositions of critical thinking, their change in dispositions, and challenges encountered. As the researcher, I collected consent forms from the three participants before conducting the study. Additionally, the researcher informed participants that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time. The written consent form further explained the confidentiality of the study. The data collection methods used to address the research questions in this study were interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and journal entries.

Interviews. This data collection tool provided data to the research questions. A total of two one-on-one interviews took place with each participant. The first interview was face-to-face. The interview took place at Lincoln Elementary in the conference room after contracted work hours. I used a portable recorder to record the interview sessions. The sessions lasted 45 – 60 minutes. The interview was semi-structured allowing the researcher to prepare the interview questions in advance and to deviate slightly from the formal questions. "When gathering truly qualitative data, interviews are probably best conducted following semi-structured or open-ended

formats" (Mertler, 2014, p. 130). I prepared specific interview questions prior to conducting the interview (Mertler, 2014).

During the first interview, I asked 12 questions and met with each participant separately in the conference room. Some of the questions I asked were How often would you say you implement critical thinking related activities in your classroom? What does critical thinking look like in your classroom? How would you define critical thinking? and Do you feel comfortable teaching critical thinking? As the participants responded, I used a tape recorder to record the responses. At the end of the interview session, I stopped the recording and proceeded to leave the premises. Appendix B contains the full list of interview questions. I transcribed the interview after the session. I used pilot testing to refine the interview questions thus validating the questions. These interview questions added relevance to the study by answering the research questions.

I conducted the second interview using Google Hangout. Participants signed up for an interview time for the Google Hangout call based on their schedule. I called participants based on the time they selected. I asked a total of 12 questions during the interview. I asked What have you learned about Socratic Seminars? How did you present Socratic Seminars to your students? and How would you explain a typical day of implementing Socratic Seminars in your classroom? I used a portable recorder to record the Google Hangout interview. After I asked all of the questions, I ended the recording. Appendix C contains a list of questions used during the second interview. I transcribed the second interview.

Questionnaires. This data collection tool provided data for the research questions. I used Google Forms to create two electronic questionnaires. Both questionnaires consisted of 10 questions. The first questionnaire sought background information from the participants such as

age, teaching experience, prior knowledge, etc. Some of the questions asked were What is your gender? How many years of teaching experience do you have? What are Socratic Seminars? I asked these types of questions to gain background information of the participants. I needed to know what they already knew about Socratic Seminars and what they hoped to learn from the study. Appendix D contained a link to the first questionnaire. I emailed the link to participants and asked them to complete the questionnaire within the next two days. Participants completed the questionnaire on their own time.

The second questionnaire allowed participants to provide their input and experiences using Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking and gauged participant's understanding of Socratic Seminars after coaching. I created the second questionnaire using Google Forms. I asked such as How can the coaching sessions have been improved? What changes to the learning do you suggest? and How will you use Socratic Seminars in the future? These questions allowed me to see how participants' dispositions changed from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. Appendix E contains the link to the second questionnaire. I shared the link with participants via email for them to complete during their own time. The questionnaires added relevance to the study by answering the research questions.

Focus Groups. The purpose of the focus groups was to interview participants simultaneously (Mertler, 2014). The focus groups allowed the participants to feed off of the comments of others and gave each participant an opportunity to speak (Mertler, 2014). I chose to use focus groups so that participants could hear the feedback provided by their peers. Since participants were together during coaching, I felt it was beneficial to bring them back together towards the end of the study to see if they had similar or different experiences.

The focus group provided data for the research questions. The two focus group sessions lasted one hour per session. The sessions occurred after contracted hours and involved all three participants. They took place at Lincoln Elementary School in the conference room. The participants and I sat at an oval-shaped table. I pressed record on the portable recorder. I started the session with generic information such as the purpose of the study and thanking the participants for their involvement. Appendices F and G contain the focus group questions. Some of the questions asked were What do you perceive to be the most important purpose(s) of asking higher order questions? and Based on your experiences with Socratic Seminars, did you find it effective in increasing students' abilities to think critically? I had a typed list of questions. As participants spoke, I indicated the order in which they responded. This helped me identify the voices on the tape recorder after the session for transcription purposes. I continued asking questions until I asked all of the questions. At the end of the focus group, I dismissed the participants.

Journals/Email Artifacts. This data collection tool provided data to the research questions. While optional, I encouraged the participants to email me a journal response after each Socratic Seminar session. The emails served as written artifacts and reflections of the participants' experiences during the six Socratic Seminars. Journaling allowed the participant to maintain accurate notes of their professional practice (Mertler, 2014). The documents emailed added relevance to the study by addressing the research questions and serve as implementation artifacts.

Throughout the data collection process, I continued to formulate questions and participants shared their dispositions and ideas. Included in Table 2 was a matrix outlining what the researcher needed to know, the rationale, and explored the process for each concept.

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	What kind of data will answer the questions?	Where can I find the data?	Whom do I need to contact for access?	What is the timeline for acquisition?
Educator perceptions of critical thinking	I need to gain insight regarding historical experiences to understand the participants' dispositions.	Semi-structured interviews	Transcript from interviews	Participants	March 18 – 22, 2019
Educator perceptions of critical thinking after coaching	I need to gain insight regarding participants' perspectives of the coaching sessions and participants' dispositions of critical thinking.	Semi-structured interviews	Transcript from interviews	Participants	March 25 – April 25, 2019
Educator perceptions of Socratic Seminars in fostering critical thinking	I need to understand how participants feel about Socratic Seminars.	Focus Group Journals	Transcript from focus group Emails, journals, etc.	Participants	March 18 – April 25, 2019
Educator perceptions of the coaching experience	I need to know educators' perceptions of the coaching sessions and how it impacted their teaching practices.	Questionnaires Journals	Responses from Google forms Emails, journals, etc.	Participants	March 14 – April 25, 2019

Challenges encountered during implementation of Socratic Seminars	I need to know the challenges the participants may have faced.	Questionnaires Focus Groups	Responses from Google forms Transcripts from the focus group interview	Participants	April 18 – 25, 2019
Educators' perceptions of critical thinking after implementation	I need to gain insight regarding participants' perceptions after gaining knowledge of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars.	Journals	Emails, journals, etc.	Participants	March 19 – April 10, 2019

Table 2: *Data Collection Strategies and Timeline Matrix*

Data Analysis Procedures

I collected and analyzed qualitative data for this study. Creswell (2013) stated data analysis consists of "preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures" (p. 180). The process of data analysis included organizing, describing, and interpreting the data (Mertler, 2014). I transcribed and coded the interview and focus group interview content. Open coding was used to interpret emerging codes, categories, and themes in an organized manner. The data analysis process consisted of creating and organizing data files, reading through the text, forming codes, describing the phenomenon, establishing themes, presenting the data in easy to understand formats such as tables and figures.

The study used Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti was a qualitative analysis software used to code data. Atlas.ti was helpful in determining themes, patterns, and code families. Creswell (2013) suggested data collection from multiple sources. The sources used to collect data include

interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and journals. The two interviews were semi-structured

with one being face-to-face and one being via an electronic device. Participants completed the

two questionnaires electronically. Two focus group sessions occurred simultaneously with the

researcher and three participants. Journals were emailed or scanned to the researcher. As the

researcher, I loaded documents into the Atlas.ti software. Similar types of information were

grouped together to begin the process of organizing the data (Mertler, 2014). After reading

through the transcripts numerous times, codes were highlighted and tagged to indicate the

category. For instance, the code of questioning emerged from the interviews and focus groups.

One participant stated, "The higher level questions are what's needed to engage students in

critical thinking encouraging them to think outside of the text" (Helen, personal communication,

April 18, 2019). The organization of data caused categories and themes to begin to merge.

Mertler (2014) pointed out, "It is truly necessary to spend a good deal of time reviewing the data,

both during and following the development of your coding scheme" (p. 164). The next phase of

the data analysis process was to describe the characteristics of the data coded (Mertler, 2014).

During this phase, the data and research questions were connected (Mertler, 2014). The final

phase of the data analysis process was to interpret the data. During this phase, the researcher

answered the research questions (Mertler, 2014).

The theories of constructivism, andragogy, and self-directed learning assisted in the

interpretation of participatory action research. Narrative inquiry was used to tell the story of the

participants, along with self-reflective inquiry as participants used journaling to express their

dispositions. I knew that teachers had been coached successfully based on the feedback and

journal entries submitted. Past studies on Socratic Seminars focused on critical thinking among

high school and college students (Menachery, 2018; Reed, 1998; Weissberg, 2013). In this study,

I focused on coaching elementary teachers, because there was limited research utilizing Socratic Seminars in elementary classrooms and limited research on teachers' dispositions. I knew critical thinking happened when the teachers shared their narratives. The methodology related to critical thinking by building a more democratic society.

<div align="center">**Trustworthiness**</div>

There were multiple strategies to consider to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. When conducting research, the researcher ensured the quality of the data (Mertler, 2014). This trustworthy study encompassed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following sections outlined the enforcement of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as the researcher explored educators' dispositions of critical thinking through coaching using Socratic Seminars.

Credibility. The study was credible through the use of purposeful sampling and maximum variation sampling. The study represented a diverse group of three participants. The sampling included various ethnic backgrounds, teaching experience, and elementary grade levels. The research methodology was participatory action research which provided a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. In action research, the data collected was nonbiased (Lee, Sachs, & Wheeler, 2014). The collection of data included individuals who agreed to participate in the study to assure credibility. Participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time to ensure honesty. Their perspectives were believable further adding credibility to the study due to my having worked with the selected participants in the past.

Transferability. To assure transferability, participants received information at the onset of the study. Participants knew that there were two interviews lasting 45 - 60 minutes, two electronic questionnaires estimated 20 minutes, two focus groups lasting one hour each, and the

submission of journal entries. Additionally, the researcher provided detailed descriptions to enable the reader to transfer information to other contexts (Creswell, 2013). Transferability was evident as I communicated the context and descriptions of the study.

Dependability. The researcher was responsible for providing a detailed report, noting any changes that occurred to address dependability (Mertler, 2014; Shenton, 2004). This enabled future researchers to repeat the study. Allowing member checking where participants provided feedback on the results guaranteed dependability within the study.

Confirmability. In assuring confirmability of the project, I provided a detailed methodological description. From research questions to data tools, I thoroughly explained all components of the research process. The use of the data collection strategies matrix was evident of confirmability within the proposed study. Triangulation of data occurred through the checking of evidence to confirm the validity of various points of view and multiple data sources (Creswell, 2013; Mertler, 2014; Stake, 2010). Additionally, triangulation improved the research findings (Stake, 2010).

<div align="center">

Methodological Limitations

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The study consisted of several limitations. First, the study included a small number of teachers from one school within a district of 37 elementary schools. As a result, the study was not representative of the entire school district. Next, only three participants were selected to take part in the study. The limited number of participants was not representative of all teachers in the building. Thirdly, the study was limited to only two interview sessions. There were numerous questions to ask during both sessions resulting in the interviews exceeding the stated time frame. Finally, the study did not assess students' ability to think critically. No research questions were asked to gather data based on student's performance. Teachers' comments were the only source

of determining student's performance. As a result, it was difficult to determine whether or not the practices learned benefited the students.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed certain ethical principles. It was imperative for the researcher to conduct himself in an ethical manner. The researcher demonstrated conduct that preserved the dignity and integrity of the research field. The study took place after I obtained approval from the Institutional Research Board at the university and the district. At the onset of the study, I informed the participants of the research process and obtained their informed consent. Personally identifiable information remained confidential by being stored on the researcher's personal computer. The final report consisted of pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the research participants. The study concentrated on the topic at hand. In the event the participants changed the subject, the researcher restated the purpose of the session and the time frame allotted. I did not share my opinions about the topic with the participants. Having a positive relationship with participants to build trust was important in the study; however, I did not form friendships. When writing the final report, all findings were shared accurately and honestly. The research report was made available to the participants per their requests. To further ensure a robust ethical study, the researcher adhered to the following Decalogue during the research:

1. Be informative during the research process.

2. Remain confidential at all times.

3. Respect privacy by not sharing identifying information and using pseudonyms in the final report.

4. Focus on the study.

5. Do not alter participants' viewpoints.

6. Demonstrate ethical conduct that preserves the dignity and integrity of the research field.

7. Be faithful by being a "man of his word."

8. Build rapport in which participants can trust the researcher.

9. Be honest when writing the final report.

10. Make findings available to participants.

My Role as Researcher

My first role as the researcher was to ensure advocacy and ethical principles were maintained (Stake, 2010). I protected the rights of the participants and reported the accuracy of the study (Mertler, 2014; Stake, 2010). My role was to describe any biases that the participants had that interfered with the findings of the study. Participants communicated any biases or assumptions with me by sharing past experiences that shaped the study (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010). I did not impose personal biases on participants and refrained from stereotyping participants. I informed participants of the research process at the onset of the study. I communicated and shared data collection tools with the participants from the beginning of the study.

Additionally, it was my role to ensure the information obtained during the study remained confidential at all times (Mertler, 2014). I used pseudonyms in the final study and did not share identifying information (Mertler, 2014). In the event the participants drifted off topic, I reiterated the purpose of the study and the allotted time frame. It was my role to maintain ethical conduct in which dignity and integrity persevered (Stake, 2010). I also had a positive relationship with participants to build trust. My role also included listening attentively to the participants being sure to paint a vivid picture during the revealing of the results. Furthermore, the findings of the study were available to the participants.

Summary

This chapter began with insight into coaching adults. The detailed methodology further explained and provided a rationale for this qualitative participatory action research study. I outlined the participants engaged in this study. I further explained the software used to code the data. As a researcher, I pointed out the considerations for the trustworthiness of this study. Lastly, this chapter shared the methodological limitations of the study and ethical considerations I took into account in developing the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

Background

According to the National Council for the Social Studies (2015), social studies "equips students with the knowledge, values and attitudes, skills, and dispositions to be engaged, reflective citizens and responsible, aware members of the world community" (p. 161). For this to happen, it is vital that teachers buy into this mission. Therefore, teachers' dispositions are important in making a democracy a reality. They need to believe in democratic principles and implement them in their classes. Socratic Seminar is one method for fostering democratic dispositions. Socratic Seminars are a classroom methodology that engages students in purposeful, evidence-based dialogue. Teachers' perspectives of Socratic Seminars proved that the seminars were highly effective (Mangrum, 2010). Previous research suggests Socratic Seminar enhances knowledge, provides opportunities for students to talk, think, question, and figure things out, and promotes citizenship (Eisen, 2007; Nussbaum, 2010; Stabler & Janke, 2012; Zare & Mukundan, 2015). Despite the democratic merits of Socratic Seminars, elementary social studies classrooms limit the use of this methodology. This may be due to several factors including teachers' lack of commitment to democratic practices, their lack of training in how to facilitate Socratic Seminars in their classrooms, and teachers' perceived need for control in the classroom.

The purpose of the study was to conduct an in-depth investigation of teachers' dispositions of critical thinking in order to positively impact elementary social studies classrooms with the goals of coaching teachers and developing students who are critical thinkers. The study investigated three teachers' dispositions of critical thinking through the use of Socratic Seminars.

School context. This study investigated elementary teachers' dispositions in a large suburban school district with over 54,600 students. The setting of the school is Lincoln Elementary (pseudonym), a public school in the state of Georgia. The school is located in the center of the community and called "the community's school." The school consists of 2 administrators, one counselor, 40 certified teachers, and 21 staff members. The student population is 723 students with 100 percent of the students receiving free lunch. Students in Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade attend the school. The student body is 58% African Americans, 25% Hispanic Americans, 5% Caucasians, 5% Bi-racial, 4% Asian American, and 3% categorized as "Other." Twenty percent of the students receive Early Intervention Program (EIP) services, 26% receive services from the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Department, 11% receive services from the Department of Exceptional Students (DES), and 4% of the students receive Gifted services.

Chapter Preview

In this chapter, I will use the data collected in the study to answer the following research questions:

1. What are elementary teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking prior to receiving formal coaching?

2. What considerations should be made in coaching teachers to implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?

3. How does receiving coaching in social studies change teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking?

4. What challenges do elementary teachers say that they encounter when employing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?

In the following sections, I present the findings of the study. I describe the findings in the order of each research question. Additionally, I identify the themes and sub-themes. I share the findings as they relate to individual participant's dispositions of critical thinking before coaching, coaching considerations, coaching steps utilized, followed by teachers' change in dispositions are presented. In addition, I address the challenges encountered through the implementation of Socratic Seminars in social studies classrooms. Finally, the chapter concludes with overarching themes and a summary of the findings.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked *What are elementary teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking prior to receiving formal coaching?*

In order to determine the teachers' dispositions towards critical thinking, I posed two questions: "How would you define critical thinking?" and "What are some strategies you think could be used to teach critical thinking? The teachers' answers to these questions revealed that teachers needed coaching on critical thinking and methods to enhance critical thinking.

These questions related to dispositions as participants shared their definitions of critical thinking and their views on critical thinking strategies. In the following sections, I profile each participant explaining dispositions towards critical thinking prior to receiving formal training establishing a baseline of previous knowledge.

Helen

Being the oldest participant, Helen appeared mature and professional. In regards to professionalism and teaching practices, she was knowledgeable and believed in doing what was "right" at all times. Her colleagues and administrators knew Helen would be professional, even when no one was watching. She walked gracefully, and her demeanor forced others to listen

whenever she talked. Having completed her Master's degree recently, Helen was receptive to learning new things and confident in her teaching practices. She believed that we should learn something new each day, even as adults. As a leadership team member, Helen led her peers as she served as a grade level team leader. From interacting with her, she portrayed the characteristics of positivity, generosity, and dependability. Helen looked for the good in all situations. For instance, one participant mentioned having to review for state assessments. Helen explained, "If we want to get different results, we must be willing to do something different." This showed her positive outlook toward situations. Helen was quick to share her ideas and expertise with the group proving her generosity and dependability.

When asked to define critical thinking, Helen explained, "I'm unsure how to define critical thinking, but if I had to guess I would say being able to justify your thinking about a topic." Helen's prior knowledge of critical thinking emphasized using questioning to guide her instruction. Helen was the only participant who explained critical thinking in terms of higher order questions. During the interview, she mentioned several strategies she uses in her classroom for fostering critical thinking, including: higher order questions and thinking maps to teach critical thinking. The question stems included phrases such as "Why do you agree/disagree with…?, How would you change…?, and What evidence do you have to support…?" to name a few. Prior to formal training Helen stated, "The higher level questions are what's needed to engage students in critical thinking encouraging them to think outside of the text." Helen's perception of critical thinking was that it involved academic discourse scaffolded through the posing of higher order thinking questions.

Despite Helen's ability to connect higher order thinking and questioning, she was also under the impression that worksheets improved critical thinking. She mentioned using Google to

search for critical thinking activities and worksheets populating for student completion. Before formal training, Helen defined critical thinking as justifying one's thinking. While she knew higher order questioning led to an increase in critical thinking skills, she was under the impression that worksheets fostered critical thinking. This is due to the search engine generating "critical thinking worksheets." Helen did not explain the types of worksheets retrieved, and she did not explain how she used thinking maps to increase students' critical thinking skills. However, the word "worksheet" raised red flags for me. When you think of worksheets, you think of correct or incorrect answers. How can students justify their thinking through the use of worksheets? The basis of the questions found on worksheets would need to be open-ended, higher order thinking questions. Helen's prior knowledge revealed the need for her to engage in coaching related to critical thinking.

Mallory

With five years of teaching experience, Mallory was receptive to learning new things. She is currently enrolled in school working on an advanced degree. She expressed a love for learning and wanted her students to have this same love for learning. Mallory appeared quiet and reserved. She did not have a lot to say when asked questions. Her quiet demeanor spilled over into her classroom with her students. She believed students learn best when they sit quietly and listen. Mallory stated, "I am constantly telling my students to be quiet, quit talking, or to please listen." Mallory indicated that her social studies lessons involved lecturing the first half of the lesson, and students completing comprehension worksheets the second half of the lesson. During test preparation time, she needed students engaged in test prep booklets answering multiple choice questions to ensure they understood the content.

Prior to formal training, Mallory's perception of critical thinking was that it involved rigor. She was not asked to explain what she meant by rigor, and she did not go into detail about the term. Mallory emphasized, "Critical thinking is having the ability to analyze information and making your own judgment or opinion." Mallory believed questions requiring a yes or no response demonstrated one's ability to think critically. Mallory was under the impression that open ended questions could not foster critical thinking. In the words of Mallory, "Open ended questioning was not important for the success of critical thinking." Students in Mallory's class were able to ask and answer questions during class discussions. Students asked the type of questions requiring a single correct answer. Mallory accounts students' questioning abilities to her previous expectations and teaching practices, while she did not realize higher order questioning enhanced critical thinking skills.

Mallory's misconception of questioning warranted the need for coaching to enhance students' critical thinking skills. She did not think open ended questioning fostered critical thinking. Although she provided opportunities for students to question, the responses to questions entailed a correct response or an incorrect response. Thus, coaching could expand Mallory's understanding of what it means to "analyze information and make judgments," as outlined in her definition of critical thinking.

Stephanie

Stephanie was the youngest of the participants and had the least amount of teaching experience. She was shy and soft spoken. Her friendly smile made you feel welcome to her world. After her contracted hours, Stephanie worked the after school program. Her passion for teaching and helping others could be witnessed in her day to day actions, both in and out of the classroom. She cultivated a supportive learning environment where students were free to take

risks. Students could answer questions or make comments without judgment from the teacher or their peers. Stephanie recalled her years as a student in which she was intimidated to speak in class and when she did her peers would laugh at her. She explained how the teacher did not discipline students for teasing her. She vowed to be a better teacher so that no student would have to face the humiliation she did as a young child.

At the beginning of the study, Stephanie noted that critical thinking was "analyzing a situation using evidence to form a claim or judgment." Stephanie indicated a previous lack of understanding of critical thinking. She could not identify any strategies to encourage critical thinking other than Socratic questioning – which she could not expound. Stephanie had knowledge of Socrates, as it related to her statement of "Socratic questioning," from her undergraduate studies but that was the extent of her knowledge. As a novice teacher to the district and hearing so much talk about "critical thinking," Stephanie wanted to know more about the topic. She explained that she was interested in learning more about critical thinking to improve academic success among her students and for professional growth. Table 3 outlines some of Stephanie's dispositions prior to coaching and after coaching.

Questions	Prior to Coaching	After Coaching
How does critical thinking look in your classroom?	"Critical thinking looks like the teacher giving students a task to complete and the students working on it without much help from the teacher."	"I placed students in a circle. I selected a team captain who was responsible for keeping everyone on task. The initial question was, 'What is significant about Thomas Edison?' From there, the Socratic Seminars began."
What is critical thinking?	"Being able to analyze a situation using evidence to form a claim or judgment"	"I would define critical thinking as rigorous content that challenges students to grow. Students are able to analyze and use evidence to make connections, solve problems on their own."

Have you received any professional learning related to implementing critical thinking in the classroom?	No	"I think professional development is first and foremost the most important thing needed."
Are you familiar with Socratic Seminars?	No	"Now I am."

Table 3: *Stephanie's Dispositions Prior to Coaching and After Coaching*

It is evident that Stephanie could benefit from coaching related to critical thinking. She had a working definition of critical thinking but was unaware of strategies she could use to apply critical thinking in her classroom. Her inability to expound on Socratic questioning and her desire to learn about critical thinking made Stephanie an ideal candidate for coaching.

Emergence of Themes

From the participants' dispositions and my roles as researcher and coach, some common themes emerge. The themes are thinking about thinking and willingness to learn. Table 4 presents the themes generated from research question one along with the alignment of interview question, questionnaire question, and focus group question numbers based on participants' responses. Based on data analysis from Atlas.ti, I determined the themes of the study. These themes formed based on the identified codes and sub-codes from Atlas.ti.

Research Question	Interview Questions (IQ) Questionnaire (Q) Focus Group Questions (FG)	Themes
RQ 1: What are elementary teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking prior to receiving formal coaching?	IQ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9	▪ Thinking About Thinking ▪ Willingness to Learn

Table 4: *Themes Generated from Research Question 1 and Corresponding Questions*

Thinking About Thinking

The theme thinking about thinking emerged based on commonalities among participants' responses. Students are better able to analyze what they are learning when given a chance to think about their thinking. The same goes for the adult learners engaged in this study. If the participants deeply thought about the definition they provided at the onset of the study, they would have been able to dissect all parts of the stated definitions, understanding key components of critical thinking. Participants understand they need practice and support to increase metacognition thus leading to an increase in critical thinking skills.

Thinking about thinking also emerged as a theme for me as I coached teachers. I had to think in advance about the layout of the coaching sessions. It was my responsibility to come to the coaching sessions prepared and ready to engage the participants. I needed all documents, content, presentations, and materials ready for content delivery. I analyzed the content and thought about how I wanted the coaching sessions to look. For example, I pretended to coach a group of individuals by reviewing the presentation and documents in my free time prior to coaching the participants. I wanted to make sure everything flowed smoothly and effortless. Furthermore, I wrote up the findings of the study showing my ability to think about thinking – thinking critically.

Willingness to Learn

The theme of willingness to learn emerged based on participants' responses. For instance, Helen felt that even adults should learn new things on a daily basis. Mallory was a graduate student, showing her drive to increase her knowledge. Stephanie indicated that she was up for the challenge of learning how to enhance critical thinking skills among her students. All of the participants received the learning well. These adult learners had a passion for learning moving towards success in their profession.

Findings revealed that participants defined critical thinking; however, they needed to improve the application of the definition. For example, "What does it mean when you say critical thinking is analyzing the text and forming opinions?" Participants could not articulate teaching practices to demonstrate "analyzing the text and forming an opinion." In addition, participants understood the importance of questioning to enhance critical thinking. The participants identified questioning as a method that could be used to teach critical thinking; however, they differed in their view of question formats. While all three participants required coaching, Mallory and Stephanie needed more support to understand the impact questioning had on critical thinking.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, *What considerations should be made in coaching teachers to implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?* The implementation of Socratic Seminars was a new methodology for all three participants. The participants were not familiar with the practice and did not know how to implement it with their students. All three participants lacked knowledge of Socratic Seminars prior to coaching. When asked, "What do you know about Socratic Seminars?" participants could not explain the methodology. I coached the participants on how to incorporate Socratic Seminars through the use of social studies text. To do this, study participants engaged in two coaching sessions facilitated by the researcher to gain a clear understanding of critical thinking and to develop proficiency in conducting Socratic Seminars. In this section, I paint the picture of the coaching sessions and discuss the themes that emerged.

Coaching Process

In order to build a coaching relationship, I started by considering the misconceptions the teachers had about critical thinking. I listened to the participants as they explained their thoughts

of critical thinking. I was careful not to judge the participants based on their current knowledge. In developing the coaching sessions, I made the participants feel valued as they shared their expertise.

The First Coaching Session. Prior to coaching the participants, I created an agenda, a PowerPoint presentation with all of the questions, articles, key information, etc. embedded to present the information in an organized manner. Appendix H contains the first coaching agenda. I included a slide about the democratic origins of Socratic Seminar and a summation of the research that supports the usage in school. For example, research suggests more opportunities for students to ask and answer open-ended questions (Yen-ju Hou, 2018).

Secondly, I created a list of questions to get buy-in from the participants. I used these questions as participants entered the coaching environment. Mallory was the first one to enter the room. I asked her, "What are your areas for growth?" This question was asked of Mallory to engage in conversation with her and to learn more information about her as an individual. I wanted the participants to know that I valued their thoughts and that I was there to listen. Table 5 of the coaching plan pinpoints the other questions asked as participants entered the room. I asked different questions to each of the three participants. The participants entered the coaching room at different times, so I was able to address each individual separately – engaging in conversation with them one-on-one. I obtained participants' permission to audio record all coaching sessions. During our coaching encounter, I maintained a professional demeanor and demonstrated my knowledge of Socratic Seminar, critical thinking, and coaching. To gain the participants' trust, I explained that our conversations were confidential. Additionally, I listened attentively whenever the participants spoke and asked their permission to coach them thus earning their trust.

Next, I reviewed the slides in the PowerPoint to explain critical thinking and Socratic Seminars and showed a brief video of the implementation of Socratic Seminars. I explained that Socratic Seminars originated from the works of Socrates who believed in thoughtful questioning. This explanation involved me talking to the participants. The session continued with me reviewing research that supports critical thinking and Socratic Seminars. For example, I provided research by Duron et al. (2016) indicating that the idea of lecturing to build critical thinking skills is unsuccessful. The learning environment is student-centered with the students constructing their own knowledge. Research proved students need opportunities to reflect and actively do something with academic content read (Duron et al., 2006). The next activity entailed the procedures of Socratic Seminars, followed by a short video clip of Socratic Seminars. Participants viewed a video titled "Third Grade Socratic Seminar" found on Teacher Tube. The portion of the video played was from 6:28 to 11:31. The identifiable video number is 426396. Throughout the PowerPoint and at the end of the video, I asked the participants questions and some of the participants had questions. Helen volunteered to write the questions on chart paper whenever participants asked a question. For example, one participant asked, "Does critical thinking require my students to use deductive or inductive reasoning or both?" Participants determined that critical thinking can be deductive or inductive thinking. This question opened the floor for discussion and led into the next portion of the coaching session – modeling.

I asked the participants to form a circle. I served as the facilitator, and they served as the students. This was my way of modeling how to implement Socratic Seminars. In modeling the implementation of Socratic Seminars, participants were asked to read "A Crooked Election," a short reading passage (Appendix I). The article was a quick read, so participants read the text during the coaching session. The opening question posed to the participants was, "Can you

expand on the reason why the election and the people involved in it are crooked?" From there, participants dialogued and asked additional questions. As the facilitator and researcher, I allowed the participants to dialogue removing myself from the conversation. I interjected on two occasions –to remind participants to cite evidence from the text and to remind participants to ask open ended questions.

At the conclusion of the coaching session, I explained the expectations for implementing Socratic Seminars in the participants' classrooms in the area of social studies. The expectation was that participants would have implemented Socratic Seminars at least three times prior to our next coaching session. I allowed the participants to ask any questions they had. Each of them took a picture of the sample questions posted on chart paper. I gave them sample questions to use as a reference in their classrooms. Appendix J contains the sample questions. Participants gained a keen understanding of Socratic Seminars based on the video and modeling that took place during the coaching session. Finally, I discussed next steps including our next meeting date and stopped the recording. I provided ongoing support and feedback to participants as needed. I transcribed the recording, uploaded the document in Atlas.ti, and determined the codes, categories, and themes for research question 2.

Pre-Coaching Planning	▪ Develop a PowerPoint presentation
	o Title of study
	o A brief overview of the study
	o Purpose of the study
	o Buy-in Questions
	o Confidentiality statement
	o Permission to be coached
	o Democratic origins of Socratic Seminar
	o Summary of research supporting Socratic Seminars
	o Socratic Seminar procedures
	o A short video of Socratic Seminars

	○ Review of Socratic Seminar steps ○ Sample questions - Practice reviewing the PowerPoint to gain confidence and knowledge of the presentation - Be prepared to voice record the session
Getting buy-in from participants	- Ask participants about themselves using about two of the following questions: ○ What do you enjoy the most about teaching? **(Helen)** ○ What do you need from me as a coach? **(Helen)** ○ What are your strengths as an educator? **(Mallory)** ○ What are your areas for growth? **(Mallory)** ○ How do you feel you learn best? **(Stephanie)** ○ Give me an example of a powerful learning experience you have had as an adult. **(Stephanie)** - Have knowledge about the information presented
Recording of Session	Ask permission to record the coaching session
Developing Trust	- Reiterate the confidentiality of the conversations - Actively listen to what participants are saying - Ask permission of the participants to be coached
Coaching Session	- Present the PowerPoint - Record questions asked on chart paper - Video of Socratic Seminar in a classroom - Model Socratic Seminars - Explain practices that participants will implement in their classroom (at least 3 Socratic Seminars with students prior to the next meeting) - Discuss next steps/meeting date
Coach's Reflection	Reflective practice

	o What went well? o What could I improve? ▪ Provide support to participants by checking in with them
Data Analysis	▪ Transcription ▪ Upload to data analysis software ▪ Look for codes ▪ Identify categories ▪ Determine themes/subthemes

Table 5: *Overview of Coaching Plan*

The Second Coaching Session. After the first coaching session, I tasked the participants

with facilitating at least three Socratic Seminars in their classroom prior to the next coaching

session. Appendix K outlines the second agenda. A second coaching session occurred three

weeks later. The PowerPoint reviewed the steps of Socratic Seminars. I began the coaching

session by asking participants to explain how the Socratic Seminars went. Other questions posed

at the beginning of coaching session 2 were What worked well? and What can be improved? I

listened to the information provided by the participants. Now that the participants were familiar

with Socratic Seminars, we engaged in a second modeling to ensure everyone had a keen

understanding of the method. To avoid putting too much pressure on the participants, we used

the same article from the first coaching session, "A Crooked Election." I removed myself from

the Socratic Seminar and allowed participants to dialogue with each other. This time the seminar

flowed, and participants knew exactly what to do. Once the conversation began to slow down, I

stopped the seminar to proceed with coaching. The final coaching activity participants took part

in was working collaboratively to plan questions and instruction for the final three Socratic

Seminar sessions they would implement with their students.

Helen. Helen provided examples and explanations of one of the Socratic Seminar

sessions in which students engaged in her classroom. "I used an article titled '7 Epic Fails

Brought to You by the Genius Mind of Thomas Edison.' Students silently read the article at the

beginning of class. I posed the initial question asking How did Edison's invention of the electric light bulb and phonograph affect American life at the turn of the century? I was relieved hearing students provide thought-provoking responses and referring to the article for textual evidence. Some of them even made personal connections with the text and question." Helen discovered her own learning during coaching when she pointed out the fact that higher order questioning was indeed necessary for Socratic Seminars.

Mallory. Mallory indicated that her students engaged in Socratic Seminars as active participants. Her perception was it had been a while since she last saw students actively learning and engaging in social studies content. For example, Johnny (pseudonym), always had difficulty focusing in class, actively listened to and engaged in the dialogue. Mallory continued emphasizing that this was a huge accomplishment seeing students respond to Socratic Seminars in the same manner as Johnny. When asked *What worked well?* Mallory stated, "The agreements and disagreements the students had based on textual evidence went well. Students were able to justify their thinking as they wanted others to agree with their viewpoints. It took the third time before this happened. You know how the saying goes…practice makes perfect." Mallory's experience demonstrated how coaching requires lots of practice. One concern mentioned by Mallory was not being prepared with questions to ask in case students get quiet. To offer support, we examined the next standard she was teaching and helped her compile a list of higher order questions.

Stephanie. Stephanie explained that her students really enjoyed dialoguing with their peers. The question What can be improved? led to participants feeling concerned. They wanted everything to go well and did not want to dwell on the negative. Stephanie finally said "time" and the other two participants chimed in. Participants felt as though they needed more time to

successfully implement Socratic Seminars. Stephanie stated that she felt rushed and stressed to get test preparation and Socratic Seminars complete. She wished she had more time to implement Socratic Seminars. With pressure to "test prep," Stephanie expressed having to condense the amount of time students engaged in Socratic Seminars. Based on the experience shared by Stephanie, I provided feedback to her. The feedback included using half of the social studies block to implement Socratic Seminars and the other half to review for state assessments.

When asked, "What are some opening questions you used during Socratic Seminars?" participants responded accordingly. The questions they stated were not centered around a single topic but were questions they had used in general. Helen and Stephanie taught the same grade level, so they collaborated outside of the coaching sessions to plan instruction. Some of their questions mirrored each other. Table 6 outlines the standards related to the opening questions and opening questions participants asked during Socratic Seminar implementation with their students. Coaching worked within this context as participants reviewed grade level standards and formed opening questions based on the content taught.

Participants	Standards	Opening Questions Used
Helen	▪ SS5H1 Describe how life changed in America at the turn of the century. (b) Describe the impact on American life of the Wright brothers (flight), George Washington Carver (science), Alexander Graham Bell (communication), and Thomas Edison (electricity). ▪ SS5E3 Describe how consumers and producers interact in the U. S. economy.	▪ Why is electricity important in our daily lives? ▪ How would everyday life be different without electricity? ▪ Why is it important that the price for a good is competitive?
Mallory	▪ SS4H1 Explain the causes, events, and results of the American Revolution. (b) Describe the	▪ What is your opinion of Paul Revere?

	influence of key individuals and groups during the American Revolution: King George III, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Benedict Arnold, Patrick Henry, John Adams, Paul Revere, and Black regiments.	▪ Can you propose an alternative to Paul Revere's ride? ▪ How did Paul Revere impact American history?
Stephanie	▪ SS5H1 Describe how life changed in America at the turn of the century. (b) Describe the impact on American life of the Wright brothers (flight), George Washington Carver (science), Alexander Graham Bell (communication), and Thomas Edison (electricity).	▪ Why is electricity important in our daily lives? ▪ How would everyday life be different without electricity? ▪ What is significant about Thomas Edison? ▪ If you could invent anything you wanted to make life easier, what would it be?

Table 6: *Standards and Opening Questions Asked During Socratic Seminars*

The opening questions were higher order thinking questions needed for the successful implementation of Socratic Seminars. In my opinion, the opening questions required students to think critically as there was not a single correct answer to the questions. We want to ask questions that may have multiple answers. The participants asked opening questions that required analyzing the text and justifying their thinking. Through higher order questions, students can respectfully agree or disagree with their peers. This teaches them social responsibility. According to the literature on Socratic Seminars, Socratic questioning encourages citizenship (Eisen, 2007; Nussbaum, 2010). These questions were open ended which is the goal of Socratic questioning. Furthermore, Socratic questioning improves cognition (Zare & Mukundan, 2015).

From participants' conversations, a shift in dispositions occurred. Participants realized they needed to give students more opportunities to answer questions that required more than one correct answer which in turn enhances students' critical thinking skills. This addressed the previous misconception that open ended questions did not enhance critical thinking. Socratic Seminars allowed students to formulate their own beliefs and ideas without hearing the teachers' perspectives; as Stephanie put it, "Students had to listen to other alternatives based on the text allowing them to internalize learning." This is important as we want students to become democratic citizens. Allowing students to formulate their own beliefs and ideas, they do not just believe what they hear or what someone says. Instead, they are critical thinkers questioning the world around them. Reading social studies content provided a basis for students being able to reason. Their interpretation of the text required thought-provoking discussions to support their viewpoints. "The habits and attitudes of democracy" are learned "by engaging in civic activities" (Graham & Weingarten, 2018, p. 7). Thought-provoking discussions are one way to encourage civic education.

Meanwhile, as the researcher, I transcribed the recording, uploaded the document in Atlas.ti, and determined the codes, categories, and themes for research question 2. Table 7 presents the themes and sub-themes generated from the participants' responses including the corresponding interview questions, questionnaire questions, and focus group questions.

Research Question	Interview Questions (IQ) Questionnaire (Q) Focus Group Questions (FG)	Themes/Subthemes
RQ 2: What considerations should be made in coaching teachers to implement Socratic Seminars in	IQ 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Q 3, 4, 7 FG 3, 5, 10	Instructional Coaching ▪ Collaborating ▪ Questioning

elementary social studies classrooms?		- Listening - Modeling Self-Directed Learning - Experience - Self-Reflecting

Table 7: *Themes Generated from Research Question 2 and Corresponding Questions*

From participants' dispositions and coaching, some common themes emerged. Several themes characterized teachers' perceptions of coaching towards implementing Socratic Seminars in the elementary classroom – instructional coaching and self-directed learning. The subthemes – collaborating, questioning, listening, and modeling proved to be effective coaching strategies used with the participants. Experience and self-reflecting were two subthemes that emerged during coaching. I will now take a closer look at the themes that informed the coaching sessions.

Instructional Coaching

I took on the role of coach seeking to change participant's behaviors, "as an expert" of Socratic Seminars, sharing my "expertise" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 21). In order to coach others, I had to know the ins and outs of the strategy. I was able to speak on Socratic Seminars and answer participants' questions. Effective coaching "requires intention, a plan, and a lot of practice; it requires a knowledge of adult learning theory and an understanding of systems and communication" (Aguilar, 2013, p. xii). I shared and modeled how to implement Socratic Seminars in social studies instruction. My plan included gathering participant's prior knowledge from our buy-in conversation, guiding them to construct their own knowledge during the PowerPoint presentation, and modeling Socratic Seminars with participants taking on the role of students. Additionally, my plan involved listening to the participants while gaining their trust,

ensuring they were able to incorporate Socratic Seminars in their classrooms, and allowing them to reflect on their practices. "Coaching can build will, skill, knowledge, and capacity because it can go where no other professional development has gone before: into the intellect, behaviors, practices, beliefs, values, and feelings of an educator" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 8). The knowledge and feelings of the participants were indeed a direct indication of effective coaching.

As a researcher and coach, I learned alongside the participants. This experience opened my eyes as it relates to being unbiased. For instance, I had perceptions of critical thinking; however, I could not impart my thinking on the participants. I allowed them to form their own thoughts, which is the case with Socratic Seminars. We want students to form their own opinions and make rational decisions. Similarly, I needed the participants to share their views based on their experiences and knowledge. From my role as researcher and coach, I witnessed the importance of collaborating, questioning, listening, and modeling. I continue this section explaining the relevance of these sub-themes to the study.

Collaborating. Collaboration seemed to be a key factor in coaching success. Participants felt as though collaboration allowed them to be coachable in the implementation of Socratic Seminars. Learning occurred in this "collaborative context for a…wide-scale transformation of professional practice" (Burley & Pomphrey, 2011, p. 125). I coached the participants, and we collaborated. Throughout the coaching process, I was able to gain the participants' trust resulting in them feeling comfortable during the collaborative efforts. Participants served as students in the learning process. There were times the participants had to engage in activities and collaborate with their colleagues. For example, participants had to work as a team to create a list of ten open-ended questions as one of the activities during the second coaching session. Mallory stated, "I find it easier to learn something new when I can collaborate with others. Two heads are better

than one." Participants' responses showed that collaboration played a factor in coaching as outlined in Table 8.

Participants	Responses
Helen	When we collaborate, I feel less overwhelmed. It takes a load off when we work together to get the job done.
Mallory	I am all for team effort. If we want to see our students excel, it requires a collaborative effort. At the end of the day, it's all about the students and what's best for them.
Stephanie	Sometimes I like to work alone, but I'm not as stressed when I can talk it through with other people.

Table 8: *Responses Demonstrating a Need for Collaboration During the Coaching Process*

The sharing of the Socratic Seminar strategy revealed positive morale and camaraderie in this collaborative environment. According to a study of National Board certified teachers, professional learning allows for collaboration among teachers and administrators and is effective (Sato et al., 2014). Collaboration requires engaging in dialogue, thus making professional learning effective. The participants received shoulder-to-shoulder support from the coach building a learning platform among the participants thus building trust. Professional learning often fails because teachers aren't listened to. They are told what to do and talked at – instead of listened to. Menninger explained, "When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand" (as cited in Aguilar, 2013, p. 148). By listening deeply to the participants, I made them feel acknowledged and validated.

Questioning. Developing and asking good questions is critical for successful Socratic Seminars (Elder & Paul, 2008; Nappi, 2017). Good questions are those that are open-ended, encouraging a thought-provoking response. For example, the question "How would living in America be different today if women were not allowed to vote?" required a thought-provoking answer. This question also promotes democratic citizenship as students listen to the viewpoints

of others. Moreover, the training sessions provided a space for teachers to ask questions, which proved to be important in promoting their buy-in and understanding of Socratic Seminars. I coached participants on the use of questioning. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions and provide their insight as to the types of questions they needed to ask during Socratic Seminars.

During the first coaching sessions, I modeled Socratic Seminars for the participants. They explored the text "A Crooked Election" found at ReadWorks.org. I selected this text due to me wanting a topic in which adult learners could relate. I served as the facilitator during the modeling of Socratic Seminars. Appendix I outlines the article, "A Crooked Election." One of the questions posed was "Can you expand on the reason why the election and the people involved in it are crooked?" My considerations in choosing this question were to show participants that they needed to ask students open ended questions and questions that will address different beliefs. Table 9 provides a complete list of questions used during coaching. Not only did participants use questioning to practice Socratic Seminars, but they also used questioning to gain clarity of the strategy. For example, once I modeled the strategy, Mallory asked "How should I proceed when students can't think of questions to ask? You know – like when there is silence for a period of time" (Mallory, personal communication, March 18, 2019). The participants saw that it is vital to have a list of questions before implementing Socratic Seminars. These questions should be directly related to the text. Stephanie pointed out, "It seems like we should be asking higher order thinking questions" (Stephanie, personal communication, March 18, 2019). Right then, it was like that ah-ha moment for the participants. Stephanie's insight was valuable because higher order, open ended questions is exactly the basis of Socratic Seminars.

By allowing the participants to discover the notion of higher order questions, they discovered their own learning, in turn thinking critically themselves. The participants were indeed practicing Socratic Seminars through this firsthand experience. This helped participants ask good questions which they can transfer into their learning environments. They constructed their own learning having a more profound impact on their professional practice. The participants have more buy-in when they feel supported. As you can see, coaching was effective through questioning in clarifying participants' misconceptions and addressing any questions or concerns participants had before implementation. I allowed participants who had questions after the coaching session to contact me for further clarification. For example, Helen wanted to know how do you handle students who do not participate in Socratic Seminars. My response was to think of an incentive to encourage participation, such as extra computer time, have lunch with the teacher, or treats.

Questions Used During Coaching Based on the Article "A Crooked Election"
▪ What changes do you think Kelly could have made in the running for class president?
▪ What is another way Trent and Boyd could have made money for their families?
▪ Can you expand on the reason why the election and the people involved in it are crooked?
▪ Why do you think the debate between Roger and Kelly turned out victorious for Kelly?
▪ What could Roger have done differently?
▪ If you were running for class president, what would you do differently? What would you do the same as Roger or Kelly?

> - How would you compare Roger and Kelly?
>
> - What conclusions can you make about Roger? What conclusions can you make about the Harrison brothers?

Table 9: *"A Crooked Election" Socratic Seminar Questions*

Findings revealed that participants needed opportunities to ask questions, receive timely feedback and needed to feel supported when implementing new initiatives. Doing so allowed the participants to implement the strategy successfully resulting in a seamless process. I provided the participants with a list of sample questions to use during Socratic Seminars. I also used some of the same questions during modeling and some of the same questions posed during coaching. I determined that the participants needed practice engaging their students in rigorous thinking through the use of higher order questioning.

Listening. Participants identified listening as a crucial means of being coached in implementing Socratic Seminars in social studies. To be successful in the implementation, they had to actively listen to me, the coach. Likewise, I had to listen attentively to the participants as well. Like questioning, listening was also critical during the modeling of Socratic Seminars. Participants had to listen to the person speaking at the moment, so they would be able to chime in when it was their turn to respond to dialogue related to "A Crooked Election." Additionally, the participants had to express the need for active listening to their students when implementing Socratic Seminars in the classroom. "Active listening is a strategy for a speaker to convey that she's listening, and also to ensure that she hears precisely what the other person wants to share" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 153). Table 10 outlines participants' responses to the impact of listening have in coaching.

Participants	Responses
Helen	I can tell by someone's body language whether or not they are listening to what I'm saying. Nonverbal cues speak volumes.
Mallory	Someone is coachable if they are one who listens.
Stephanie	Listening is important if you want to learn what is being taught or presented to you.

Table 10: *Participants' Responses: Impact of Listening*

Findings revealed the participants actively listened during coaching. First and foremost, I – as the coach – had to listen to the participants, just as participants had to listen to their students. My listening involved using nonverbal cues to show that I was indeed paying attention to the speaker. The participants knew they had my undivided attention, and they exposed "juicer, more important information" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 150). They were able to take what they learned and successfully utilize it with their students. During the collecting of data, participants explained how they had to discuss the importance of listening with their students for Socratic Seminars to be effective. Listening is important for teaching adults making them feel heard and like their opinions are valued. When coaching adults, "we return to these stories, our clients feel heard and validated" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 152). Furthermore, listening is an important component of citizenship. We do an excellent job of voicing our opinions, but when it comes to listening to others do we really "hear" what they are saying. We all want others to listen to us, but how often do we listen to them.

Modeling. To ensure the participants were confident in implementing Socratic Seminars, the coach modeled the strategy with the participants taking on the role of "students." As an instructive coach, modeling lessons is vital. As the researcher and coach, modeling helped the participants learn firsthand what I required of them. Participants felt it would be helpful if the strategy was modeled prior to implementation. They used modeling in their classrooms with their

students showing commonalities between the coaching sessions and their teaching practices. "What we model is determined in agreement with the client" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 221). Participants benefited from their hands-on involvement in Socratic Seminars. In turn, they applied the learning in their classrooms with students.

Self-Directed Learning

The adult learning theory of self-directed learning occurred in this study. Participants took the initiative in the planning of their social studies instruction. Sample higher order questions were composed as a team. Being that two different grade levels participated in the study, Appendix J contains a list of generic Socratic Seminar questions. Participants contributed to the learning process while engaging in the coaching sessions. Knowles (1975) points out learning among adults is self-directed. During coaching, participants took charge of their learning as they served as students learning about Socratic Seminars. Furthermore, the participants volunteered to take part in the study showing self-directed learning.

Experience. The coaching sessions allowed participants to experience Socratic Seminars firsthand. Initially, participants lacked a thorough understanding of how to implement critical thinking in classrooms. The coaching sessions gave participants an exclusive understanding of Socratic Seminars related to improving students' critical thinking skills. Participants engaged in Socratic Seminars and asked questions during the process. This experience allowed them to fully understand Socratic Seminars, so they can be successful in their efforts with students.

Self-reflecting. Optional journal entries allowed participants to expound upon the coaching sessions and implementation of Socratic Seminars. The use of journal entries provided opportunities for the participants to self-reflect as they put theory into practice (Corley, 2011).

To show that self-reflecting played a factor in coaching participants' responses, Table 11 outlines these responses along with the number of journal entries submitted per participant.

Participants	Responses	Number of Journal Entries Submitted
Helen	I'm still learning how to effectively implement Socratic Seminars, so it's best that I not coach others at this time. Maybe down the road, I will be able to. I want to start the school year using the strategy with my students so I can be more confident. Then I can coach others.	2
Mallory	The students were hesitant and required me to ask them questions in order for me to hear them talk. I think I need a redo of my first time using Socratic Seminars. I have to be more explicit in my directions.	3
Stephanie	I had to continuously stop the dialogue to reinforce vocabulary. My first time implementing the strategy seemed ineffective due to the lack of vocabulary. The next time I will use a shorter or easier passage so the focus can be on the strategy itself.	2

Table 11: *Participants' Perceptions of Self-Reflecting & Number of Journal Entries Submitted*

Helen. "As I self-reflect, I wish we could have started this at the beginning of the school year instead of the end of the year," explained Helen. "It was good to have someone that you can call on anytime to coach you through the process. Sometimes we attend professional learning, and then we are thrown to the wolves with no one there to support us or answer our questions." Helen expressed, "Oftentimes, we have a one day professional development training on something and expected to implement it in our classrooms the next day with no kind of support to ensure it's done with fidelity. I see now the difference collaboration can have on the implementation of a new teaching practice. It's very beneficial leading to more successful teacher development."

Mallory. Coaching helped Mallory learn how to implement Socratic Seminars in her social studies classroom through collaborative efforts. "Implementing the same strategy as other teachers in my building allowed me to collaborate with my colleagues since we all participated in the same professional learning. I'm glad I chose to take part in this study. It has really helped shed light on my thinking."

Stephanie. Coaching impacted Stephanie's professional practices through active listening and effective questioning during coaching. "We need coaching on a regular basis. I wish the higher-ups would see the benefits of coaching to help novice teachers like myself."

Considerations should be made in coaching teachers to implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms. Through self-reflecting, the participants were transparent in sharing their thoughts, strengths, and weaknesses. The study revealed that participants did not feel confident coaching other teachers on the use of Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms. Reasons for this lack of confidence included needing more practice implementing Socratic Seminars with students and not feeling comfortable presenting to other teachers on any topic.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked *How does receiving coaching in social studies change teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking?* Participants engaged in two formal, sit down coaching sessions with the researcher, during which they learned about Socratic Seminars and its impact on critical thinking skills. To analyze how teachers' dispositions changed, questionnaires and interviews took place before the strategy was explained and after coaching and implementation.

The next section of this chapter outlines how participants' dispositions changed due to receiving coaching.

Helen. Helen later defined critical thinking as "taking information and making a reasonable judgment based on the information received." Helen appeared excited each time she entered the coaching environment, interview, or focus group interviews. Her bubbly personality brought sunshine to any room. Due to her passion for teaching, she gained knowledge and immediately incorporated it into her classroom. Her students took pride in knowing their teacher always sought ways to make learning fun and enjoyable. Helen attributed the coaching relationship to her success with Socratic Seminars.

Mallory. "Critical thinking is thinking deeply and analyzing possible solutions to problems." Mallory taught two blocks of social studies to fourth grade students. Her calm spirit seemed to rub off on her students as she mentioned that the Socratic Seminars were not chaotic. Students waited their turn to talk and showed respect towards one another. When asked about the effectiveness of the coaching sessions, Mallory stated, "I never thought critical thinking could be enhanced using questioning. Now I know differently."

Stephanie. Stephanie defined critical thinking as "rigorous content that challenges students to grow. Students can think and make connections, solve problems on their own." Stephanie pointed out she had never attended professional learning that resulted in someone giving her feedback and being available to answer her questions well after the professional learning session ended. Her disposition proved that coaching is necessary to effectively and efficiently implement new teaching practices. When asked about the effectiveness of the coaching sessions, Stephanie felt coaching positively impacted her professional knowledge as it relates to critical thinking and Socratic Seminars. Professional learning provides the knowledge

and teaching practices needed for teacher's professional growth (Wood et al., 2016). Stephanie explained that she gained knowledge that she can apply in her classroom beyond the study. While she did not feel comfortable coaching other teachers, she felt that she could share Socratic Seminars with her grade level team. Coaching proved effective for Stephanie. Her response was, "I think I enjoyed Socratic Seminars more than my students. I will definitely add Socratic Seminars to my teaching toolkit."

Based on participants' responses, common themes emerged. The themes of teachers' dispositions and relinquishing authority pinpoint the change in dispositions toward critical thinking. Table 12 presents the themes generated from the participants' responses and the corresponding interview questions, questionnaire questions, and focus group questions. In the next section, I provide evidence to support the impact these themes had on the study.

Research Question	Interview Questions (IQ) Questionnaire (Q) Focus Group Questions (FG)	Themes/Sub-Themes
RQ 3: How does receiving coaching in social studies change teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking?	IQ 7, 10, 11 Q 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 FG 6, 9	Teachers' Dispositions ▪ Critical Thinking ▪ Application of Critical Thinking Relinquishing Authority ▪ Benefit to Students ▪ Student Inquiry

Table 12: *Themes Generated from Research Question 3 and Corresponding Questions*

Teachers' Dispositions

Participants' temperament changed dramatically from the beginning to the ending of the study. In the beginning, participants appeared skeptical as it related to critical thinking. This

uncertainty resulted from participants thinking that worksheets and lower level questioning led to an increase in students' critical thinking abilities. The participants gained a thorough understanding of Socratic Seminars and were able to witness the impact it had on dialogue, not just in their classrooms but also in coaching environments. Decisively, participants' dispositions shifted after the first coaching session. For instance, Stephanie pointed out she had never attended professional learning that resulted in someone giving her feedback and being available to answer her questions well after the professional learning session ended. Her disposition proved that coaching is necessary to effectively and efficiently implement new teaching practices.

Critical Thinking. As stated in the introduction, critical thinking is an ability to reason, analyze, and evaluate to transform knowledge. Students can take charge of their thinking and learn independently in doing so (Berliner, 2009; NCSS, 2015; Paul & Elder, 1997). Based on the participants' initial perceptions of critical thinking, they failed to mention transforming students' knowledge and independent learning. At the conclusion of the study, participants gave their definitions of critical thinking. Findings revealed a more thoughtful definition from all three participants by the end of the study. Helen went from critical thinking justifying your thinking to being able to make judgments based on text. Mallory later learned that critical thinking included the ability to solve problems. In a democratic society, we want students who can solve world issues demonstrating their critical thinking skills. Additionally, Stephanie recognized the need for critical thinkers to solve problems. Participants gained an understanding that critical thinking is not the incorporation of a worksheet but strategies that require the transformation of knowledge through reasoning, analysis, and evaluating.

__Application of Critical Thinking.__ During the first interview with the participants, when asked how often they implement critical thinking strategies in their classroom, all participants stated they implement critical thinking in their classroom. "I would say I implement critical thinking activities in my classroom on a daily basis" (Helen, personal communication, April 8, 2019). "Everyday or every other day," stated Mallory (Personal communication, April 8, 2019). Stephanie stated, "Maybe once a week" (Personal communication, April 8, 2019). Participants felt as though they implemented critical thinking related strategies at some point during the course of the week. Table 13 outlines participants' dispositions of what critical thinking looks like in their classroom**.**

Participants	The Critical Thinking Look
Helen	Critical thinking looks like students engaging in academic discourse about a topic. This is done with the teacher and with their peers. It also looks like students working on a critical thinking worksheet.
Mallory	It looks like your level of rigor in the way you ask your questions. You want them to respond. It's thinking critically. It's higher order thinking.
Stephanie	Critical thinking looks like the teacher giving students a task to complete and the students working on it without much help from the teacher. For example, if I give students the task of researching the importance of the Vietnam War, they should be able to use evidence from their reading and knowledge to give their findings.

Table 13: *What Critical Thinking Looks Like in My Classroom*

Relinquishing Authority

Students have the power to engage in dialogue constructing their own knowledge. This does not give students the authority to "control" the class but gives them the authority to manage their beliefs and values. The teacher still has power of her class while students are involved in dialogue. The difference is students form their own opinion of a variety of topics, while the teacher facilitates learning making learning practical for students. Stephanie points out in her

journal entry, found in Appendix L, the importance of facilitating instruction. Stephanie stated, "I will only be taking on the role of the facilitator to make sure the seminar runs smoothly" (Stephanie, personal communication, April 16, 2019). Stephanie made it explicit to her students that she was a facilitator during the implementation of Socratic Seminars.

   Benefit to Students. The study revealed that coaching benefited students in the long run. Participants realized they had to relinquish authority during social studies and allow students to take charge of their own thinking (Berliner, 2009; NCSS, 2015; Paul & Elder, 1997). Stephanie explained her willingness to let go of her "control" and "power," so students could formulate their own opinions. She went on to explain that it may not be on state assessments, but this way of thinking will impact students in a positive manner in the real world. Moreover, students are tomorrow's leaders and deserve opportunities to dialogue regarding content and issues that may impact them in a democratic society.

   Student Inquiry. Using social studies text as the basis of discussions, allowed students to take on an investigative approach in learning. Students had to support their thinking with textual evidence. For example, the reading of a passage on the Civil War required students to provide evidence from the text when explaining the primary controversy of the war. Students could not just state their opinion. They had to analyze the text to find evidence to support their belief. In turn, this inquiry process fosters critical thinking.

   The findings revealed a number of factors regarding teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking. Teachers' dispositions changed as a result of coaching relationships. Seeing a change in how participants defined critical thinking from the beginning to the ending of the study further highlights this change. Additionally, teacher's dispositions transformed in how they approached the social studies content. Past teaching experiences had teachers standing in the front of the

class lecturing to elementary school students about topics such as the Great Depression, Bill of Rights, or the American Revolution. In this "sit and get" environment, teachers forced students to keep quiet and complete worksheets for grades. Findings indicated that students need opportunities to dialogue with their peers to make sense of social studies content.

Research Question 4

Research question 4 asked *What challenges do elementary teachers say that they encounter when employing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?* During the second interview, I asked participants to share any challenges they faced when administering Socratic Seminars in their social studies classrooms. The post-questionnaire went even further asking participants to explain how they overcame those challenges during the course of the study. Table 14 presents the themes generated from the participants' responses to interview questions, questionnaires, and focus group questions along with corresponding questions.

Research Question	Interview Questions (IQ) Questionnaire (Q) Focus Group Questions (FG)	Themes
RQ 4: What challenges do elementary teachers say that they encounter when employing Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms?	IQ 12 Q 5 FG 4	District Mandates ▪ Time Constraints ▪ Grading Requirements Students' Lack of Textual Understanding ▪ Lack of Participation ▪ Limited Vocabulary Acquisition ▪ Lower Level Questioning

Table 14: *Themes Generated from Participants' Responses to Research Question 4 and*

Corresponding Questions

The themes of district mandates and students' lack of textual understanding emerged

based on participants' responses. I discuss these themes in the following sections. I further

explain the subthemes – time constraints, grading requirements, lack of participation, limited

vocabulary acquisition, and lower level questioning.

District Mandates

Teachers are often frustrated by the state, local, and national mandates handed down to

them. Teachers have limited input regarding these mandates and must adhere to the required

mandates. The teachers at the focus school faced a similar issue. They were told to implement

"critical thinking" without any guidance or direction. This is why I decided to use Socratic

Seminar to provide teachers with a tangible method for implementing a critical thinking routine

in the classroom. Because of past issues with professional learning that devalues the expertise of

adult learners, I knew that I could not begin planning professional learning until I knew how the

teachers in my study felt.

Teachers may have two days to teach contributions of and challenges faced by Susan B.

Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman.

This example shows teachers' frustration with district mandates. Although students may or may

not have mastered the concept in two days, district mandates require teachers to stay on track

with pacing guides. Mallory contemplated whether or not she should continue focusing on test

prep instruction or if it was acceptable to implement Socratic Seminars. "What if my principal

comes in my classroom to observe my instruction?" she asked. This question speaks to the

overwhelming pressure on teachers to remain in compliance with mandates. Adhering to

mandates take away much needed time to focus on critical thinking, more specifically student dialogue. Teachers don't want to get in trouble by administrators and district leaders, so they stick to pacing guides and resources provided by the district.

Time Constraints. With pressures on the participants to prepare for upcoming state assessments, participants felt as though they did not have enough time to implement Socratic Seminars. In the fourth grade classroom, the participant indicated that the instructional focus was on reading and math. The two fifth grade participants' main focus was on teaching standards that had not been taught prior to state testing and re-teaching standards in which students had difficulty. The end of year state assessment assessed fifth grade students in all content areas. Helen even mentioned wanting to engage in the study at the beginning of the school year as opposed to the end of the school year.

Grading Requirements. The impeding factors of grade requirements posed a challenge for participants. With test preparation, it was already difficult to obtain the required two weekly grades. The school level expectation included teachers entering at least two grades per week in each content area for every student they taught. Teachers entered these grades in an electronic gradebook platform known as Infinite Campus. Teaching students a new strategy further complicated things making getting grades difficult. All three participants felt the need to issue worksheets just to get the grades they needed for the week.

Students' Lack of Textual Understanding

Participants indicated the challenge of students understanding the text. With Socratic Seminars, students have to be able to delve deep into the text, analyzing what they have read. Due to reading comprehension being an issue for some students, all three participants identified textual understanding as a challenge in implementing Socratic Seminars.

Lack of Participation. The lack of student participation by students posed a problem according to the study's participants. The first two Socratic Seminars involved the teachers modeling for students on how to engage in Socratic Seminars. As a result, Stephanie indicated that not all of her students participated in the first two seminars. Stephanie had to devise a plan to assign classroom grades based on the number of responses from individual students. Mallory explained, "I had two different social studies classes. My first class consisted of advanced leaders, and they participated with no hesitation. My second class was slow to participate, and I found myself constantly asking the questions. Even still, students just gave the bare minimum in their responses."

Limited Vocabulary Acquisition. All three participants noted vocabulary as an area of concern. When engaging in Socratic Seminars, some students, particularly English Language Learners and Department of Exceptional Students, lacked the vocabulary to engage in the discussions posing a concern for participants. "When asked how can not having a patent affect an inventor such as Alexander Graham Bell, several students stumbled over the question. After going back and forth about the same question, I determined that students did not know what was meant by the term 'patent'" (Helen, focus group, April 25, 2019). "I noticed that when students were reading they got stuck on words that they didn't know the meaning of" (Mallory, focus group, April 25, 2019). Mallory mentioned having to help students use context clues to determine word meaning. Stephanie was appalled when one student asked: "What's innovate?" Stephanie knew then that she had to stop the seminar to teach some important invention vocabulary words. She decided to have students write any word they did not know on a piece of chart paper. Before the Socratic Seminar started for the day, Stephanie allowed students to go to

the board and record any unfamiliar words. Stephanie addressed these words prior to the seminar.

Lower Level Questioning. Socratic Seminars require the asking of higher order questions. Higher order questions are those that do not require one correct answer. Helen observed her students asking yes/no types of questions, and she immediately addressed this concern. She went on to say, "Had we implemented the strategy at the beginning of the year, it would be easier to have the expectation of asking higher order thinking questions. Now that it's the end of the year, I found it difficult to get students to change their train of thoughts." Mallory was known for asking higher order questions consistently in her class. She did not notice her students asking lower level questions. In fact, some of the questions they asked had her stumped. However, Stephanie experienced similar challenges as Helen. Her students wanted to pose questions that were stated explicitly in the text. The lower level questions limited the amount of dialogue students can actually engage. This tells us that students need to be exposed to higher order thinking questions, as they are not automatically going to know how to ask them.

Findings revealed that elementary teachers encountered challenges when employing Socratic Seminars in social studies classrooms. When asked if they will implement Socratic Seminars in the future, all three participants indicated yes. As with any strategy, there will be bumps along the way and situations to overcome. It's a matter of persistence and determination when you see the results are favorable. In the case of Socratic Seminars, findings revealed more positive than negative. We must look at these challenges and tackle them one at a time. Our students are worth the fight.

Overarching Themes

Throughout the study, the words "coaching," "questioning," and "text evidence" were used repeatedly by participants. Therefore, coaching the coachable and thinking beyond the text were identified as underlying themes of the study.

Coaching the Coachable. Teachers needed more than basic professional learning opportunities. They required side by side coaching as they were willing to be coached. Each coaching session began with me asking participants if I have their permission to coach them. All three participants responded by saying yes, they were in agreement to being coached. It makes a huge difference when individuals are coachable. This means they are open to the suggestions, feedback, and support offered to them as they improve their teaching practices. They were willing to improve their practices and received feedback and support without hesitation.

Thinking Beyond the Text. How often do we encourage students to think beyond the text? How often are students allowed to challenge what someone else says, including the teacher? How often do students question their own beliefs and values? In our increasingly complex society, students need opportunities to analyze the text and engage in dialogue with their peers as they learn to express their views of the world around them.

Students need opportunities to do more than answer the "one right answer" type of questions. They need to be able to expound on what they have read and hear thoughts and beliefs of others, aside from hearing the teacher's opinions day in and day out. Engaging in complex and pertinent questions of this kind can encourage students to recognize their own and others' perspectives and communicate their positions clearly—two additional capacities that are especially important to today's global work teams. Coaching teachers on how to expose students to this type of dialogue rich learning environment is necessary. Thinking beyond the text encourages critical thinking and critical reading. Students need to hone these critical faculties to

be effective in a democratic system (Burns, Couto, & Becker, 1996). Students need opportunities to delve deeper into the text. This text analysis fosters critical thinking. As a result, effective coaching leads to students thinking beyond the text as recorded by teachers' dispositions.

Conclusion

This qualitative participatory action research included three participants who were elementary social studies teachers. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' dispositions, coaching considerations, and challenges of Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms as a means of increasing students' critical thinking skills. This chapter began with a reiteration of the research methods and statements of the themes. I examined the results associated with each research question.

Coaching and the implementation of Socratic Seminars were requirements of the study. I gauged participants' prior knowledge at the start of the study and again at the end of the study to determine the effectiveness of coaching. Modeling during coaching plays an important role in teachers' implementation efforts. Through coaching, participants practiced and questioned the learning of a new strategy. Based on the findings, participants gained knowledge of Socratic Seminars and critical thinking. Participants witnessed improvements in students' ability to question what they read in social studies and improvements in the responses to questions asked by their peers. Findings indicated that Socratic Seminars are an effective methodology to use in elementary social studies classrooms as a means of increasing critical thinking skills.

These findings might serve as a resource for district leaders and policymakers as they determine topics of professional learning and ways to increase student learning in the area of social studies. Professional learning should be meaningful (Mansilla & Jackson, n.d.). District

leaders may see the need to develop coaches as a resource for supporting teachers. The findings might also serve as a guide for teachers wishing to implement Socratic Seminars with their students. Teachers having a voice in strategies they wish to implement in their classrooms leads to buy-in and follow-through from teachers. Additionally, the findings might serve as a means to encourage student dialogue using social studies text fostering democratic socialization. In turn, Socratic Seminars lead to a democratic rich learning environment and ultimately student success.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings from the study. I explain implications, recommendations, limitations, and implications for future research. The purpose of this participatory action research was to conduct an in-depth investigation of teachers' dispositions of Socratic Seminars in order to positively impact elementary social studies classrooms with the goals of coaching teachers and developing students who are critical thinkers.

Discussion of Findings

In the next sections of this chapter, I discuss the findings along with supporting literature. There are four findings that correspond to the four research questions. Additionally, I expound upon the implications.

Finding 1: *The Road to Democratic Citizenship*

Critical thinking is essential, and students need to think critically for the sake of developing citizenship and the humanities as they thrive in a democratic society (Berliner, 2009; National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 2017; NCSS, 2016; NCSS, 2017; Weissberg, 2013). Teachers' perceptions of critical thinking mirrored this statement by the end of the study. The first research question sought to obtain teachers' dispositions of critical thinking in classrooms. Elementary teachers' perceptions of using Socratic Seminars to foster critical thinking in classrooms revealed positive outcomes at the conclusion of the study. Helen reiterated that students need opportunities to lead discussions and take accountability for their learning. She realized that students need opportunities to socialize with their peers as they discuss academic content. Thus, teachers made the connection between critical thinking and citizenship. The Socratic Seminar dialogues foster critical thinking as students reason, evaluate, and form their own judgments. Participants felt that Socratic Seminars did enhance students'

critical thinking abilities based on the dialogue heard by the teachers; however, none of the participants provided specific quotes made by the students. Participants believed Socratic Seminar is an effective teaching practice to use with elementary students, as it required students to engage in higher level questioning and dialogue.

Students develop critical thinking skills in social studies classrooms by analyzing and reasoning which allow them to contribute to society (Elder & Paul, 2008). During this study, students analyzed various texts selected by their classroom teachers. In analyzing the text, thought-provoking questions formed. These types of questions are the basis of Socratic Seminars – good questioning. "It proved that questioning is a viable and productive teaching strategy in promoting critical thinking of elementary students" (Rashid & Qaisar, 2016, p. 166). With favorable comments from participants, I determined that Socratic Seminars foster critical thinking in elementary social studies classrooms.

As a result of dialoguing with their peers, the students engaged in a democratic approach to learning. Students listened to one another and spoke one at a time during Socratic Seminars. As democratic citizens, students learn how to "respect one another, listen to one another, think critically together about common problems and issues, arrive at solutions to mutual problems creatively in a community setting, and work together in implementing those solutions" (Burns et al., 1996, p. 18). Democratic socialization occurs among students when they voice their thoughts and opinions.

These findings are consistent with the literature in that critical thinking can be enhanced through the use of Socratic Seminars. Educators and researchers agree that critical thinking is essential and that students need to think critically (Berliner, 2009; National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 2017; NCSS, 2016; NCSS, 2017; Weissberg, 2013). Studies

have found that dialogue fosters critical thinking (Cuny, 2014). Socratic Seminars use dialogue. "Socratic Seminars enable the entire class to engage in critical thinking at their own level" (Cuny, 2014, p. 58). Critical thinking is the foundation for "effective democratic citizenship and economic productivity" (Weissberg, 2013, p. 322).

Finding 2: *Effective Coaching Practices*

Coaching helps teachers implement Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms. Feedback from participants revealed the benefit of the coaching sessions. Participants gained knowledge that they could immediately implement in their classrooms. Through collaborating, questioning, listening, and modeling, I provided participants with a positive coaching relationship. Collaborative efforts involved working as a team to accomplish the goal of successful Socratic Seminar implementation. As the coach, participants needed my support throughout the professional learning experience. Asking a variety of questions and asking probing questions proved beneficial during the coaching relationship. As a coach, I actively listened to the participants. This type of listening is making eye contact, nodding in agreement, or even restating what was said. Participants also needed me to model the teaching practice in which they learned. I made myself readily available to offer honest feedback and support throughout the coaching relationship. When engaging in conversations, "coaches must be very patient and compassionate" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 164).

Participants expressed feeling a lack of confidence in coaching other teachers on the use of Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms. Participants indicated that they needed more practice implementing Socratic Seminars with their students before teaching it to someone else and that they had never presented to a group of teachers. As a result, participants can benefit from the continued implementation of Socratic Seminars.

Finding 3: *Coaching Changes Dispositions*

Coaching changed teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking. Participants indicated varying definitions from the beginning of the study to the ending of the study. While the wording of the pre and post definitions changed, it was not a significant change. Helen's definition of critical thinking prior to coaching was being able to justify your thinking about a topic. Her post-coaching definition of critical thinking was taking information and making a reasonable judgment based on the information received. Before coaching, Mallory defined critical thinking as having the ability to analyze information and making your own judgment or opinion. After coaching, she defined critical thinking as thinking deeply and analyzing possible solutions to problems. Stephanie's pre-coaching definition was being able to analyze a situation using evidence to form a claim or judgment. After coaching, Stephanie defined critical thinking as rigorous content that challenges students to grow and being able to think and make connections, solve problems on their own. Their dispositions changed in fully understanding that critical thinking involves students forming their own judgments.

Teachers' dispositions changed in the way teachers delivered content as modeled during the coaching relationship. Previously, students would open their textbooks to a page stated by the teacher. The teacher and student would read through the content, followed by the teacher discussing the text – doing most of the talking. Students would answer comprehension questions or complete a paper-pencil assignment for a grade. Students repeated this process of paper-pencil assignments day after day. After coaching and based on participants' input, the teacher served as a facilitator as students engaged in dialogue with their peers. Students read the text either for homework or at the beginning of the class period. They formed a circle to make eye contact with their peers. Students asked and answered questions providing evidence to support their claims.

Coaching enabled participants to glean knowledge and understanding and to improve their "intellect, behaviors, practices, beliefs, values, and feelings" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 8). As a result, dispositions changed due to teachers receiving coaching to enhance instructional practices.

Finding 4: *Overcoming Obstacles*

Elementary social studies teachers encountered challenges when employing Socratic Seminars. The challenges included adhering to district mandates and students' lack of textual understanding. District mandates of preparing for state assessments led to participants feeling they did not have sufficient time to implement Socratic Seminars as they wanted. Participants felt rushed during Socratic Seminars. Stephanie mentioned, "If it's not on the test, why are we teaching it?" It's not that she felt this way, but this is what she had heard from other educators. Each of the participants expressed having to make time to utilize the test prep materials. This focus on testing and testing culture proved to be an obstacle for the participants. In a testing-intensive culture, there is little room for discussion and critical thinking that are hallmarks of Socratic pedagogy. American politicians call for schools to assist students in developing citizenship and the humanities (Berliner, 2009; Nussbaum, 2010). Students were not comprehending what they read posed a problem due to students not being able to engross in the dialogue. Participants realized that scaffolding was necessary to overcome the challenge of students lacking an understanding of the text with some students having limited prior knowledge of the content. Furthermore, participants addressed the challenge of time constraints. Stanley (2017) also saw time constraints as a challenge when effectively engaging in critical thinking methods.

According to participants, students had difficulty asking higher order questions. They wanted to chime in the discussions by asking questions that required a yes/no answer or

questions that had answers explicitly stated in the text. This challenge would require ongoing practice in which students and teachers practice asking and answering open-ended questions – and consistently.

The challenges addressed by participants are rectifiable with continued persistence and passion for improving knowledge.

Implications

The findings of the study are important for several reasons. First, the findings allowed participants to share their dispositions of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars. Teachers do not always get to provide their insight on topics during the implementation of new initiatives. This study provided an opportunity for participants to voice their opinions. Next, the findings revealed the impact coaching had on the initiation of new teaching practices. This is important for district leaders and policymakers wishing to implement new practices. They recognize the value and positive influence coaching provides, instead of leaving teachers alone to figure out new initiatives. The findings are also important as teachers learn new ways to foster a democratic learning environment in which students have opportunities to question the world around them dialoguing with their peers. Finally, the findings are important for future researchers who may wish to repeat this study or add to this existing literature.

These implications contribute to teaching leadership, social studies, and literature on Socratic Seminars. Teaching and learning are improved as teachers take charge of their learning growing professionally in the process. Self-directed learners take the initiative for their own learning as they seek to improve their teaching practices. Adults need opportunities to be involved in the planning and evaluation of classroom instruction (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). As a teacher leader, contributions are made in the field of education as I took on the role

of a teacher leader. It allowed me to be a change agent and help others improve their teaching

and learning. The implications also allowed me to develop and hone my craft of coaching

teachers, learning alongside the teachers. For instance, I learned that everyone does not teach the

way I teach. I believe in giving students hands-on learning experiences and allowing them to

engage in dialogue with their peers. Whereas, other teachers may encourage silence in their

classrooms.

The implications contribute to the area of social studies by preparing students to become

democratic citizens. "Elementary social studies should include civic engagement, as well as

knowledge from the core content areas of civics, economics, geography, and history" (NCSS,

2017, p. 1). In these areas, students can ask compelling questions about the world around them

(NCSS, 2017). Social studies enables students to make informed decisions regarding world

issues (NCSS, 2016). Furthermore, the implications contribute to Socratic Seminars as it

includes additional literature for elementary social studies classrooms and fosters critical

thinking in classrooms. Alfonsi (2008) found Socratic Seminars to be a thought-provoking

approach in which students explore topics in-depth, thus preparing students for life.

In the following section, I provide concrete recommendations for those wishing to

implement Socratic Seminars in their classrooms.

Recommendations

Research-based advice is provided for those coaching teachers and for those wanting to

use Socratic Seminars in classrooms. The recommendations are:

- Ensure that students have read the text before engaging in Socratic Seminars.

- Have higher order thinking questions prepared in advance.

- Implement a system to ensure all students engage in the dialogue. For instance, each student has two popsicle sticks. As they ask or answer a question, they place the popsicle stick in the container in the center of the circle.

- Devise a rubric to distribute grades equitably to students.

Coaching Teachers. Recommendations for coaching teachers include transparency, modeling, building trust, active listening, and forming relationships. Be open and honest with participants at all times. Explain the purpose of the study without trying to cover up or hide information. Let them know that you all are in this together - working collaboratively. Model the practices you desire to use with the participants. Allow them to practice during the coaching sessions, so you can provide quality feedback and answer any questions they may have. Participants need to feel as though they can trust the coach. The recommendation is to consider the feelings and needs of the coachee. Actively listen to the coachee by acknowledging what he has to say. As the coach, nod your head in agreement or even reiterate what was said. In coaching teachers, forming relationships is also recommended. A successful coaching relationship involves the coach learning more about the coachee through a conversation initiated by the coach. "By implementing coaching as a practice for embedded, ongoing professional learning, schools and districts can take action to ensure high-quality support for both educators and students" (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016, p. 13).

Socratic Seminars. Recommendations for using Socratic Seminars include knowledge of higher order thinking questions, text analysis, academic discourse, and suspending judgments. The driving force behind Socratic Seminars is questioning. These questions must be open ended and require evidence from the reading. In analyzing the text, students provide their interpretation of what was read using it to form the basis of their thinking. Appendix M provides a step by step

guide for individuals wishing to implement Socratic Seminars in their classroom. The recommendation is that students engage in academic discourse using Socratic Seminars. Dialogue allows for socializing among students. In using Socratic Seminars, students suspend judgments and form beliefs based on all evidence presented. Students develop multiple perspectives based on the questions and responses during the seminars and have a deeper understanding of others' views. Students cultivate new ways of thinking as they integrate others' ideas into their beliefs.

Limitations

The study occurred at one school with a small population of participants. The findings are representative of this population and may vary with other population sizes. The study also took place in one elementary school involving only 4th and 5th grade participants. The experience level of the participants was five years or less of teaching experience. Replicating the study is possible; however, the teaching experiences of other potential teachers may cause the findings to differ. Teaching experience can sway the results of the study. These participants used social studies instruction to guide the study.

The study took place shortly before the administration of state assessments. Teachers were in the process of preparing students for assessments and worried that implementing a new strategy that could possibly negatively affect students' performance on state assessments since Socratic Seminars were not "on the test." With it being three months before the end of the school year, the study appeared rushed with teachers being coached and implementing Socratic Seminars before school ended for the summer.

As the coach and researcher, I taught at a different location having to drive 30 minutes to the research site. Coaching took place after contracted hours. It took commitment from the

participants to wait 30 minutes after work hours. On a few occasions, I had to wait until someone

was passing by the door to gain access to the school as the front office closed promptly at 3:30.

Implications for Future Research

Timing was a significant factor referenced by participants. The study should begin closer

to the start of the school year to allow time and practice among teachers and students.

Participants felt the timing of the study – being towards the end of the school year – was not the

right time with so many other obligations. The participants taught fourth and fifth grades, so their

focus was on state testing. Future research could conduct the study for a more extended period of

time earlier in the school year.

Monitoring and measuring the progress of students' ability to think critically could be

beneficial to future studies. I suggest that Socratic Seminars begin with students in third grade

for instance, and following this same group of students throughout their elementary years.

Having teachers to loop up with their students give longevity to the study and show the

consistency of Socratic Seminars. By doing so, student performance can be monitored and

assessed. Teachers can receive coaching on alternative ways of evaluating learning through the

use of Socratic Seminars. The administration of a pre-assessment and a post-assessment is

necessary to determine whether or not improvements took place among students' ability to think

critically. The assessments should be reliable, valid, and mirror one another to measure true

levels of achievement. This assessment process is beneficial to determine student success when

implementing Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking. In turn, future research could

provide powerful insight into assessing Socratic Seminars and students' performance.

Future research can include implementing Socratic Seminar with all elementary level

classrooms in the area of social studies. This implication can occur district-wide to allow for a

diverse population of students and participants. It is helpful to implement the Socratic method with all students as students matriculate from one grade level to the next. Professional learning related to the successful implementation of Socratic Seminars during pre-planning or post-planning could be beneficial. Teachers need to feel supported during the implementation phase. Future research could focus on a larger audience to reach more teachers which benefit students' critical thinking abilities.

Final Thoughts

Participants were pleased with the coaching relationship and expressed interest in continuing the implementation of Socratic Seminars in the future. All three participants stated that they would continue using the seminars with their students.

"In this age of information explosion where students are inundated with different and conflicting viewpoints, it is imperative for them to be equipped with intellectual tools to have an informed perspective" (Menachery, 2018, p. 226). Students need opportunities to engage in dialogue as they form their own views of the world, not believing everything they read or hear. The implementation of Socratic Seminars accomplishes this task of students constructing their own beliefs. The hallmarks of Socratic pedagogy are discussions and critical thinking. Higher order thinking questions allow students to come to terms with their thinking and the thinking of others which is extremely important for global competences (Mansilla & Jackson, n.d.). Students need opportunities to develop citizenship and humanities in the school setting (Berliner, 2009; Nussbaum, 2010). "An inquiring mind and critical faculties are clearly important tools that any citizen must hone in order to be effective in a genuinely democratic system" (Burns, Couto, & Becker, 1996, p. 6). In short, society needs critical thinkers for democracy to thrive.

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Appendix A: KSU Informed Consent Form

SIGNED CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Study: Thinking Beyond the Text: Examining Teachers' Dispositions of Critical Thinking in Elementary Social Studies Classrooms Through the Use of Socratic Seminars

Researcher's Contact Information: Jacqueline Hunter-Belser, KSU student
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Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study (IRB Approval, Study #19-316) conducted by Jacqueline Hunter-Belser of Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to participate in this study, you should read this form and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Description of Project

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms as a means of enhancing critical thinking skills. As citizens of the world, students need to engage in the humanities and arts to think critically (Nussbaum, 2010). "Education proceeds by questioning and self-scrutiny" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 61). I am interested in how and in what ways teachers can be coached to implement Socratic Seminars in social studies classrooms, how coaching in social studies can change teachers' dispositions toward critical thinking, the challenges teachers encounter during the implementation of Socratic Seminars, and teachers' perceptions of using Socratic Seminars to enhance critical thinking. One of the major goals of the study is to coach teachers as they engage students in academic discourse/dialogue as a means of developing critical thinkers in elementary social studies classrooms.

Explanation of Procedures

Three elementary school social studies teachers will participate in two coaching sessions by the researcher and will be interviewed. The interviews are semi-structured. Participants range in age from 25 – 50. Participants will be interviewed two times regarding their perceptions of critical thinking and Socratic Seminars and challenges of using Socratic Seminars in elementary social studies classrooms. A combination of purposeful sampling and maximum variation sampling will be used to identify teachers who teach social studies, are certified teachers, and have various backgrounds, years of experience, and educational experiences. Participants will complete two questionnaires using Google Forms. Participants will engage in two focus group sessions with the researcher. Notes, journals, letters, or any other

artifacts will be emailed to the researcher. All personally identifiable information will be stored in a locked file cabinet.

Time Required

Participants will be asked to engage in two interview sessions with the researcher. Each session will take no more than 60 minutes. Follow-up questions or conversations may be needed but will be kept to a minimum. Any follow-up sessions will take place via email or telephone. There will be two - four coaching sessions that will last between 45 – 60 minutes each. The completion of the two questionnaires will take no more than 20 minutes. Two focus group sessions will occur for a total of 60 minutes per session.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no known risks anticipated because of taking part in this study.

Benefits

Educators, policymakers, and other researchers may benefit from the results of the study. The researcher may learn about himself as it related to professional growth and development. The study will inform the participants' use of Socratic Seminars on the national level. Teaching influences will also benefit the participants as they learn a new method of teaching critical thinking and can share knowledge with other educators.

Compensation Participants will not be monetarily compensated for participating in the study.

Confidentiality

The results of this participation will be confidential. Specific names and schools would not be mentioned. Participants will be referred to as Teacher A, Teacher B, etc. Collected data will not include names. To ensure each participant is identified correctly a secure database will be used to keep track of Teacher A's name, Teacher B's name, etc. All identifiers will be stripped. All personally identifiable information will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's classroom.

Inclusion Criteria for Participation

You must be 18 years of age or older and a certified social studies teacher to participate in this study.

Signed Consent

I agree and give my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

_____

Signature of Participant or Authorized Representative, Date

_____

Signature of Investigator, Date

_____

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM, KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 585 Cobb Avenue, KH3403, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (470) 578-2268.

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Protocol #1

Date _____/_____/_____

Thank you for participating in today's interview session. I am a student at Kennesaw State University conducting a qualitative research study (#19-316). The purpose of the research project is to gather teachers' perceptions in defining critical thinking and using Socratic Seminars to foster students' abilities to think critically. I document the findings of the research study in a research paper. I will conduct two interview sessions. Each interview session will last about 45 – 60 minutes. I will ask you a series of questions regarding your perceptions as a teacher. I want your permission to audio record the interview, so I may accurately convey the information shared. You may request me to stop the recording at any time. Any information shared will be strictly confidential. The information shared will be used in the writing of the research paper and for educational purposes only.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. Do I have your permission to conduct the interview? If you need to stop for any reason, please feel free to let me know. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the interview process thus far? With your permission, we will proceed with the interview.

Interview Questions:

1. How often would you say you implement critical thinking related activities in your classroom?

2. What does critical thinking look like in your classroom? How would you define critical thinking?

3. What are some strategies you think could be used to teach critical thinking?

4. Do you feel comfortable teaching critical thinking? Explain your answer.

5. Have you received any professional learning related to implementing critical thinking in the classroom? If so, when? Was the professional learning effective?

6. Are you familiar with Socratic Seminars? If so, what do you know about Socratic Seminars? If not, what would you like to know about Socratic Seminars?

7. Do you think students can grasp the ability to think critically? Explain your thinking.

8. Do you have the necessary resources and materials to teach critical thinking effectively? What resources/materials are readily available to you? What additional resources/materials do you need?

9. What advice would you give to someone implementing Socratic Seminars for the first time?

10. What challenges did you encounter during the first implementation of Socratic Seminars?

11. What, if any, improvements did you notice in student's ability to think critically?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share?

This is the end of our first interview session. I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview. Your thoughts and experiences are valued.

Appendix C: Teacher Interview Protocol #2

Date _____/_____/_____

   Thank you for participating in today's interview session. I am a student at Kennesaw State University conducting a qualitative research study (#19-316). The purpose of the research project is to gather teachers' perceptions in defining critical thinking and using Socratic Seminars to foster students' abilities to think critically. I document the findings of the research study in a research paper. I will conduct two interview sessions. Each interview session will last about 45 – 60 minutes. I will ask you a series of questions regarding your perceptions as a teacher. I want your permission to audio record the interview, so I may accurately convey the information shared. You may request me to stop the recording at any time. Any information shared will be strictly confidential. The information shared will be used in the writing of the research paper and for educational purposes only.

   Your participation in the interview is voluntary. Do I have your permission to conduct the interview? If you need to stop for any reason, please feel free to let me know. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the interview process thus far? With your permission, we will proceed with the interview.

Interview Questions:

1. What have you learned about Socratic Seminars?

2. How did you present Socratic Seminars to your students?

3. Explain a typical day of implementing Socratic Seminars in your classroom.

4. Do you think it is essential to have a list of Socratic Seminar questions before the seminar taking place? Why or why not?

5. What role did you take on during the implementation of Socratic Seminars?

6. What are some questions you used as opening questions?

7. Did you notice a difference in students' responses, actions, etc.? After this study, will you continue implementing Socratic Seminars with your students? Why or why not?

8. In a day's time, how long did your students engage in Socratic Seminars?

9. How could you have adjusted the Socratic Seminar session?

10. How did the coaching help you effectively implement Socratic Seminars?

11. How would you define critical thinking at this point in the study?

12. What challenges did you encounter during the Socratic Seminar implementation?

This is the end of our second interview session. I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview. Your thoughts and experiences are valued.

Appendix D: Socratic Seminar Questionnaire #1

Listed below are a series of questions to gain background information from participants. Thank

you in advance for your response.

1. What is your gender?
_____Male
_____Female
_____Prefer not to answer
Other:

2. Which age category do you fall in?
_____21 - 25
_____26 - 30
_____31 - 35
_____36 - 40
_____41-45
_____46 -50
_____51 or older
_____Prefer not to answer

3. What is the highest degree you obtained?
_____Masters Degree
_____Specialist Degree
_____Bachelors Degree
_____Doctorate Degree

4. What is your race?
_____Black
_____Asian or Pacific Islander
_____American Indian
_____Other
_____Hispanic
_____Multi-racial
_____White

5. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

6. How would you define critical thinking?

7. Have you received any training on how to implement critical thinking in the classroom?

_____Yes
_____No

8. Explain the details of the critical thinking training you received.
Your answer

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your current use of critical thinking skills in the classroom. (1 = no use of critical thinking; 5 = very high use of critical thinking)
____1
____2
____3
____4
____5

10. Are you familiar with Socratic Seminars?
____Yes
____No

Appendix E: Socratic Seminar Questionnaire #2

Listed below are a series of questions to gain concluding information from participants. Thank you in advance for your response.

1. How can the coaching sessions have been improved?

2. What changes to the learning do you suggest?

3. How will you use Socratic Seminars in the future?

4. How can you share your learning with your colleagues?

5. How did you overcome the challenges you encountered?

6. Did you notice any improvements in student's ability to think critically? Explain your response.

7. Knowing what you know now, how would you define critical thinking?

8. What is the key take-away from the study?

9. Do you feel capable of coaching other teachers on the use of Socratic Seminars? Why or why not?

10. How can I be of further assistance to you?

Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Protocol #1

Thank you for participating in today's focus group interview. As you know, the purpose of the study is to conduct an in-depth investigation of teachers' perceptions of Socratic Seminars and dispositions towards critical thinking in hopes of gaining insight that will positively impact elementary social studies classrooms. I document the findings of the research study in a research paper. This study will provide school and district leaders with information that will guide their decisions to improve students' ability to think critically. You will be asked several questions during the focus group interview. I want your permission to audio record the interview, so I may accurately convey the information shared. You may request me to stop the recording at any time. Any information shared will be strictly confidential. The information shared will be used in the writing of the research paper and for educational purposes only. You are free to speak as often as you would like. I encourage you to be open and honest. The focus group interview will last approximately one hour. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group interview. Let's get started.

Focus Group Interview Questions:

1. How useful were your most recent coaching sessions?

2. What are your current needs as it relates to enhancing critical thinking and implementing Socratic Seminars?

3. Have your experiences with Socratic Seminars encouraged you to share your knowledge with other colleagues?

4. Do you think all teachers need to be trained on strategies to use in the classroom to enhance critical thinking? Provide your rationale. Do you believe Socratic Seminars will be a good strategy to present to the faculty and staff?

5. How would you say you learn best?

6. How would you describe your experience from this coaching relationship?

7. How could your experience with coaching be improved?

8. How can Socratic Seminars be used in other content areas?

9. What other comments/questions do you have?

Appendix G: Focus Group Interview Protocol #2

Thank you for participating in today's focus group interview. As you know, the purpose of the study is to conduct an in-depth investigation of teachers' perceptions of Socratic Seminars and dispositions towards critical thinking in hopes of gaining insight that will positively impact elementary social studies classrooms. I document the findings of the research study in a research paper. This study will provide school and district leaders with information that will guide their decisions to improve students' ability to think critically. You will be asked several questions during the focus group interview. I want your permission to audio record the interview, so I may accurately convey the information shared. You may request me to stop the recording at any time. Any information shared will be strictly confidential. The information shared will be used in the writing of the research paper and for educational purposes only. You are free to speak as often as you would like. I encourage you to be open and honest. The focus group interview will last approximately one hour. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group interview. Let's get started.

Focus Group Interview Questions:

1. What do you perceive to be the most important purpose(s) of asking higher order questions?

2. Based on your experiences with Socratic Seminars, did you find it effective in increasing students' abilities to think critically?

3. For what purposes will you use dialogues in future lessons?

4. What challenges were you able to overcome during the course of the study?

5. What has your experience been like participating in this study?

6. What activities, strategies, or research information did you find enhanced your instructional practice?

7. Have you observed any changes in your students' participation in dialogue or critical thinking skills during daily instruction?

8. Are there any areas where you felt that you needed more information or assistance while implementing Socratic Seminars?

9. Do you plan to incorporate what you have learned during this study in the upcoming school year?

10. Please provide a description of how you would approach the implementation of Socratic Seminars in your classroom next school year.

Appendix H: Coaching Agenda #1

Thinking Beyond the Text

March 18, 2019

Teacher Leadership Standards (GaPSC Rule 505-3-.53)	
TL:1	Includes professional development
TL:2	Mentoring and coaching other teachers
TL:3	Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
TL:4	Best teaching practices
TL:5	Analysis of data and improvement of learning through data-informed decision making
TL.6	Research-based approaches to instructional challenges
TL.7	Collaboration with all stakeholders to improve student learning

Time Allotted	Alignment to Learning Objectives	Learning Task
5 minutes	TL:2	Get to Know Participants (Engage in a one-on-one discussion as they enter the room)
2 minutes	TL:3	A brief overview of the study
3 minutes	TL:5	Purpose of the study and confidentiality
5 minutes	TL:3	Discuss democratic origins
5 minutes	TL:6	Discuss summary of research
5 minutes	TL:4	Discuss Socratic Seminar procedures
5 minutes	TL:1	Video of Socratic Seminar taking place
5 minutes	TL:1	Discuss types of questions to ask during Socratic Seminars
15 minutes	TL:2 TL:7	Model Socratic Seminar
5 minutes	TL:2	Question & Answer session
5 minutes	TL:2	Next Coaching: April 8, 2019 Next Steps: Implement at least three more Socratic Seminar sessions; Provide optional journal entries to the coach

Appendix I: Article "A Crooked Election"

By: K. Abrahams

Kelly is running for class president of Wright High School. Some of Kelly's classmates think elections are pointless. Kelly's best friend Maya doesn't believe in voting at all.

"I'm not voting," Maya tells her. "Voting is pointless."

"But if you don't vote, someone else will. And then they'll get what they want, and you won't get what you want!" Kelly says.

"I don't want anything. I just want to be left alone." Maya responds.

Kelly is running for class president because she says she thinks the school can be better. She wants to see less meat served in the cafeteria and more vegetarian options. She also wants the school to stop bringing a live goat onto the field during football games.

"Kelly has good ideas, but won't be able to change anything," Maya tells her classmates. "She's just idealistic. No one can change anything."

Kelly's opponent, Roger, is running for class president of Wright High School because his brother was president last year. In fact, Roger has three brothers, and all three of them have been class president.

"I'm not losing to anybody," Roger tells his brothers. "Especially not a girl."

Roger has really nice banners professionally printed and hangs them around the school. Roger's banners say: "Roger Whitaker. The Right Man for the Wright Job." The phrase "right man" is a reference to the fact that Kelly is a girl. Roger says that girls can't be president because they cry too much. He only says this secretly to his brothers. He would never admit this opinion to his classmates.

"All Kelly cares about is that we have tofu in the cafeteria," Roger tells his classmates. "But I want to fix the broken doors in the bathroom!" Roger holds up a screwdriver as he says this and makes a grunting "man" sound.

The election banners were given to him as a gift by the Harrison kids. Their dad owns Harrison Sign Manufacturers and made the signs for free.

"Just make sure that when you get elected-and we are confident that you will-you tell the school that they need new signs." They shake hands and give him the free signs, which suddenly don't seem so free.

Roger looks around the school and sees that they do, in fact, need new signs. The exit sign above the main door is cracked. The sign above the library just says, "Librar." The menu next to the school cafeteria is so old it says you could get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for 50 cents. So, maybe it is a bit unfair to take something from a student who's going to vote for you. But Roger figures they have a good point about the signs.

Meanwhile, Kelly has been running around the school putting up signs of her own. They are all handmade from construction paper with fresh flowers on them. They say, "Make the school beautiful. Vote Healthy for Kelly."

Maya tells Kelly they look nice, but she doesn't think they'll do anything.

"It's just lipstick on a pig," she says. "Just because you make it look nice doesn't mean it's not still a pig."

Kelly's handmade signs make Roger nervous, because they seem more honest and down-to-earth. Although his signs are really nice and professional, it's also obvious that they cost money. Roger feels like the students don't relate to him.

He wants the other students to think he's just like them, so he organizes a barbecue during school lunch hours with free hot dogs. Actually, it's the Harrison brothers' idea. They even get him a deal on the hot dogs, from their cousin's supermarket, of course.

A few kids come by, but Roger also notices that a good amount of students stay in the cafeteria, eating food they brought from home. He can't figure out why someone would want to eat a stale sandwich when he's offering free hot dogs.

The hot dog giveaway is definitely a flop. Roger goes home dejected and sad.

The next day, the school holds a debate between the two candidates. The debate is moderated by their civics teacher, Mrs. Graham.

Roger and Kelly sit on stage, opposite each other. The auditorium is filled with students, all of whom will have the opportunity to vote. All the students are watching with great interest, as this is how they will make their decision. One wrong answer today and it could mean losing the presidency.

Mrs. Graham asks the first question.

"As class president, how would you see fit to spend the school's extra money?"

Kelly answers first. "Well, I certainly wouldn't be spending our money on expensive signs and hot dogs," she says.

The audience gasps. This is a low blow. It's surprising that Kelly would say something like that. Roger looks into the audience and sees the Harrison brothers sinking down into their seats.

Kelly continues, "I would like our school to be healthier, and I know we have many students who are vegetarian. They don't have many options for lunch, and if they forget to bring lunch from home, sometimes they don't eat lunch at all!"

At this, at least 50 students stand up and applaud. Even Maya stands and applauds, although she rolls her eyes a little, too. The other students join in the cheering.

Of course, a few students start booing, just to be jerks.

"Eat more bacon!" says one, cupping his hands around his mouth so the sound will carry.

"Eat a vegetarian!" says another, laughing and throwing pieces of paper.

"Okay everyone, that's enough!" the moderator says from the stage. The students who are booing the vegetarians just look like troublemakers now.

Roger looks into the audience. He finally realizes how many students are vegetarian; he has never thought to find out before.

"What about you, Roger? What will you spend money on?"

"Well, I would like to have a new sign for the cafeteria," he says. "And that could certainly include any vegetarian options that the school may end up providing."

"Oh please! Without me to push for it, the school will never change its menu," Kelly says.

"Roger offers empty promises. And he thinks he is better than me because I'm a girl!"

The students start to applaud, and Roger watches the Harrison brothers sneak out the back door.

When the debate is over, Roger can tell that he lost. His failure is palpable; he can feel it.

Students clamor around Kelly in a group, hugging her and telling her how they can't wait for the new lunch menu.

Only a few people come up to Roger.

"I liked your nice sign," says Peggy, pushing her glasses up on her nose and squinting.

"Thanks," said Roger. "Can I count on your vote next week on election day?"

"Oh, that," Peggy says. "Well, actually, I'm voting for Kelly. I just wanted to be nice to you."

After school, the Harrison brothers are waiting outside to talk to Roger. He notices they are carrying some of Kelly's signs.

"We're going to have to withdraw our support," Boyd Harrison tells him.

"We just don't think you look like the winning candidate," Trent Harrison says. "And we really need to get behind someone who can help bring our dad more business."

"What are you talking about?" Roger says, angrily. "I was your guy! You supported me! I thought we were friends."

"Yeah, friends. Well, about that...You see, it's just that Kelly will bring in a lot more business for our dad's company," says Trent.

Boyd nods in approval. "It's nothing personal. You're a nice dude and all. But Kelly has a little more... spirit."

"Kelly? Oh please!" Roger is yelling now. "Her signs are all handmade! Didn't you see them? It's just hipster junk!"

"Oh, yeah, you noticed that? We went for a more 'indie' feel with these." Trent says.

"Tried to make them look handmade," Boyd interjects. "The hipsters love that. We're glad you noticed."

Kelly is coming out of the school now, and the Harrison brothers walk away from Roger without saying a word. Each brother puts an arm around Kelly.

"How's our best girl?" they ask.

Kelly smiles. "Doing just great now," she says. "Now that Roger looks like a woman-hating meat eating loser."

"We've got this election in the bag," Boyd says. "A vegetarian bag, that is."

Trent holds up a bag of veggie burgers. "We've even been eating these at lunch, showing all those health-conscious kids that we're one of them."

"Well, you sure do look trustworthy now, don't you?" Kelly says, laughing. "But do you have any real food? I'm so sick of this vegetarian junk. My stomach is killing me!"

"You bet we do," says Boyd. "In fact, we have a whole bunch of hot dogs left over from Roger's barbeque yesterday. Let's go to our house and have dinner."

"By the way," Kelly says, "How did you convince people not to go get delicious free hot dogs? I think he could have really turned people to his side with that."

"It was easy," Boyd says. "We started a rumor that Roger left the hot dogs out in his car overnight. Nobody wanted to get sick. He was so depressed; he just left everything sitting there. We grabbed all the leftovers and took them back home."

"That's brilliant," Kelly says. "I can't thank you enough!"

"Well, you won't have to thank us once you're elected. Just make sure the school uses our dad's business. And, oh yeah, when the cafeteria goes vegetarian, you know which veggie burgers are the best choice."

Boyd dangles the bag in front of her and for the first time, she reads the label: "Harrison's Burgers."

"Victory has never tasted so sweet," Kelly says.

Appendix J: Socratic Seminar Questions

What changes would you have made to…?

Can you elaborate/expand on the reason…?

What could be done to minimize/maximize…?

What is your opinion of…?

How could you defend the arguments of…?

Why did he/she/they decide…?

How would you compare the ideas…?

Why do you think…?

What conclusion can you make…?

What information would you use to support the view…?

How would you improve…?

What would have happened if…?

Can you propose an alternative…?

What is the significance of…?

Why was it better that…?

How would you justify…?

How could you determine…?

How could you prove/disprove…?

What evidence is there that…?

Appendix K: Coaching Agenda #2

Thinking Beyond the Text

April 8, 2019

Teacher Leadership Standards (GaPSC Rule 505-3-.53)	
TL:1	Includes professional development
TL:2	Mentoring and coaching other teachers
TL:3	Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
TL:4	Best teaching practices
TL:5	Analysis of data and improvement of learning through data-informed decision making
TL.6	Research-based approaches to instructional challenges
TL.7	Collaboration with all stakeholders to improve student learning

Time Allotted	Alignment to Learning Objectives	Learning Task
8 minutes	TL:5	Discuss how the Socratic Seminar went
2 minutes	TL:1	Review Socratic Seminar process
10 minutes	TL:2	Participate in Socratic Seminar (Practice)
5 minutes	TL:3	Whole group discussion
30 minutes	TL:7	Collaboratively plan next lessons
3 minutes	TL:2	Question & Answer session
2 minutes	TL:2	Next Steps: Provide optional journal entries to the coach; Conduct last Socratic Seminar sessions; Schedule final interview; Complete questionnaire

Appendix L: Journal Entry by Stephanie

April 16, 2019

I spent some time today going over our Socratic Seminar rules. I want the children to become comfortable enough to lead a whole class discussion or seminar and I just observe. Today I provided the students with the article "Economics Competition," and wrote out the question - Why is it important that the price for a good is competitive? In the rules, I explained that I will not be included in the discussion. I will only be taking on the role of the facilitator to make sure the seminar runs smoothly. I explained that I really wanted to hear their thinking and their reasoning with evidence from the text. I felt good about what I observed and heard today. I even noticed that some students took on the role as discussion leader.

Appendix M: A Step-by-Step Guide on Socratic Seminars

for Teacher Leaders and Social Studies Teachers

Steps of Socratic Seminar

Step 1: Students read the selected text.

Step 2: Students form a circle.

Step 3: The teacher poses an opening question.

Step 4: Students orally respond to the opening question, agreeing or disagreeing with their peers.

Step 5: Students continue asking other questions related to the text and responding to their peers

Step 6: Students cite textual evidence in their responses.

Step 7: This dialogue continues until the facilitator stops the session.

Sample Opening Questions

- What is a good title for this chapter?

- How does the reading impact your beliefs of …?

- How could this have been prevented?

- Can you provide examples of…?

- What evidence do you have to support…?

- Do you have a different interpretation?

- What better choices could ___ have made?

- Do you agree/disagree with …? Why?

Important Pointers

- The teacher/facilitator can intervene and ask other questions if the dialogue stops or get off-topic. The goal is to encourage the students to ask higher order questions and keep the conversation moving. Students should be Socratic Seminar leaders.

- If grades are an issue, assign a letter grade based on the number of responses from the students or have a writing assignment for students to submit after the Socratic Seminar.

- If class sizes are too large, you can split the class and have an outer circle and an inner circle. The outer circle observes, and the inner circle engages in dialogue. These roles are switched as deemed necessary by the facilitator.