

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES

CONCEPTS IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2007

UMI Number: 3263426

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A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES
CONCEPTS IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC
CURRICULUM

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family, friends and teachers in gratitude of their support and encouragement throughout my first thirty years of education:

Maurice and Irene Barron

Kerry and Jane Ann Malakosky

Janice Bear

Dr. Ellen Marcy

Dr. Marcy Blackburn

Alice Mayer

Krista Demcher

Drs. Terral and Karen McKellips

Dr. Jennifer Dennis

Rebecca McKeown

Ruth Dishman

Jerry Moon

Kim Erwin

Myrna New

Doyle and Della Evers

Dr. Jamie C. Polk

Jerry and Donna Evers

Dr. Charles and Doris Prichard

Stacey Evers

Jean Ann Richard

Robbie Gillis

Dr. Mary Rubin

Tara Grandy

Dr. B. Don and Glenda Sullivan

Diane Hensley

Carol Thurman

David, Janice and Jonathan Holloway

Vicki Turner

Jake Holloway

Kathy Weyher

Sharon James

Adrienne Wilson

Howard and Jo Jean Johnson

Jenny Langston

Nancy Lavender

Shirley Ludwick

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my doctoral committee members: Dr. John Chiodo (chair), Dr. Gregg Garn, Dr. Frank McQuarrie, Dr. Jon Pedersen, and Dr. Courtney Vaughn for their guidance, direction, support and questioning.

This study would not have been possible without the permission and support of the Lawton Public School District in Lawton, Oklahoma. I would like to thank Dr. Linda Dzialo, Mr. Barry Beauchamp, elementary principals and teachers for their participation.

To my OU girlfriends: Sylvia Hurst, Laura Morris, and Jami Van Camp, I would like to thank you for sharing this journey with me. The hours we spent together on campus, in McAlister's Deli, at Charleston's, The Hideaway, and various other fine dining locations in Norman and Oklahoma City have meant the world to me. Your lives have enriched mine in so many ways, your stories have encouraged me, and your friendship is invaluable to me. I cannot wait to wear our velvet caps and gowns together as we finally graduate from OU with our doctorate degrees. You gave my experience meaning and are the part of this journey that I love and will cherish the most. I am so grateful to each of you for being my friend. And to Sylvia, for serving as my red bridesmaid and study companion for Quant I and II, I am eternally grateful. I will never forget the stories and secrets shared in the Taurus (a.k.a. The Womb) and I would be honored to decorate your Christmas tree every December.

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ABSTRACT

A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES CONCEPTS IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

This study questions the accepted belief that social studies is not being taught in regular elementary education classrooms. That belief is based on time studies and a body of research that looks at curriculum and teacher interviews and concludes that the social studies time block is being completely ignored in elementary classrooms. The problem with that belief is that it ignores the standards or key concepts in the social studies curriculum that are being taught through curriculum integration with reading, language arts and math.

The research question asks if social studies is really taught, and if so, how is it being taught? A list of key social studies concepts for grades 1-5 from the Oklahoma PASS document and the California Concepts Collection was used to survey approximately 100 elementary school teachers who teach grades 1-5 in the Lawton Public School district. Teachers used a Likert Scale to rate how often they teach each concept. From those surveys, 10 teachers were interviewed about how they approach teaching those key social studies concepts and shared sample lesson plans with the researcher.

Transcribed interview data was coded and themed in order to determine consistencies and differences with how teachers teach social studies. Three themes emerged: Concepts taught in social studies, planning and emphasis, and how teachers teach social studies, which includes the role of integration. Analysis revealed that elementary teachers are teaching most social studies concepts in traditional time blocks and with curriculum integration in a variety of methods.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Statement of Problem

Introduction

There is a popularly held belief in the world of education that social studies is a non-essential portion of the curriculum that is to be taught only after the basics of reading and math have been thoroughly taught (Hinde, 2005). It is historically supported in the evolution of social studies as a discipline during eras where the nation pushed a “back to the basics” view of curriculum in hopes of educating United States’ students to be the intellectual equivalent of their Asian counterparts (Howard, 2003). The common belief held by society was that public education does our students no favors when it allows U.S. students to lag behind other nations’ youth in the teaching of content areas of knowledge. It promotes only laziness and low expectations. According to Cuban (1991), the way we teach social studies has changed very little in the past twenty years. There is a greater emphasis put on social studies during times of war or national crisis, such as September 11, 2001. The country feels greater responsibility for instilling the ideas of nationalism and patriotism in the minds of youth during times of tragedy. It’s the calmer moments in our nation’s history that allow educators to revert back to practices of teaching social studies as a second-ranked subject (Thornton & Houser, 1996).

In comparison with others, our students must be the brightest and best prepared to be globally competitive in international job markets, areas of research and development in engineering and technology and in military innovations regarding national security and the war on terrorism. Public opinion is not certain that students could be developed intellectually by forcing them to memorize names and dates. The oral history that was

good enough in the past is no longer sufficient in the modern age of science and mathematics. Students have to be able to read, write, think critically and solve problems. Because none of those needs has been historically taught in the field of social studies, the belief is that there is no hope in building the curriculum around their objectives. Instead, many people view that educators need to focus on reading and writing and teaching math in order to develop the skills necessary for our children to compete and win. Tides of this thought have ebbed and flowed through the ages during battles of curricular design, but have not firmly entrenched themselves quite like the current trend of the 21st century.

In the era of No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB) students and teachers are held accountable for what goes on in America's public schools through the use of standardized tests. Accountability is a powerful motivator and serves to provoke teachers to change their practices which often results in instructional shortsightedness (Brighton, 2002). Tests are written and given only in the core content areas of reading and math, and therefore public school curriculum is designed and concentrated around those two disciplines. With the focus of curriculum redesigned to designate a larger portion of the instructional day toward reading and math, social studies is often left behind. No one stood up and officially said we don't have to teach social studies or science anymore or that other disciplines were less important. The feeling was implied, and there was a universal understanding of a dynamic shift in how we spend our time teaching.

Many teachers and students don't seem to mind leaving social studies behind because it's such an ambiguous field of study anyhow (Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Both national and state standards define the objectives that are to be taught in the social studies, but the content is so broad and the objectives are so numerous that the curriculum

can seem overwhelming and ambiguous to teachers who do not feel prepared to teach the content. The teachers' attitudes towards the discipline affects the students' perception of its relevance and significance and increases their disdain for social studies as well.

Teachers have often reported being uncomfortable teaching social studies due to their lack of content knowledge and having unsuitable texts or resources. They don't want to teach it because students have typically been known to dislike social studies. There are a myriad of reasons that substantiate students' sheer distaste of the subject matter (Governale, 1997). Social studies has historically been known to be presented in timed contexts using dry materials and tired models of instruction that stress rote memorization of factual data. Students relate social studies to lists of dates to memorize, dead men's names to spell and associate with some historical event that has little relevance to their everyday lives or lists of key vocabulary terms that have to be defined for some unrelated quiz in their near future. There is no incentive to learn the material, it does not show immediate application in the lives of elementary students and it often involves the heaviest, hard-to-read textbook that the school can afford to distribute to the masses. In short, it is believed that the discipline is ancient and in need of an extreme make-over.

There is no particular reason why social studies has to be boring, nor is there evidentiary support needed to reduce the social studies curriculum to trivial lists of knowledge to be covered. Social studies can never be "covered" adequately when viewed in this context. Coverage should never be the goal, but for many teachers coverage is all that the school district requires and they are merely in the business of "checking the box." When school administrators serve as poor instructional leaders and

allow teachers to teach what they enjoy teaching and at their own pacing calendar for the academic year, it's no wonder social studies is often treated as the unwanted step-child.

Even when the subject matter is revamped to appeal to students or taught effectively by those who display a love of the discipline and seek ways to teach it enthusiastically, social studies is still not viewed as a meat-and-potatoes portion of the curriculum. It is not taught in a traditional block of the day but is supplementary curriculum that is taught on a rotation schedule with science or art. With secondary status, researchers have shown that it has been relegated to the “back burner” of curricular design (Houser, 1995).

Considering that the average elementary student spends approximately six hours each instructional day in the classroom learning, it would be interesting to note what portion of that time is spent teaching a “back burner” topic. Teachers who worry about the aforementioned standardized tests designate their instructional hours to reading and mathematics curriculum. They feel forced to do so by administrators and districts who worry about losing federal funding for school programs due to poor test scores. The abandonment of other curricular areas is supported in this framework of high-stakes testing. By the time you figure in lunch, recess, specials such as physical education, music education, assemblies for special events, guest performers, computer instruction and pull-out times for students on individualized education plans or tutoring programs, there is a small portion of the day actually designated to teaching and learning in the content areas.

Some educators have determined that the solution to the time-crunch dilemma is subject integration. They can “do” social studies with mathematics by incorporating

dates and charts and graphs in their units of study. They can “do” social studies in language arts by having students write a report about the American Revolution. They can “do” social studies in spelling by using the key chapter vocabulary terms as spelling words. It is the belief of these individuals that if students can just gain exposure to social studies terminology, maybe that will be enough. Curriculum integration is a difficult and demanding endeavor (Hargreaves & Moore, 2000). There is much more involved in subject matter integration than including discrete factual aspects of one with another. Curriculum design requires more complex planning and goal setting in creating interwoven connections between subject topics, concepts and generalizations (Parker, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

With time constraints in the daily schedule, mandated decisions on what is to be taught and tested and a lack of significance in the placement of curriculum importance, it’s no wonder that some researchers do not believe that social studies is being taught in elementary classrooms. What is evident from that analysis may be time not spent teaching a traditional social studies lesson with the framework of a traditional block of allocated time for social studies. What cannot be deduced from those studies, however, is whether or not the key concepts of the social studies curriculum are being taught. If teachers take the key concepts of the curriculum and weave them throughout their instructional day and across discipline lines, the concepts are still being taught. They are simply being presented in a format that varies from what is traditionally known and accepted. If this were the case, social studies could be integrated within disciplines which receive the lion’s share of the instructional hours per day.

The amount of time spent teaching does not necessarily equate with quality teaching or adequate coverage of material taught. The social studies concept of culture could be taught within the context of a novel study during a language arts lesson, but may only be addressed as a concept for a minor fraction of time per lesson which may be taught over the course of several weeks. Social studies is being taught, but in a more holistic way, when interwoven with other broad conceptual frameworks. Students can relate social studies concepts within the context of another study to develop deeper understandings of their relevance and significance. In this light, social studies is not only being taught but also applied in life contexts outside of the traditional expectation for its discipline.

Research Question

This dissertation questions the accepted belief that social studies concepts are not being taught in regular elementary education classrooms. That belief is based on time studies and a body of research that looks at curriculum and teacher interviews and concludes that the social studies time block is being completely ignored in elementary classrooms. When considering the purposes and research behind concept teaching, it may become apparent that social studies is being taught in elementary schools, just not in the allotted portion of time that would traditionally regard departmentalized curriculum planning. It is the standards or key concepts in the social studies curriculum that are being taught through curriculum integration with social studies and reading, language arts and math.

What is important is that the concepts are being taught, not the amount of time spent teaching social studies. This research question asks if social studies concepts are

taught, and if so, how are they being taught? Finally, it is of interest to identify specific social studies concepts that lend themselves to curriculum integration more so than others.

Purpose of the Study

A list of key social studies concepts for grades 1-5 based on the Oklahoma PASS document, the California Concepts Collection (CCC), and by pooling concepts from the pacing calendars of skills within teacher textbook guides was created during this study. I used those concepts to create a survey which was given to approximately 100 elementary school teachers who teach grades 1-5 in approximately 20 elementary schools within the Lawton Public Schools district. They used a Likert Scale to rate how often they teach each concept. From those surveys, I randomly selected 10 teachers to interview to ask further questions about how they approach teaching those key social studies concepts. I interviewed those teachers and a small sample of their students to gain an understanding of how they learn social studies and how those concepts fit into their traditional educational setting. From their input I was able to determine whether or not social studies concepts are being taught in elementary schools, and if so, how they were taught.

Interviews focused on how social studies concepts were being taught in the elementary classroom. Interview data was coded and themed in order to draw conclusions for the research question. That conclusion was compared and contrasted with the theme of time-study research included in the literature review in an effort to show whether or not social studies is being taught.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 includes a review of literature on social studies teaching, concept teaching and curriculum integration. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research design and methodology. Chapter 4 summarizes the data collection process and includes information gleaned from surveys and interviews conducted. Chapter 5 serves as a conclusion to the research questions and also addresses limitations of the study and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Minimal Time Spent Teaching Social Studies

“I only have 35 minutes to teach this lesson. That’s not enough time” (Hawkins, 1997, p. 108). Time is a teacher’s greatest enemy and teaching can easily become frustrated by its demands. Teachers understand the value of time in engaging learners to make connections and grasp new concepts. It takes more than three and one-half hours of true teaching time each day to stimulate interest in history and involve students in their own learning (p. 109). Teachers are forced to make important decisions regarding what is taught during that precious teaching time and many have been acting as a “gatekeeper in social studies” (Hawkins, 1997).

In a study conducted by Thornton (1991) in which he interviewed student teachers regarding their attitudes on teaching social studies, many ranked social studies very low on the priority list of disciplines to teach. Some of the teachers reported teaching social studies in the afternoon if they had some time to kill while others selected a movie on a related social studies topic to show in place of a planned lesson. Some of the teachers admitted feelings of inadequacy as social studies teachers but felt they had no time to do more. Teachers must selectively choose to make the time to teach social studies and therefore set an example for their students of its validity and worth in the grand scheme of the curriculum. One way teachers can include social studies with high stakes testing disciplines like reading and math is through curricular integration. That will be addressed in further depth later in the chapter.

Many elementary teachers report that they simply do not have time to teach social studies and therefore it is often reduced to a place of minor importance. Social studies is not unimportant but is sometimes considered as an enrichment or second-ranked subject (Hinde, 2005; Thornton & Houser, 1996; Wade, 2002). The problem with elementary social studies is that there is no time to teach it and it is often not seen as a priority. Teachers complain about the lack of time to teach all of the requirements of the elementary curriculum (McCall, 2004; Kaplan, 2002). Marzano (2003) estimates that there are an average of 200 standards and 3,093 benchmarks in fourteen separate content areas that teachers are required to cover. In order to cover that many benchmarks teachers would need 15,464 hours of solid instructional time. In a typical 180-day school year, teachers have approximately 9,042 hours of actual time spent teaching (Marzano, 2003). Of those hours, primary grades emphasize reading instruction over all other content areas because teachers feel pressured to devote their time and energy to those areas that are tested.

A similar study conducted by Smith and Manley (1994) reports that social studies is often relegated to a thirty-five minute instructional period due to time constraints. This results in a fragmented social studies curriculum which is often taught with textbooks, lectures and worksheets. According to Wade (2002), research has documented that 75 to 90 per cent of social studies instructional time is based on the textbook. Dependence on these teaching methods and time restraints place the students in a passive role and makes social studies concepts seem remote. Those concepts will never become part of their conceptual framework because they are regarded as finite sets of facts about isolated events or periods of time. Social studies courses are often left out of the primary

curriculum because teachers fail to see sufficient evidence to support their inclusion (Goodlad, 1983). Some schools report very little or no social studies instruction occurring in grades kindergarten through third because social studies in elementary schools has most often been regarded as a subject that should be taught but only when there is time (Atwood, 1986; Zhao & Hoge, 2005).

In a study conducted by the Council for Basic Education (2004), elementary principals reported a decrease in instructional time for social studies in grades K-5 since 2000 (Hinde, 2005). The current trend is for students to have little exposure to social studies in the primary grades. Elementary teachers are thought to be subject matter generalists and are typically unprepared to teach social studies. The complexity of teaching such concepts in the truncated time frames of the history and social studies curriculum in elementary schools is a recipe for superficial knowledge development (VanSledright & Frankes, 2000).

Zhao and Hoge (2005) conducted a study in three different school districts in northeast Georgia. Fifty elementary school teachers and their students were interviewed about social studies teaching and learning. The data collected from that study indicated that nearly all students held negative attitudes toward social studies. They did not understand the importance of the curriculum or how it related to their everyday lives. When asked specific content questions the students showed limited knowledge of basic topics. The authors of the study concluded that the students were receiving little or no social studies instruction. They also reported that social studies received insufficient time and resources compared to the amount devoted to reading, writing and math. The primary teachers interviewed reported teaching only the three R's, because of their

school's emphasis on those subjects and the support of school administration for that curriculum. Social studies was not given enough attention. Reform movements in social studies have historically been academic and idealistic without taking into account the needs and constraints of the classroom environment (Shaver, 1987; Thorton, 1991).

The block of time necessary to provide the framework for an environment which is unhurried so that novel and unique ideas can be developed in problem solving situations is a luxury seldom enjoyed by elementary teachers. A fifty-minute period of time for a class session is too short to stress the use of a variety of reference sources in problem solving (Ediger, 1998). This condensed instruction delivered in a 50-minute time chunk forces students to do the "cognitive shift shuffle" (Erickson, 2002, p. 45). A double class period of approximately ninety minutes is necessary for emphasizing a learner-centered curriculum. Limited time for the teaching of social studies denies students the opportunity to develop an adequate depth of knowledge in collaborative learning settings using a variety of learning methods.

Integration Ideas

Beane (1995) contends that designing the curriculum around separate subjects in school is artificial and fragments the desire for coherence. One solution to this problem is curriculum integration wherein teachers relate curriculum areas so that fewer subjects are taught in isolation from one another. The idea is an old one with proponents who suggest the pupils can perceive knowledge as related and that process will allow them to retain previously acquired subject matter for a longer period of time as compared to learning content in isolation as factual data (Ediger, 2000). Social studies can be integrated into other subjects because there is simply not enough time in the day to do it

any other way. Teachers can wrap other content areas in a cocoon of social studies to solve their time crunch problem (Christensen, Wilson, et.al., 2001). Integration also gives students opportunities to see how social studies concepts fit into the entirety of human experience, including art, literature, politics, government, philosophy and psychology (Cannon, 2002). Capturing history through plays, poetry, artifact study, film, field trips, art and music makes it come alive and seem relevant to students' lives today (Hawkins, 1997).

One way to integrate social studies concepts effectively within the framework of other disciplines was prescribed by Hilda Taba. Her spiral curriculum introduced and elaborated on social studies concepts throughout primary, intermediate and even into middle school grade levels (Taba, 1967). The Correlation Model (Wraga, 1993) for curriculum integration is a design that allows teachers to arrange concepts that relate to one another in similar learning activities. The Infusion design (Parker, 2005) combines two or more subject areas to form a meaningful curriculum. It is also an effective way for teachers to make time for social studies concepts.

Curriculum integration is the most frequently used method at the elementary level for teaching a variety of concepts within a limited framework. The holistic design of teaching units of subject matter may also lend itself to integration. Studies show that students who experience integrated curricula have more positive attitudes toward learning and experience significant advantages within their learning environment (McBee, 2000). Despite the fact that curriculum integration is a difficult and demanding endeavor for educators, the curriculum becomes more meaningful in the lives of the students and integration advances the relevance of classroom learning (Hargreaves & Moore, 2000).

The important thing for teachers to remember is that integration is a method and not a goal for learning. Lessons are not integrated for the sake of integration but for the purpose of reaching a specific learning goal or objective. This structure is necessary if students are to understand and remember what they have learned. Students need to deal with meatier ideas such as the concepts that organize and structure facts (VanSledright & Frankes, 2000). Zhao and Hoge (2005) recommend that teachers attend workshops where creative strategies for integrating social studies within other content areas, especially language arts and math, is promoted so that they can justify giving social studies more attention.

Primary grade students can and should be taught certain aspects of history within a balanced and integrated social studies curriculum that gives sufficient attention to powerful ideas (Alleman & Brophy, 2003). Teachers should teach a richer content embedded within a larger context which will help students construct a broader network of understanding. Developing conceptual understanding in students who study history is vital in moving them away from rote memorization of factual and historical data (Brophy, 1990; Gagnon, 1989; National Center for History in the Schools, 1994).

According to Ediger (2000), relationship of content is lacking in elementary curriculum. Effective integration is one way for social studies concepts to be taught in the elementary curriculum. Integration of curricular content brings balance to the curriculum. Hinde (2005) offers the following suggestions as well: lessons should meet the curricular objectives and activities should be significant in addressing state standards in all of the content areas. Teachers should ensure that integration does not distort the integrity of the social studies (Alleman & Brophy, 1993). Lessons and activities must

also be developmentally appropriate and allow students an opportunity for authentic application of learned skills. Social studies can be approached by teachers as a “pervasive and integral method for improving all curricular areas, the classroom environment, and life” (Christensen, Wilson, et. al., 2001).

Educators should consider the big picture in relation to the development of topics and concepts to be taught when designing the curriculum. Big ideas focus learning, deepen student understanding and foster inquiry into important ideas. Teachers should develop engaging learning activities that encourage students to explore, reflect on, and revisit key concepts and big ideas (Seif, 2003). With this focus on ideas rather than discrete facts, social studies seems to be transitioning from isolation toward subject matter integration, emphasizing literature connections. This shift toward integration is based on selection of resources. Children’s literature offers a wider variety of genres than traditional texts; students’ interest is peaked when social studies concepts are embedded in quality literature; student comprehensibility relating to text is greater; and students are better able to see the relevance of the subject matter within their everyday lives.

In addition to these, integrating literature with social studies is vital in teaching citizenship preparation. Literature can help students better understand social studies when used as a historical source for students to analyze points of view, perspectives, and inaccuracies (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Hawkins, 1997; Levstik, 1990). Elementary social studies teachers also promote literacy by reading poetry. According to McCall (2004), poetry is a credible supplementary social studies source. Poems can be used to address thematic strands of the concept of culture including time, continuity and change,

governance, civic ideas and practices. Elementary teachers can also borrow and teach reading and language arts research strategies and integrate them into historical studies, because both stress gathering facts and noting key concepts. Each of these disciplines more or less relies on the others for either substance or procedure. Therefore, integrating them makes sense (VanSledright & Frankes, 2000; Dunn, 2000).

Social studies concepts can also be incorporated into the study of mathematics, because both require an emphasis not only on content but also on process (Rose & Schuncke, 1997). Two problem-solving components relevant to both disciplines can be taught: exploration and inquiry. In exploration, students determine the problem area, delineate the problem, gather data related to the specific question, examine, analyze and evaluate the data, synthesize the data into a meaningful whole, and reflect on the process used to answer their problem question. Using the inquiry process, students determine the problem, set their hypothesis, gather data, examine, evaluate and analyze the data in relation to their hypothesis, accept or reject the hypothesis, develop a generalization, and reflect on the process. In this way, social studies concepts can be taught in a mathematical process approach.

According to Putman and Rommel-Esham (2004), oral history projects are another example of inquiry projects that integrate objectives from math, science and language arts with social studies. They also follow the National Standards for Teaching Social Studies:

National Standard II: Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study

of time, continuity and change.

National Standard VIII: Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study of science, technology and society.

The connection among the disciplines is relevant when students conduct research using resources such as the internet, almanacs, encyclopedias, diaries, journals, and newspapers. Students utilize graphic organizers as pre-writing tools prior to writing a finished essay, newspaper article, or organizing a dramatic presentation or other media presentation. Students utilize mathematics in creating charts, graphs, analyzing data, and reporting results. Students can document their understanding of new concepts through projects, written reports, plays, musicals, poems, oral presentations, illustrations, and other art forms (Hawkins, 1997). Oral history projects are an active way to integrate curriculum with social studies standards (Putnam & Rommel-Esham, 2004).

The Effect of No Child Left Behind

School districts have a substantial degree of autonomy in all areas of the curriculum, and in social studies there is greater curricular freedom because it is not a subject for high-stakes testing (Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Informal and anecdotal data indicate a reduced emphasis on social studies and history in the primary and intermediate elementary grades as a result of No Child Left Behind's emphasis on reading and math achievement through standardized testing (Seif, 2003). If social studies is not tested, odds are more likely that it will not be taught. In states with high-stakes testing in other core curricular subjects, social studies is being ignored. The curriculum is narrowed to a

host of tedious skill and drill type activities receiving great amounts of instructional time. When facts are emphasized on tests, they also become the emphasis of classroom instruction and teachers revert to the practice of lecture-dominated classes where best practices are not nearly as important as test practices (Brighton, 2002).

Teachers are not supporting efforts to increase time spent teaching social studies because they are too worried about their test scores and people do not want to invest time or money in those areas where they are not likely to influence results (Savage, 2003). Teachers also attribute their students' lack of interest in social studies to the subject not getting a fair share of effort in curricular planning and to the increased emphasis on reading and math (Zhao & Hoge, 2005).

According to Howard (2003) the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act has had a negative influence on social studies instruction with elementary teachers reportedly shortening social studies lessons. Some integrate reading and writing with social studies in order to address the diminished attention on the social studies curriculum. In a study conducted by Christensen, Wilson, et al.(2001), one social studies teacher related the stress of teaching social studies with tested curriculum with this statement:

“I feel like a cookie maker rather than a teacher, hoping to be able to squeeze in the good stuff (the extras, like social studies, science, character education, and love) between the two bigger cookies of reading and math.”

The same study also reported teachers feeling pressure from school administrators, state mandates correlating with testing and pressure from fellow teachers to designate social studies as the least important curricular area. In these elementary

schools “social studies is simply considered as an extra” (Christensen, Wilson, et. al, 2001).

Some educators are worried about further mandates for standardized testing in social studies. Testing in social studies has been emphasized in some states, but not the majority, and it is unfortunate that this lack of focus on social studies testing minimizes the area of importance of this curriculum. Educators are fighting against additional testing while making a case for the importance of teaching all subjects necessary for a well rounded education (Ediger, 2004).

It is unfortunate social studies concepts are not included in state-mandated tests, because by doing so, it minimizes the importance for social studies instruction. It may de-emphasize the importance of developing the content, and time is taken away from social studies in the curriculum (Hawkins, 1997). The teaching of reading and math as isolated subjects also minimizes the effects of including social studies as an integrated curriculum. It is vital to student development to teach quality social studies units in elementary schools. Solely testing reading and math also de-emphasizes the importance of developing quality assessments for student achievement in social studies as well. Objectives that are tested should emphasize key ideas or generalizations from an integrated curriculum (Ediger, 2004).

Teaching Conceptually

Concepts are considered categories in which we group phenomena within our experience in order to learn and remember information more easily. Concepts involve all learning, thinking and action that allow us to communicate with others. Concepts are general and broad umbrellas that allow us to sort and categorize a variety of specific bits

of knowledge including: Numbers of people, objects, events, and other phenomena. “Concepts are hooks on which we can hang new information” (Martorella & Bean, 2002). Multiple concepts can be clustered together and organized into broader instructional themes, but singular concepts are easier to teach because of the specificity necessary for building a child’s schema. Concepts are taught in all disciplines within the elementary classroom including: Reading, math, science, social studies, language arts, music and physical education.

According to Erickson (2002) the curriculum should be seen as relevant to the life and culture of students, as well as to the world beyond their classroom. It should be based on problem-solving and knowledge production in a manner that attracts students while fueling their in-depth understanding. Students should be able to use the curriculum to enhance their organizational skills in order to retain ideas better through active participation and problem solving. Curriculum should be designed to support students’ transfer of learning to new situations and should ultimately result in maintaining an enduring value in students’ lives as they move beyond mere information to a level of thinking about their own thought processes. Elements of the curriculum include facts, concepts, principles, skills, and attitudes. Conceptual frameworks allow teachers to reduce the number of topics covered and integrate thinking so that students can create patterns and connections between related ideas. Students are encouraged to apply their thinking to conceptual and transferable understandings (Erickson, 2002).

The National Council for the Social Studies recommends 10 conceptual themes in the social studies standards to organize essential understandings for grades K-12: culture, time/continuity/change, people/places/environments, individual development and

identity, individuals/groups/institutions, power/authority and governance, production/distribution/consumption, science/technology/society, global connections, and civic ideas and practices (Erickson, 2002). Conceptual understanding are developed over time through student evaluation of content based examples. This type of learning allows students to express conceptual understandings that transfer to current situations in present society.

Teaching conceptually is teaching with global, encompassing themes which group standards together into meaningful units of study. Teachers should think of the standards as providing scaffolding to link multiple concepts, skills or topics (Brighton, 2002). According to Christensen, Wilson, et.al.(2001), teachers appear to be moving from the notion that social studies is a group of skills or isolated facts to be taught by transmission to the view that social studies should be a conceptual framework for all teaching and learning. Social studies can be an integral part of the entire curriculum when serving as a method for planning integrated concept instruction. Instead of social studies focusing on content and teacher transmission of ideas, it is becoming more of a student-centered focus where life skills are being incorporated into the teaching of all subjects. This type of constructivist teaching weaves different curricular goals and materials together and enables students to construct new knowledge for themselves. It is teaching that is student centered, recognizes diversity in learning styles and emphasizes student engagement in activity.

These concepts are not distinct from social practice but are grounded in students' experiences. According to Zhao and Hoge (2005) students have the greatest difficulty with abstract concepts related to time or place because teachers do not provide enough

life-related activities for students to relate those concepts to their own experiences. Concept development involves growing into the culture's values and practices as well as learning to think in systematical and categorical ways. The process of concept development is facilitated through activity in cultural practice because direct instruction in principles alone leads only to a mindless learning of words and that type of knowledge will not lead to meaningful application (Vygotsky, 1987). Practice contributes to learning and rich conceptual development because it requires social engagement. Lave and Wenger (1991) named these classrooms communities of practice because they provide meaningful opportunities for students to participate in learning.

One benefit of concept teaching is that it emphasizes depth of subject matter rather than breadth. Students cannot develop strong connections between concepts when constructing knowledge when too many conceptions are covered. Concepts must be taught and reinforced through student experience in activities that stress depth of fewer learned concepts. Without this continual reinforcement a concept will not fully develop beyond its rudimentary stages and knowledge will seem fragmented. Educators have criticized buffet-style curricular programs that offer a brief sampling of many topics and result in superficial knowledge which only enables students to mark the correct answer on a test, rather than develop deeper conceptual frameworks of knowledge (Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 1985).

Hilda Taba investigated the development and encouragement of student thinking in the elementary social studies curriculum. She developed the theory that the most durable form of knowledge lies in concepts and that the focus of social studies curriculum should center on those concepts (Taba, 1967). Taba became involved in a project to

design, develop and implement a curriculum that included a conceptual base, that provided a model for curriculum innovations and that developed a format for implementing those practices. She also sought to evaluate the curriculum with her study. In her version of social studies, content was sampled rather than covered.

Taba encouraged teachers to write objectives that would provide a consistent focus for the curriculum. Two of the most essential elements are the concepts and universal themes that structure the in-depth learning. Connecting these components is vital to the development of a sequence of broad concepts that will be taught over a semester or year of study. The concepts must flow and build upon each other in order to increase student understanding (Cannon, 2002). Objectives set the criteria for teachers when selecting content and learning activities for each concept and guide the evaluation of achievement. Cannon (2002) suggests that teachers ask themselves three questions when planning the curriculum: 1. What does the student have to know? 2. How is this important to the student? and 3. Where can the concept go from here?

These objectives should be based not only on society's needs but also reflect the needs and interests of the students. Her overall goals were based on multiple objectives, much like national or state standards in setting the framework of the curriculum. Some social studies learning objectives are duplicated in other disciplines or repeated over several grade levels (Dunn, 200). Unlike a listing of objectives, Taba wanted the social studies subject matter broken into three levels that included the themes and topics needing emphasis. She divided them into key concepts, organizing ideas and specific facts.

Key concepts represent highly abstract generalizations. According to Vygotsky (1987), formal abstract knowledge of a concept enables students to reapply it to new situations. A variety of ideas would come from these key concepts and would serve as the organizing focus of social studies units. Organizing ideas were chosen based on their significance, explanatory power, appropriateness, durability and balance. From this unit teachers would create multiple objectives and ensure that they were connected directly to the students' learning experiences. For Taba, covering specific facts was an impossibility. Facts are always changing and students cannot rely on memorization of a body of factual data as a meaningful learning experience for future application in a variety of settings (Fraenkel, 1994; VanSledright & Frankes, 2000).

Many of Taba's ideas on curriculum design, including the "spiral" curriculum in which key concepts are referred to again and again throughout the grades, remain influential in the 21st century. Exploring the spiral curriculum was also part of the work of Bruner (1960) who felt that it engaged students in ongoing explorations and extended a theme or concept over time while it is mediated through a variety of curricular topics. Conceptual development is sustained through educational environments that enable ongoing contact and dialogue. Taba organized teaching strategies around the cognitive and affective domains which allow students to form generalizations from the concepts and ideas they gather during their learning activities. Students are learning by doing in this active process of identifying values, analyzing conflicts, and perception of relationships. When students are actively engaged, they become motivated and interested in their learning and the transfer of learning potential increases.

According to Ediger (2000), social studies teachers should also stress writing concepts in their teaching. One way for teachers to facilitate this idea is through the use of journal writing. Writing could also be taught formally through the use of dramatizations with goals stressing creativity and expression. Social studies content also can be used when students write diverse forms of folklore. In this respect students are encouraged to write across the curriculum with the acquisition of relevant facts, concepts, generalizations and main ideas. Teachable moments can also be used to teach some social studies concepts with writing.

Farris (1993) suggests that teachers use quality children's literature including picture books to teach social studies concepts to elementary students. Picture books are useful in adding depth to certain topics within a concept and can also be utilized to present sensitive concepts to younger children. Teachers may also use them to pique students' curiosity about a new concept or topic of study in the areas of anthropology, geography, history or sociology. Intermediate students in grades four through six may also enjoy picture books for the new insights into historical perspectives that they offer. Picture books help students build critical thinking skills by encouraging students to compare and contrast ideas, study social issues such as war and poverty, and learn to deal with the emotional issues of characters who face hardships and struggles of life (Farris & Fuhler, 1994). Successful history instruction can appeal to students' imaginations and feelings as they study stories of the past including a variety of different cultures. More historical concepts can be taught in the primary-level social studies curriculum that includes concepts such as: time, change, human life, the past and basic economic concepts (Wade, 2002).

The literature cited within this chapter points to specific reasons why social studies is a marginalized curriculum in today's elementary classrooms. First, it is de-emphasized when stacked against other curricular staples which receive the lion's share of instructional hours in the school day, reading and mathematics. Second, No Child Left Behind legislation does not consider it as significant as reading and math and it is not required as a mandated criterion referenced testing discipline. When schools are not held accountable for students' knowledge in the field of social studies, the heat is off to teach it or even give it a decent amount of recognition in the curriculum framework.

One of the ways that was mentioned within the chapter to holistically include social studies within the teaching day was through the use of integration. Curricular integration with reading and social studies, math or science, or even language arts and writing allows teachers to re-emphasize the importance of the subject matter. Students also see the significance of the content when incorporating it with meaningful opportunities to participate in learning that seems real and applicable in the eyes of the learner.

One way to integrate curriculum is by teaching cross-curricular concepts such as respect or responsibility. There is a plethora of learning activities that include reading, math, games, role play, music and art that would tie in seamlessly with these social studies concepts. Hilda Taba supported this type of concept teaching and found that teaching was more effective when the concepts followed a spiraling pattern: Were introduced, re-taught, and reinforced throughout the K-12 curriculum. Conceptual teaching is one method of integration that allows for a variety of teaching strategies to

cross discipline lines in a holistic approach to creating meaning by connecting bits of isolated knowledge into a framework of understanding.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter introduces the purpose of the study by stating the research problem and giving an overview of the research design. It outlines and discusses the data collection process in detail with information regarding survey and interview procedures and describes the usage of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The role of the researcher in regards to conducting the study in an ethical manner is also described later in the chapter. Further attention is given to the process and procedures of data analysis used in this study and the closing section explains the value or significance of conducting this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this two-phase, sequential mixed methods study was to obtain statistical, quantitative results from a sample and then follow up with a few individuals to probe or explore those results in more depth. In the first phase, a quantitative research question compared how often one hundred 1st through 5th grade teachers in the Lawton Public Schools district taught individual social studies concepts rather than teaching social studies within a given block of instructional time. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were used to probe significant survey results by exploring aspects of their concept teaching with 10 of the 100 participants surveyed in the district to find out how they teach social studies concepts.

This study assumes a pragmatist theoretical perspective using a theory base established prior to data collection and a study oriented to real-world practice. The strategy of inquiry involves a mixed methods design. The methods include a closed-

ended survey measure and open-ended interview questions. This type of study allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data sequentially. The mixed methods design was selected in order to generalize findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a concept for individual teachers (Creswell, 2003).

Bodies of research exist which document teachers' lack of time spent teaching social studies (Kaplan, 2002; McCall, 2004; Hinde, 2005) with some studies claiming that social studies is not being taught at all in primary classrooms (Goodlad, 1983). However, social studies may still be taught, just not in the traditional time block during the elementary school day. It may be taught as individual concepts integrated throughout the curriculum. This study addressed what remains to be explored in current trends for teaching social studies curricular standards. Findings from this study can be related to practicum experiences in teacher preparation programs at the university level and may also benefit the novice teacher trying to juggle multiple subjects and curriculum requirements. This research may also be beneficial for those who teach social studies methods courses in relating the subject matter to practice and toward subject integration so that the discipline is not marginalized in the elementary classroom.

Oklahoma PASS skills are somewhat integrated. For example, a fourth grade reading process comprehension standard I, objective B1 states that students will read and comprehend both fiction and nonfiction. Social studies textbooks are readily available non-fiction resources that every student has access to and would be a key source for integration of content. Another integrated objective in reading and social studies is the fourth grade standard III, objective D. Interpret information from charts, maps, graphs, tables and diagrams. This not only integrates reading with social studies, but also math

and science. Elementary life science for fourth and fifth grade contains standard XIII, objectives B, C, and D all integrate with social studies: B. Changes in environmental conditions can effect the survival of individual organisms and/or entire species; C. Organisms in a community depend on each other for food, shelter, and reproduction; D. Human interactions, such as building, pollution, and clearing the land impact the environment (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2002).

The questioning portion of this study asked teachers if they teach specific content concepts that would be included under the umbrella of the social studies curriculum. Teachers indicated by revealing how often they teach the concepts whether or not they teach social studies in their elementary classrooms. Those who teach the concepts were questioned more in-depth about how they make the concept teaching process work with other curricular areas. Insights into the juggling of multiple disciplines and teaching strategies to accomplish the central purpose of teaching the concepts were documented through the use of interviews. The research question asks if social studies concepts are really being taught in elementary schools, and if so, how are they taught?

Mixed Methods Design

The mixed methods framework addresses issues regarding underlying paradigms, a variety of research designs, issues of validity, as well as issues regarding data collection and analysis. This framework combines aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research designs within a single study to be mutually supportive of each other in order to explore the research question comprehensively. The two methods come from differing paradigms in regards of ontology and epistemology and several authors have argued that the methods should not be mixed within a single study (Greene & Caracelli, 1997).

However, both can be used within the same study to strengthen the research process. Quantitative research attempts to separate facts and values in search of laws and takes a subject-object position on the relationship to subject matter, while qualitative research assumes facts and values are inextricably mixed and seeks understanding while viewing the subject matter in a subject-subject approach (Smith, 1983).

Pragmatism can serve as the underlying paradigm for mixed methods studies because it does not subscribe to any one philosophy regarding knowledge claims (Creswell, 2003; Datta, 1997). Pragmatists reject an either/or component of research design and consider truth to be “what works” in regards to the research question. The focus of the study is ultimately what guides the choice of methods used (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Pragmatists base research design on practical and consequential purposes. Miles and Huberman (1994) agree, “Epistemological purity doesn’t get research done” (p.21).

This study followed what Caracelli and Greene (1997) refer to as a component approach, which includes triangulation, complementarity and sequential designs. In this component approach, the mixing of quantitative and qualitative techniques occurs during the data interpretation and conclusion stages. In triangulating data, different methods are drawn upon to assess the convergence of interpretations. The complementarity design uses the results of quantitative and qualitative data to enhance or clarify the results of the alternative method (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Horvath, 2005). The reason this design was employed in this study is because the in-depth qualitative interviews were utilized to provide depth to the previously administered quantitative survey data. The sequential design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; 1998) refers to the chronology of the use of

quantitative and qualitative techniques. Sequential designs consist of two distinct phases of data collection that occur consecutively. The quantitative phase is conducted prior to the qualitative stage, which answers to what extent the concepts were taught.

One strategy of inquiry that was implemented to inform the procedure included the use of a cross-sectional survey questionnaire typically associated with a quantitative approach. It was used with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Babbie, 1990). That strategy was followed through using a case study methodology associated with a more qualitative approach which allowed for much more detailed data collected by means of interviews over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995).

A mixed methods framework for design was utilized in this study so that a predetermined instrument based questions application could be followed up by interview data. This method is referred to by Creswell (2003) as the sequential procedure. The use of the sequential procedure will help expand the quantitative findings using qualitative methods of inquiry. Beginning the study with a quantitative method also allowed for the testing of theories or concepts, which allowed for a detailed exploration of just a few cases or individuals later in the study.

Quantitative Methods

A survey design was utilized to provide a numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2003). The survey design identified the purpose of the research and indicated why the survey is the preferred type of data collection procedure for the study. The survey utilized in this study was given in a single-stage, random sampling. The gender and education levels of the participants was recorded as well. The survey was cross-sectional with the data

collected at one point in time in the form of self-administered questionnaires. The survey instrument was designed for this research and included the use of a Likert scale for teachers to indicate how often they taught various social studies concepts. The scale ranged from *Never Taught* to *Taught Often*. Each survey instrument included a cover letter, demographic and behavioral items and closing instructions (See Appendix A).

Pilot Study

A pilot study of the survey was conducted during the month of May, 2006 with teachers in grades 1-5 in two Lawton Public Schools elementary schools: Cleveland Elementary and Lincoln Elementary, to review the face validity and effectiveness of the survey as a data collection instrument prior to its use in the formal study. Each school principal was given a survey and demographic data sheet for five teachers, one each in grades 1-5. I received 8 of the 10 surveys back in a two week time period. Seven of the eight returned were female teachers. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 1.5 years to 30 years, with an average of 16 years. All grade levels were represented by a returned survey. Demographic data also indicated specialty areas or background areas of interest for each teacher. Of those participating: Three selected music; one selected art; five selected social studies, two selected science; five selected language arts; five selected reading; four selected math; two selected general studies; none indicated physical education as a specialty area. There was a space available to indicate other specialty areas. One wrote in “special education” and another wrote “early childhood.”

Survey data indicated that a variety of concepts were often taught, scoring a 3 on the Likert scale: Attitudes, citizenship, community, conflict, cooperation, decision making, family, honesty, model, responsibility, socialization, and values. Those concepts

that were sometimes taught were represented with a 2 on the scale and included: Change, culture, democracy, freedom, justice, leadership, needs, persuasion, population, race, resources, rights, and technology. Those concepts that teachers indicated never teaching and scoring a 1 on the Likert scale included: Nationalism, power, religion and revolution. The results of this data indicate that social studies is being taught in elementary classrooms because specific concepts were identified as taught objectives.

The survey was found to be a useful data collection tool and contains a wealth of information regarding specific concepts, as well as those not being taught, in social studies classrooms. This survey was found lacking in regards to the number of concepts indicating social studies content. After brainstorming with other social studies teachers, the variety of concepts was expanded in the larger study to include: Colonization, constitution, customs, difference, economy, exploration, frontier, hero, independence, laws, natural environment, patriotism, region, respect, rules, service, state and trade. The “model” concept was removed from the original survey because teachers felt that the word was more of a skill or part of the teaching/learning process rather than a social studies content concept.

The changes made on the final survey instrument used during the data collection phase of the formal study showed improved face validity because of the additional input and review of its content and enhanced meaning in regards of implications for the teaching field. More concepts can be reviewed by a larger sample of teachers for further analysis.

Qualitative Methods

The interview process was conducted as a case study, which does not claim any particular method for data collection or analysis. A case study design was chosen for this research problem in order to gain an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded unit and because the focus of this study was on a process rather than outcomes. The case study method was appropriate because it is an essential form of social science inquiry that relies on multiple sources of evidence, and is used to document implementation processes (Merriam, 1998). Knowledge gained from case study research is more concrete and contextual in that it is based in sensory experience and explores a process. It is used to answer “how” questions by following pre-specified procedures, with a contemporary set of events, when the investigator does not have control over behavioral events observed and documented. Its protocol assures that diverse data collection will involve converging lines of inquiry and triangulation of data (Yin, 2003). Insights gained from this case study can directly influence future practice and research.

Yin (1994) recommends using the case study when “how” questions need to be answered because they can explain a process, such as how teachers teach social studies concepts in an integrated curricular framework. Interpretive case studies allow researchers to challenge theoretical perspectives prior to data collection, such as, elementary teachers are not teaching social studies in their classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study which were guided by a set of questions and issues that needed to be addressed, but the exact order of the questioning was not necessarily important. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

The aim of the design was to study how specific practices operate in schools, how they are affected by the various school situations in which they are applied, and what the teachers who are directly involved with the process think are advantages and disadvantages of the practice. This allowed the researcher to document what it is like to be participating in the scheme (Bassey, 1999). One advantage of using the case study method with this study was that it allowed the researcher to understand complexity in particular contexts that would not be quantifiable. It does not represent a “sample” as in quantitative statistics. It shed light on holistic, meaningful, real-life experiences. A disadvantage of this method is that the findings from this study cannot be generalized to other contexts but can be generalized to theoretical propositions (Simons, 1996).

Data Collection

Data collection began with a non-experimental design survey in order to generalize results to a population and then focused, in the second phase, on qualitative interviews to collect detailed views from participants in smaller case studies (Creswell, 2003). The setting of the study was the Lawton Public Schools district. This district is over a century old, is the third largest school district in the state of Oklahoma with 37 schools and a census of nearly 18,000 students. The district is located in southwest Oklahoma near the foothills of the Wichita Mountains. More specifically, this study included 100 elementary school teachers in grades 1 through 5 who teach social studies. These participants came from a variety of the district’s 28 elementary schools. The one hundred participant sampling is somewhat guided and determined by the number of elementary schools within the Lawton district and the limitations of the study to only those teachers in grades 1-5. School population size varies as Lawton’s model is based

on neighborhood schools and some participating schools have only one teacher per grade level in certain neighborhoods. This sample size did not greatly effect the statistical importance of the data collected, but served as an adequate sample for the purpose of this particular study. It included enough participants to allow the researcher to answer the research questions posed earlier in the study. The number also allowed the researcher to interview those volunteer participants, 10 of 100 who served as a majority representative sample, who helped enrich the quantitative data with their qualitative experiences.

The survey portion of the study took place in the elementary school buildings and was distributed in written format by the school administrator during scheduled faculty meetings. The survey instrument was collected by the building administrator and was mailed to the researcher in a sealed certified mailing envelope. From the collected surveys, a purposive sample of 10 teachers was chosen for the second phase of data collection, the interview process.

Participants were recruited through personal contacts within the Lawton Public Schools district by elementary building principals as they sought volunteers willing to complete the initial survey instrument. Specific information about the study was given to teachers to ensure that participants understand the research and their role in it. Elementary teachers signed an informed consent document verifying their voluntary agreement to participate in the study with the acknowledgement that they may withdraw their participation at any time or decline to answer specific questions.

The informed consent document included an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of their participation. It also included a description of the procedures that the researcher followed in collecting data. The form described any

foreseeable risks to the participant as well as a description of the benefits of participating in such a study. The document also explained how the researcher maintained confidentiality of records.

Role of Researcher

The role of the researcher is one of curious investigator. I have taught elementary school social studies in the Lawton Public School district for six years and have served as an instructional leader in the capacity of an assistant principal for one year. As part of a curricular team making decisions regarding what will be taught utilizing Oklahoma PASS standards and the district's instructional goals, I have utilized a variety of teaching strategies that emphasize teaching social studies concepts. I am currently serving as a school principal where I encourage and support teachers as they attempt to incorporate all learning goals and objectives into their lesson plans as we prepare students for life while also preparing them for high-stakes testing. I chose the Lawton Public Schools as a sampling site because I no longer live or teach there but maintain a network of administrative support that helped facilitate the data collection process in an environment that is familiar and easily accessible. Elementary principals in this district invited all of their 1st through 5th grade educators to participate in the survey for a collection of 100 total surveys and of those, I selected 10 participants as a majority representative sample for the qualitative data collection phase of the study.

The ethical issues presented in this study included the protection of human research subjects. All participants were treated with respect as autonomous individuals. Each participant had the right to make informed decisions about what information they

shared with others. All participant names or personal data were kept confidential and pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality in transcripts of interview data and written analysis of data included in chapter four. Demographic data such as race, gender, age, years of teaching experience and level of educational experiences were not disclosed to any other researcher nor was it included in the data reporting. All participants completed an informed consent form approved by the institutional review board of the University of Oklahoma before participating in the study or having their voices taped during the interview process. All written records and audio tapes are securely held by the researcher for a period of five years after the completion of study, upon which time all such materials will be destroyed by the researcher.

Research study participants were given an additional opportunity to review all transcribed data in an effort to seek clarity with additional commentary or strike invalid statements from the record. During this process any changes or addendums to the original data were kept confidential and the continued use of pseudonyms was in place to protect privacy.

Data Analysis

The survey data was analyzed quantitatively. The first numbers to be reported were those of participants who did or did not return the completed survey. Based on the number of surveys returned completed an analysis of Likert Scale results was conducted. The findings determined which teachers taught social studies concepts in their elementary classrooms. Ten of those teachers indicated that they taught concepts and were randomly sampled for the second phase of the study, the interview process.

Each audio recorded interview was transcribed by the researcher and read through in order to obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative case study data was analyzed by a coding process where the researcher drew similarities out that cut across the data in an effort to organize them into categories and themes. Different categories were color-coded and cut from the text to aid in organization of data. A list was made of all similar categories and they were clustered together in search of interrelating categories. After the clustering process, the list was compared to the data once more and the topics were written as codes near the appropriate portions of the interview text to see if any other codes emerged. Codes were grouped and rewritten in simple terms as larger themes.

This study also involved a detailed description of the setting and interviewed individuals, followed later with analysis of the data for emerging themes or issues. Those themes became narrative descriptions in chapter four which described how teachers taught social studies concepts. They were listed as major findings and included examples of participant quotations and specific evidence. Lessons learned from the data analysis process were included in chapter five and include a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the theories presented in chapter two.

Three different strategies were employed in this study to enhance internal validity: triangulation, member checks and peer examinations. Triangulation of data used multiple sources and methods to confirm findings. In addition to survey data and interview data, sample social studies lesson plans were collected from the teacher interviewed as another data source. Lesson plans were reviewed for inclusion of social studies concepts that are taught, indications of if and how social studies concepts are

integrated into other disciplines, and documentation of time spent teaching social studies. Member checks were also used during the second phase of the study where interview data was taken back to the participants interviewed to inquire about possible results. Peer examinations was another technique used that allowed colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerged from the themes (Merriam, 1998).

Value or Significance of Study

The importance and implications of this study for researchers and practitioners is three-fold. First, the findings from this study can be utilized to show whether or not social studies is actually being taught in elementary schools, and whether or not it is taught in the traditional setting and time frame. Secondly, the survey data indicated whether or not concept teaching is alive and well in elementary classrooms. Are teachers integrating social studies standards into other curricular areas where there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the traditional instructional school day to teach a historical block of social studies?

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

Data Analysis

The data collection process began by receiving consent from the Lawton Public School district in Lawton, Oklahoma to collect data from their elementary teachers in grades 1-5. After receiving permission from the superintendent, I began creating packets for school principals. Each packet contained a cover letter soliciting help with distributing the surveys (see Appendix A), five informed consent documents (Appendix B), five surveys (Appendix C), and five self-addressed, stamped envelopes. I was invited to present my research project to all elementary principals in the Lawton Public Schools district at their monthly elementary administrators meeting. I distributed packets to principals of participating schools: Adams, Almor West, Brockland, Carriage Hills, Country Club Heights, Crosby Park, Douglass, Eisenhower, Geronimo Road, Howell, Hugh Bish, Jackson, Park Lane, Pat Henry, Pioneer Park, Ridgecrest, Sheridan Road, Sullivan Village, Swinney, Washington, Whittier Wilson and Woodland Hills. Two elementary schools in the district did not participate in this data collection process because they had participated earlier in the pilot study. Two other schools were not selected to participate in this study, Lee and Westwood, because those schools are early childhood centers offering full day Pre-K programs and would not meet the specifications of this study. Data collection instruments were given to principals to pass along to 115 teachers within the district.

Each principal who received a packet was informed of the purpose of this study and given directions on how to distribute the contents of the packet. Principals selected

one teacher within his/her school in each of the grade levels, first through fifth. Principals invited teachers to participate on a volunteer basis. No incentive was given to complete the survey or return it by October 31, 2006. Teachers began returning the signed informed consent documents and completed surveys within one week of the principal's meeting. Three weeks after the surveys were handed out I emailed the principals of those schools who had not yet returned copies of the survey. I also electronically attached the informed consent forms and survey forms for those who might have misplaced their packets. Several more surveys were returned after that email attempt. By the end of survey data collection, 55 of the 115 surveys were returned with signed informed consent forms.

Demographic Information

There was a total of 55 surveys returned within the 7 weeks that the first phase of data was collected. Of those 55 surveys, 51 (93%) of the participants were female and 4 (7%) were male. Nine first grade teachers, 12 second grade, 11 third grade, 14 fourth grade, and 9 fifth grade teachers responded to the survey. Years of teaching experience for participants ranged from 1 year to 33 years. The average years of teaching experience for all participants was 16 years. Areas of teaching specialization were self-reported by participants and included the following options: Music, art, physical education, science, math, language arts/writing, reading, social studies, and general education. There was also a blank category for teachers to write in other areas of specialization. There were 4 participants who specialized in music; 8 in art, 7 in physical education; 15 in science; 23 in math; 23 in language arts/writing; 31 in reading; 21 in social studies, and 11 in general education. There was 1 candidate who wrote in a specialization area that included

psychology (See Table 1). Of the 55 survey participants, 30 agreed to participate in a follow-up interview with the researcher while 25 did not.

Table 1:

Demographic Data

Survey	Gender	Grade Level	Years Taught	Specialty or Background Area (M, music; A, art; PE, physical education; S, science; MA, math; LA, language arts; R, reading; SS, social studies; G, general)								
				M	A	PE	S	MA	LA	R	SS	G
01	F	3	17		X		X	X	X	X		
02	F	2	23					X	X			
03	F	2	26						X	X		
04	F	1	24		X			X		X		
05	F	3	25					X	X	X	X	
06	M	4	5		X					X		
07	F	1	28				X		X	X	X	
08	F	1	15			X			X	X		
09	F	3	3				X	X	X	X	X	
10	F	4	16									
11	F	3	4			X		X				X
12	F	4	6									X
13	F	1	3							X		
14	F	5	15		X		X	X		X	X	
15	F	4	22					X	X	X	X	
16	F	2	3			X						

Survey	Gender	Grade Level	Years Taught	Specialty or Background Area (M, music; A, art; PE, physical education; S, science; MA, math; LA, language arts; R, reading; SS, social studies; G, general)								
				M	A	PE	S	MA	LA	R	SS	G
17	F	5	27				X	X			X	
18	F	2	28	X		X						
19	F	3	7							X		
20	F	4	6					X		X		X
21	F	3	3				X	X				
22	M	4	12			X	X	X			X	
23	F	2	25					X		X		
24	M	5	8	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
25	F	1	6		X				X	X		
26	F	5	28									X
27	F	3	10									X
28	F	4	31				X				X	
29	F	2	13				X	X	X	X	X	
30	F	4	7				X	X	X	X	X	
31	F	5	2									X
32	F	4	19							X		
33	F	1	9									
34	F	1	31							X		X
35	F	2	18								X	X

Survey Number	Gender	Grade Level	Years Taught	Specialty or Background Area (M, music; A, art; PE, physical education; S, science; MA, math; LA, language arts; R, reading; SS, social studies; G, general)								
				M	A	PE	S	MA	LA	R	SS	G
37	F	4	8					X	X	X		
38	F	5	2									
39	M	5	4				X	X				
40	F	4	25			X			X			X
41	F	2	31						X	X		X
42	F	5	26	X	X		X	X				X
43	F	3	32	X					X	X		X
44	F	3	28							X		
45	F	2	24							X		X
46	F	2	20					X		X		
47	F	4	12					X	X	X		X
48	F	3	2									
49	F	1	15									
50	F	4	13					X	X	X	X	X
51	F	5	1									X
52	F	1	33						X		X	X
53	F	2	26		X		X		X	X		X
54	F	2	19				X	X	X	X		X
55	F	4	32						X	X		

Presentation of Results

The survey asked teachers to use a Likert Scale to rank how often they taught 47 different social studies concepts. The Likert Scale was numbered 1-3, with 1 representing those concepts never taught; 2 represented those concepts sometimes taught; and 3 represented concepts that were often taught. The 47 concepts were gathered from a variety of sources including Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills, the California Concepts Collection, and by pooling concepts from the pacing calendars of skills within teacher textbook guides. The concepts questioned on this survey were those that seemed universal to social studies teaching in elementary grades 1 through 5 and that were supported through inclusion in teacher resources and curriculum guides (See Table 2). Based on the number of times teachers taught those specific concepts, the Likert scale was used to indicate the emphasis placed on that concept in his/her classroom.

Table 2:

Presentation of Results

Concept	Never Taught	Sometimes Taught	Often Taught
Attitudes	1	2	3
Change	1	2	3
Citizenship	1	2	3
Climate	1	2	3
Colonization	1	2	3
Community	1	2	3
Conflict	1	2	3
Constitution	1	2	3
Cooperation	1	2	3
Culture	1	2	3
Customs	1	2	3
Decision making	1	2	3
Democracy	1	2	3
Difference	1	2	3
Economy	1	2	3
Exploration	1	2	3

Concept	Never Taught	Sometimes Taught	Often Taught
Family	1	2	3
Freedom	1	2	3
Frontier	1	2	3
Hero	1	2	3
Honesty	1	2	3
Independence	1	2	3
Justice	1	2	3
Laws	1	2	3
Leadership	1	2	3
Nationalism	1	2	3
Natural Environment	1	2	3
Needs	1	2	3
Patriotism	1	2	3
Persuasion	1	2	3
Population	1	2	3
Power	1	2	3
Race	1	2	3
Region	1	2	3
Religion	1	2	3
Resources	1	2	3
Respect	1	2	3
Responsibility	1	2	3
Revolution	1	2	3
Rights	1	2	3
Rules	1	2	3
Service	1	2	3
Socialization	1	2	3
State	1	2	3
Technology	1	2	3
Trade	1	2	3
Values	1	2	3

Nearly 50 surveys were returned within one month of data collection and I began contacting the teachers who had indicated that they would be willing to volunteer to participate in the second phase of data collection to schedule interviews. I contacted teachers by their Lawton Public Schools email address that they had written on the

bottom of the demographics portion of their survey. I introduced myself, thanked them for completing and returning their survey, and explained the second phase of the data collection process. An attached file that included the interview questions was given to the participants as an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the questions and consider their responses prior to the phone interview. I also attached a second informed consent form (Appendix D) for the participant to sign that gave permission to record the interview over the telephone. Those forms were printed by the participants, signed, and returned to the principal investigator. Participants responded to the email with a convenient time of day for them to receive a call and conduct the interview by telephone. Interviews were conducted September through November, 2006.

Interviews were tape-recorded and lasted anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes in length. Interviews included the following questions:

1. What social studies concepts do you teach in your classroom?

Sub-Questions: What source do you primarily use for social studies concept content? What role does Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills have in your lesson planning? How do you determine which concepts receive more emphasis than others? What portion of your content comes from a survey of students' interests?

2. How do you teach social studies concepts in your elementary classroom?

Sub-Questions: Do you use differentiated instruction with diverse learners and learning styles? What percentage of your lessons would you say come from projects/thematic units? What portion of your day do you devote to social studies?

3. What is the role of integrative teaching with social studies and other disciplines in your classroom?

Sub-Questions: Are there subjects that lend themselves to integration with social studies? Do you do any team teaching with your peers in regards to thematic planning and instruction? What skills are you able to teach with social studies content?

4. May I see some samples of social studies lessons you've taught and make a photo copy of any of your social studies lessons for further review?

Sub-Questions: How often do you plan for social studies content to be included in your lesson plans?

Does your school administration expect to see social studies documented in your plans? What source do you rely on most for social studies lesson ideas/components/and activities?

Interview data were transcribed and emailed back to the participants to review their responses. No participants emailed responses which requested changes made to the transcribed interviews. Three participants emailed copies of their social studies lesson plans by attachment while others chose to mail the researcher copies of their hand-written lesson plans. Others shared internet websites that they used to find social studies lesson plans in lieu of sending any plans for review. All plans were received and reviewed during the second phase of data collection. Transcribed interview data were coded and themed in order to determine consistencies and differences with how teachers teach social studies. Three themes emerged: Concepts taught in social studies, planning and emphasis, and how teachers teach social studies, which includes the role of integration.

Concepts taught in Social Studies

The first theme that emerged deals with which concepts teachers say they teach in social studies. The survey data documented a wide variety of responses to the prescribed concepts, but the teachers interviewed mentioned their own lists from their lesson plans. There were 46 concepts that were mentioned during the interviews and several of those were repeated by at least half of those interviewed and include: Citizenship, communities, map skills/geography, and responsibility. Many of the concepts listed also take into account the Great Expectations program, which is a school-wide program that aims to teach students basic life principles or core essentials. Among those are: Respect, responsibility, perseverance, courage, loyalty, citizenship, patience, cooperation, and integrity. These character traits are taught in an effort to help students become better citizens in their current school setting and in their future responsibilities as adults. Other concepts mentioned include war, government, culture, economics, the environment, inventors/biographies, natural resources, the five themes of geography, and others. In relation to the quantitative reporting, these themes would have ranked under the “Sometimes Taught” category with a Likert scale recording of 2.0 to 2.9.

Of the 47 concepts, nine appear to be universal in that there was almost an emphatic response to repeated re-teaching of these concepts. Those include: Attitudes, citizenship, community, cooperation, honesty, respect, responsibility, rules and values. There were also nine concepts that were consistently ranked as less important to teachers because they were marked more often as a 1 (never taught) by the 55 participants. Those concepts include: Colonization, economy, nationalism, persuasion, population, power, religion, revolution and trade. However, it is important to note that no concept mean

was totaled at 1.0 (never taught), meaning that all 47 concepts were being taught to some degree or extent in the school district. Many concepts received more importance and exposure due to grade level appropriateness. For instance, the majority of third grade teachers often taught communities, while the majority of fifth grade teachers taught exploration and patriotism. That difference could be attributed to the curriculum guidelines in the Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills or the grade level scope and sequence of adopted textbooks (See Table 3).

Table 3: First and Second Grade Concepts

Fist and Second Grades			
Concepts Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)	Concepts Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
Citizenship	3.0	Attitudes	2.8
Cooperation	3.0	Change	2.0
Respect	3.0	Climate	2.3
Responsibility	3.0	Community	2.8
Rules	3.0	Conflict	2.6
		Constitution	2.3
		Culture	2.4
		Customs	2.4
		Decision making	2.7
		Democracy	2.3
		Difference	2.7
		Family	2.9
		Freedom	2.6
		Hero	2.2
		Honesty	2.9
		Independence	2.8
		Justice	2.2
		Laws	2.3
		Leadership	2.6
		Natural environment	2.4
		Needs	2.6
		Patriotism	2.7
		Race	2.0

Concepts Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)	Concepts Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
		Resources	2.3
		Rights	2.3
		Service	2.3
		Socialization	2.0
		State	2.4
		Technology	2.0
		Values	2.8

It is significant to note that those concepts not rating a mean score of 2.0 or higher on the Likert Scale for first and second grades include: Colonization, economy, exploration, frontier, nationalism, persuasion, population, power, region, religion, revolution, and trade. Those concepts are least taught because they are not designated PASS objectives for those grade levels. Table 4 lists those concepts taught often or sometimes in the third and fourth grades in the Lawton Public Schools.

Table 4:

Third and Fourth Grade Concepts

Third and Fourth Grades			
Concepts Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)	Concepts Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
Responsibility	3.0	Attitudes	2.6
		Change	2.4
		Citizenship	2.7
		Climate	2.2
		Community	2.6
		Conflict	2.4
		Constitution	2.1
		Cooperation	2.7
		Culture	2.5
		Customs	2.5
		Decision making	2.5
		Democracy	2.3
		Difference	2.3

Third and Fourth Grades (Continued)

Concepts Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)	Concepts Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
		Exploration	2.3
		Family	2.5
		Freedom	2.4
		Frontier	2.2
		Laws	2.3
		Leadership	2.5
		Natural environment	2.3
		Needs	2.3
		Patriotism	2.7
		Population	2.0
		Race	2.3
		Region	2.4
		Resources	2.3
		Respect	2.9
		Rights	2.5
		Rules	2.7
		Service	2.3
		Socialization	2.4
		State	2.5
		Technology	2.3
		Trade	2.0
		Values	2.8

It is significant to note that those concepts not rating a mean score of 2.0 or higher on the Likert Scale for third and fourth grades include: Colonization, economy, nationalism, persuasion, power, religion, and revolution. Also note that there was only one concept ranking a 3.0 as often taught in third and fourth grades, responsibility. A

notable change from concepts often taught in first and second grades to third and fourth grades is less emphasis placed on the concepts of citizenship, cooperation, respect and rules. This change might be attributed to students' increased level of experience with the school socialization process, learning the rules and norms of the institution, and practice participating in community settings. Table 5 lists those concepts taught often or sometimes in the fifth grade in the Lawton Public Schools.

Table 5:

Fifth Grade Concepts

Fifth Grade			
Concepts Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)	Concepts Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
Community	3.0	Attitudes	2.8
Honesty	3.0	Change	2.4
		Citizenship	2.9
		Climate	2.5
		Colonization	2.0
		Conflict	2.6
		Constitution	2.4
		Cooperation	2.9
		Culture	2.5
		Customs	2.5
		Decision making	2.5
		Democracy	2.6
		Difference	2.4
		Economy	2.3
		Exploration	2.3
		Family	2.6
		Freedom	2.6
		Frontier	2.1
		Hero	2.0
		Independence	2.5
		Justice	2.5
		Laws	2.5
		Leadership	2.5
		Nationalism	2.1

Fifth Grade (Continued)

Concepts Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)	Concepts Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
		Natural environment	2.9
		Needs	2.5
		Patriotism	2.5
		Persuasion	2.1
		Population	2.1
		Power	2.0
		Race	2.1
		Region	2.5
		Resources	2.8
		Respect	2.9
		Responsibility	2.9
		Rights	2.5

It is significant to note that only two concepts scored a mean of less than 2.0 on the Likert Scale for the fifth grade: Religion with a mean score of 1.6, and revolution with a mean score of 1.9. All other concepts ranked as sometimes or often taught. It is also interesting to note that community ranks as a concept often taught once again, after being dropped from the list in the third and fourth grades. The majority of concepts are taught in fifth grade; and those taught the least may be due to controversy and PASS significance. For example, world history is not introduced formally as a PASS skill until the sixth grade and most of those units of study include world religions.

Other contemplation of religion in general during social studies lessons may be considered controversial and teachers would naturally avoid those to keep parents out of their principals' offices. Religion seen as a concept of world religions is therefore a PASS skill relegated to sixth grade. Although revolution should be a key concept to fifth grade teachers when teaching the American revolution, and it still scored a mean of 1.9 which is almost considered "sometimes taught", teachers may consider the broader

concept of revolution in terms of world history and wars fought by countries other than the United States. That would also make this concept one reserved for secondary students.

The following charts review data collected from the entire sample of participants and do not disaggregate means by specific grade levels. Those concepts that averaged a 1.0 response to a 1.9 response on the Likert scale in this study are those concepts that teachers taught the least (See Table 6). No concept scored a mean of 1.0, indicating that all were taught by the average of the 55 participants.

Table 6:

Concepts Least Taught

Concepts Least Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean Score)
Colonization	1.9
Economy	1.9
Nationalism	1.9
Persuasion	1.9
Population	1.9
Power	1.7
Religion	1.6
Revolution	1.7
Trade	1.9

Those concepts that averaged a 2.0 response to a 2.9 on the Likert scale in this study would be those concepts that teachers sometimes teach (See Table 7).

Table 7:

Concepts Sometimes Taught

Concept Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean)
Attitudes	2.6
Change	2.3
Citizenship	2.7
Climate	2.2
Community	2.6
Conflict	2.5
Constitution	2.3
Cooperation	2.8
Culture	2.4
Customs	2.4
Decision making	2.5
Democracy	2.4
Difference	2.5
Concept Sometimes Taught	Likert Scale Rating (Mean)
Exploration	2.1
Family	2.5
Freedom	2.5
Frontier	2.0
Hero	2.0
Honesty	2.8
Independence	2.5
Justice	2.3
Laws	2.3
Leadership	2.5
Natural Environment	2.4
Needs	2.3
Patriotism	2.6
Race	2.2
Region	2.2
Socialization	2.1
Rules	2.8
Service	2.3

There were only two concepts that ranked higher than 2.9 on the Likert scale and were the closest to a 3, which indicated those concepts that are often taught (See Table 8).

Table 8:

Concepts Often Taught

Concept Often Taught	Likert Scale Rating
Respect	2.93
Responsibility	2.95

These concepts represent the core content of the social studies curriculum in elementary classrooms. Nineteen per cent of those 47 concepts surveyed are not being taught in grades 1-5. Less than one percent are being taught often; and 77 per cent are sometimes taught. Those nine concepts not being taught represent missing schema in the child's mind if they are not learned outside of the traditional school setting. That disconnect will reveal itself when the child begins sixth and seventh grade government courses, study of world cultures, and economics classes. Students will have no previous framework to construct or build meaning from if that foundation is not laid at the elementary level.

Those two concepts often taught are not only content concepts, but also character traits that are taught directly in character education programs. They are continually taught and reinforced in an effort to create better citizens of the school community and to enforce school norms. The 77 per cent of concepts sometimes taught likely represent those that are tested on state mandated assessments, but they could also be given more emphasis for a myriad of reasons. Some of those concepts may have a greater value to the citizens of the community and be encouraged over others that seem controversial, such as religion. Many teachers may feel uncomfortable teaching those concepts that they fear could effect their approval with the building or district level administrators,

such as power, persuasion, and revolution. Other teachers may not teach the concept of economics, revolution or trade because they may feel that they do not have the sufficient background content knowledge to know what they are teaching. If teachers do not feel confident about their knowledge of the subject matter, it may inhibit their teaching of it to their students. These factors combine to effect the teaching of social studies concepts in the elementary classroom.

Planning and Emphasis

The second theme involves planning for social studies lessons and the emphasis that is placed on particular concepts. Two of the ten teachers organize their concepts into year-long themes. Three teachers used a district alignment guide provided by the Lawton Public School district as a scope and sequence of which grade level PASS objectives to teach during the four quarters of the school year. Two others shared that there was no pacing calendar available to plan for their lower primary grade level in regards to a year-long social studies spectrum. One concern that emerged during interviews with the participants was the difficulty of maintaining student interest in a subject matter as dry as social studies.

Four of the ten teachers polled their classrooms for student interests and tried to incorporate those interests into their lessons and concepts taught when planning for the year while two other teachers argued that there is no time to teach to student interests when testing looms each spring. One participant admitted to not having time to consider student interests when planning. However, she was willing to allow student choice in selecting learning activities from her predetermined concepts and planned themes. Two of the ten teachers also use a graphic organizer technique when planning. They write the

concepts that students will need to learn into webs in order to cluster concepts around themes and plan for their scope and sequence for the school year. The teachers work collaboratively with their grade level teams during shared planning sessions to incorporate all concepts into a long range vision for the year. From that web they begin teaching concept clusters in order to build knowledge into larger themes in an effort to produce a more holistic learning experience.

Another interviewee stated that she created a 3-ring binder collection of social studies lesson plans that could be used year after year. After reading and learning her required PASS objectives, she created, borrowed, bought, and found lessons that coordinated with each objective. She then organized each printed lesson into a binder that includes tabs labeled with the PASS standard and objective code. She then uses this binder throughout the school year as a reference when planning for social studies instruction. Those lessons are taught, modified, re-taught when necessary, and some are even discarded after unsuccessful lesson presentations. This binder acts as the teacher's reference bible for her social studies curriculum.

Nine of the participants include technology as a resource for planning and find a multitude of quality lessons on the internet. Teachers share websites with one another and copy successfully taught plans for one another that were downloaded off of the World Wide Web. Some of the websites shared include: The Oklahoma Alliance for Geographic Education (<http://www.ngsednet.org/community/rsources>); The Oklahoma Council for the Social Studies (<http://okcss.org/resources.htm>); Lesson Plans and Resources for Social Studies Teachers (<http://www.csun.edu>); The Public Broadcasting System Teacher Source (http://www.pbsc.org/teachersource/soc_stud.htm); The National

Endowment for the Humanities (<http://edsitement.neh.gov>); and The Educator's Reference Desk (<http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/lessons>).

The Oklahoma PASS document guides instruction for all ten of the teachers interviewed. Nine of the ten participants are required by their building administrator to document the weekly PASS objectives that they teach in social studies, while one is only required by her administrator to document PASS for reading and math. Two of the ten also shared that their building administrator requires them to post their daily PASS objectives on a chart by their bulletin board so that when administrators circle through the classroom during curriculum walk-throughs, they can readily spot the plans being taught that day and get a picture of what is going on in the room that day. Curriculum walk-throughs (CWT) are 3-4 minute pop-ins by building or district supervisors that informs administrators of how the teacher is teaching, what the teacher is teaching, and how the students are responding to instruction and learning. These CWT's provide teachers with helpful feedback in an effort to improve practice over time. One of those teachers also admitted that she liked putting the concept to be learned on the board in all subjects each day so that students could see the roadmap for their learning that day and know what was expected that day. Setting that expectation for learning is an automatic organizer for students and provides additional structure to the already maintained classroom routine and procedures set earlier in the year.

Planning with others seemed to be a popular practice with nine of the ten participants interviewed. Five of the ten participants admitted that planning with experienced mentors or veteran teachers in their school buildings was most beneficial in determining how to plan out their lessons. Three participants also felt that having the

opportunity to share resources with team teachers was also beneficial because it saved them from having to spend their own money on additional resources to teach social studies lessons. Two of the teachers shared that written plans had to be flexible for social studies because other subjects sometimes required more time to teach or another activity ran over its allotted time frame and that meant that social studies would be cancelled for the day or carried over to the next day. This flexibility in planning was also necessary for school assemblies, fire drills, and other interruptions to the regular classroom routine.

Thirty per cent of those interviewed stated that they teach to the state mandated criterion referenced tests in the spring when teaching social studies. When teaching to the test the teachers simply take those objectives that will be tested in fifth grade and spend a great amount of time presenting that information in a multiple-choice format and simulating assessment during instruction in order to prepare intermediate students for helping the school meet AYP. Seven of the ten teachers interviewed stated that they determined how much emphasis to place on specific concepts only after consulting the Oklahoma State Department of Education website.

There are blueprints for item analysis in relation to the criterion referenced tests that students are required to take each spring. Those item specs will tell teachers exactly how many questions will be on the test pertaining to that particular skill or objective and a weight percentage is also given. From that information, teachers select those items that are most heavily tested to place a greater amount of class time and emphasis. Those items that are not tested are taught either after the testing period in April or not taught at all. When planning lessons teachers must take into account the accommodations that will be made for student on individualized education plans. One of the ten teachers taught a

non-tested primary grade and stated that she placed equal emphasis on all objectives because she felt they were all equally important.

One of the teachers interviewed uses a computerized lesson format or software program, but nine of the ten write out their weekly lessons by hand. One of the ten teachers stated that she did not write formal lesson plans for social studies, but used a calendar grid type format and simply wrote in the page numbers from the textbook as a reference to document the daily social studies lesson. The majority shared that their lesson format was much more relaxed than those required by university professors during their social studies methodology coursework. Teachers document the concept that students will learn and a brief skeletal outline of the activities or resources used to teach that concept. Lessons are not thorough in documenting possible areas of difficulty, laundry lists of necessary resources, or teaching methods used. Their lessons are simply references to knowledge that is stored elsewhere and documented more thoroughly in a separate source of information.

All ten of the participants interviewed stated that they teach social studies in their classrooms during a pre-determined time block. For the majority of the ten this included a week-long study on a particular concept that would last for five days, and anywhere from 20-45 minutes per day. Social studies instruction was placed on a week long alternating cycle with science. This allowed the teachers to teach both science and social studies and document at least 2-3 required grades for those subjects in a nine week grade reporting cycle, while minimizing class time used for social studies and science. Teachers agreed that a week long focus on social studies was necessary in order for students to connect the fragmented pieces of knowledge from daily lessons and activities

and arrange those individual bits as concepts that could become fully developed over a five day period. Two of the ten teachers admitted that some of the war concepts required two solid weeks for social studies instruction because their were interrelated concepts that could be taught simultaneously and because the concepts were more abstract and they felt that more time was needed in order to fully develop the content. These teachers also shared that their goal in teaching social studies concepts was to form connections within students' minds to create a holistic view of the concepts that would become imbedded in their long-term memories for future retrieval when studying those spiraling concepts in higher grades. This type of instruction builds a framework of references in which students create schemas that can be revisited and added to when new material is presented.

How Teachers Teach Social Studies

Social studies is primarily taught on an alternating weekly schedule with science curriculum. One teacher mentioned that social studies concepts were taught within the time block in her classroom setting, but those that referred to citizenship characteristics or life principles were also reinforced during their morning school assemblies. They were chanted during the oral recitation of their school creed, which is an extension of Great Expectations program practices. Other teachers shared that social studies concepts are reinforced when building their classroom community as far as establishing rules and consequences and setting policy and procedures as a democratic, voting body. Four of ten teachers interviewed state that classroom discussions make up the majority of participation grades in their social studies lessons.

One of the ten participants teaches social studies in a departmentalized format within her school while another teaches social studies across grade levels based on age appropriate PASS objectives. Her next door neighbor teaches the entire science curriculum for their grade level while she teaches all of the social studies lessons. The teachers switch classes during the allotted time block for science and social studies every other week. Sixty per cent of teachers engage in team teaching lessons for classrooms in their schools in a spirit of collaboration and to strengthen instruction in an academic area where the teacher may lack confidence and content knowledge.

Seventy per cent of teachers interviewed maintained that they taught social studies in interactive formats in order to include hands-on learning experiences for bodily-kinesthetic learners. Hands-on lessons included a variety of activities: Constructing globes and placing the seven continents, creating topography maps that show elevation using cooking ingredients, playing games, singing and dancing or incorporating other movement, role play, painting, engaging in classroom debates, researching information in the library, drawing and labeling diagrams and dioramas, participating in service projects within the community, organizing canned food drives, participating in student council events, as well as others. A great amount of these classroom learning projects is incorporated into classroom thematic units, which are taught in 50% of these classrooms. Single thematic units include a variety of lesson plans addressing several social studies concepts that may be taught over a one to three week time period. Thematic instruction can also be based on grade-level PASS themes, such as communities in the third grade, and family and community information in earlier grade levels.

Seven teachers interviewed facilitate these types of projects during small group instruction. These small groups allow for more one-on-one instruction and guidance from classroom teachers and/or peer tutors. This model of teaching also allows for teachers to integrate reading with social studies and include opportunities for teachers to monitor and assess pre-reading and reading strategies that students use to make meaning through decoding. Ninety per cent of those interviewed use whole group instruction in order to facilitate classroom community discussions, to teach lessons using the textbook, or other whole group activity such as Weekly Reader or the local newspaper.

Whole group instruction is also an advantage for teachers as a time management strategy for giving directions, reviewing lessons learned, and for conducting student assessments. Ten per cent of teachers claimed that they taught with differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of individual learners by using personality and learning styles to adapt to individual differences. Twenty per cent use strategies such as group investigations and role playing where students study social behavior and values. Jurisprudential Inquiry is a model of instruction that one of the fifth grade teachers uses with her students to trigger classroom debates where students take a stand on a social policy and defend it. This type of teaching promotes higher-order thinking skills in Bloom's Taxonomy and can lead to more in-depth classroom discussions.

A variety of resources are used to teach social studies lessons. Eighty per cent of teachers interviewed use their textbook as a resource in the classroom, whether it's for whole group instruction, as a reference for maps, charts, or graphs, or for special selections on cultural traditions or mini-biographies. Half of the participants in this study do not use their social studies textbooks as primary resources for instruction for a variety

of reasons. Two stated that the readability of the text was much too high for students not reading on grade level within their classrooms. Others commented on its dry presentation format or on its lack of alignment with Oklahoma PASS objectives. That fact alone is one that led forty per cent of teachers interviewed to teach project-driven lessons that include meaningful opportunities for student engagement.

Twenty per cent of teachers interviewed use newspapers in education in an effort to incorporate and promote current event awareness and content knowledge. Eighty per cent of participants use a variety of resources when teaching social studies including: Internet sites, store-bought curriculum, video and musical supplements, pre-packaged project materials and/or visual aid materials, documents picked up along personal travels over the continental U.S. and abroad, photos from personal experiences, artifacts and guest speakers, items on loan from local museums or public libraries, local university resources, and resources borrowed from other teachers. Many of these resources are used in place of the textbook or to supplement brief textbook overviews. A mere ten per cent of those interviewed admitted to using the worksheets that come with the adopted textbook series' teacher resource kit as a part of their social studies curriculum.

Public libraries are rich sources for curriculum supplements in regards to checking out trade books that may include biographies, non-fiction accounts of historical events, reference materials such as atlases, almanacs, and encyclopedias, books on tape, National Geographic videos or DVD's. School librarians can also help funnel a variety of materials into the classroom including collections of unit trade books all relating to a specific concept or region of study. Twenty per cent of those teachers interviewed utilize their school librarian as a prime resource for helping to build classroom libraries of books

relating to their study. For example, one third grade teacher was doing continent studies and her school librarian pulled all of the children's books on the continents for the teacher in a crate and checked them out to the classroom teacher for use with all of the students in her room for an extended period of time. Librarians can also check out class sets of books for book studies on periods of time in our history. For example, a teacher checked out 22 copies of *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry (1989) for students to read during their study of World War II. Forty per cent of teachers interviewed use trade books to teach social studies concepts (Appendix E).

Three teachers use book making activities as concept reinforcement in their classrooms where students are responsible for writing, peer-editing, revising and publishing their own books, including illustrations. Ten per cent of those interviewed use note taking strategies during instruction to build listening comprehension, and teach graphic organizing as part of the writing process. Students then take those written ideas and share them with others in class presentations and in book-buddy type settings where older intermediate students will read their books in pairs with younger primary students. This type of activity creates a sense of pride and ownership in student learning and offers opportunities for students to showcase individual writing and artistic talents within the social studies lesson. When these teachers are not making books they may be taking their students on field trips to any of the following locations: The Museum of the Great Plains, the Wichita Wildlife Refuge, art exhibits at the Leslie Powell Art Gallery, the courthouse, fire stations, or to performances at either the Cameron University Theater or the McMahon Auditorium.

Primary teachers in grades 1-2 did not give formal assessments in social studies. Teachers in grades 3-4 do not teach to tests either because the only elementary grade level tested in social studies is the fifth grade. These lower grade levels choose to maintain social studies as a participatory grade and do not feel pressured for students to show documented competency with their social studies concepts. Instead, students are graded on participation in the discussions, the projects, the reading, and the collaborative coursework.

Two teachers shared that they do not do social studies projects in their classroom. One of them stated that there just simply isn't enough time in the day to tackle a social studies project after teaching reading and math all morning. This refers directly back to literature cited in chapter 2 which stated that the problem with elementary social studies is that there is no time to teach it and it is often not seen as a priority. Teachers complain about the lack of time to teach all of the requirements of the elementary curriculum (McCall, 2004; Kaplan, 2002). The rest of the day is tied up with physical education, music, computer lab time, library visitation, or special assemblies. The other teacher interviewed worked in a Title I school that received federal funding due to its high percentage of students receiving free and reduced priced lunches. She claimed that she could not give special projects in social studies because she could not get students to provide any materials for the projects from their homes due to impoverished home lives and lack of parental support. She stated that she simply cannot afford to do all that she would like within her limited budget.

Social studies can feel like an isolated discipline in the elementary classroom, especially when three of the 10 teachers interviewed commented that they do not

participate in team planning. Ten per cent of those interviewed do not teach thematic units, but teach isolated concepts separate from the elementary curriculum. Teachers who teach social studies as connected concepts that build and interconnect with other disciplines may reduce that feeling of isolation in their classrooms. There are a myriad of free resources available to teachers to develop more connected lessons and outlets for support from teachers worldwide available on the internet. Teachers who feel alone in the teaching process at the local level can invest their efforts in building their repertoire at a higher level with these resources.

Other national organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies can also provide a network of communication for planning purposes for professional educators seeking to improve their social studies teaching. This level of commitment requires time, extended effort beyond the minimum criteria for teacher evaluation, and a desire within the teacher to want to change current practice. The result of this effort is a more connected teaching process that relates concepts across disciplines to broaden students' schemas.

The Role of Integration

Two of teachers interviewed during the study stated that they did not integrate social studies with other disciplines because of the block of time they had scheduled to teach it, or because they did not use integration in their classrooms, but rather taught subjects in isolation from one another as compartmentalized units of knowledge. On the contrary, 20 per cent of teachers argued the value of integration in saving time for more in-depth study of specific concepts. The argument by those teachers maintains that instead of allotting only 30 minutes to that topic during social studies, it can be integrated

into the time slot of the day allotted for math and be given more emphasis. Students have more time to explore the concept, ask questions, and spend time in further independent study.

Forty per cent of those interviewed integrate social studies with art. That would include visual interpretations of historic accounts, map making, papier mache models of various landforms and geographic features, painting or drawing in relation to cultural studies, illustrating writing as part of the book making process prior to publishing, photography in terms of photographic essays and displays, and the making of small crafts projects. Ten percent of teachers interviewed integrate music with social studies and plays samples of music and teaches traditional dances from other cultures as part of her multicultural unit taught each spring. Thirty per cent of teachers integrate the philosophy behind the Great Expectations program for teaching character traits and core essential values with their social studies instruction. Those concepts that qualify for integration would include: Respect, responsibility, perseverance, loyalty, citizenship, values, courage, and cooperation.

Forty percent also integrate math with social studies instruction in terms of creating graphic organizers to display data such as bar graphs, timelines of biographical data, calculating distance using scale on a map, and computing economic data regarding the production and distribution of goods and services. Younger primary grades incorporate number recognition with the three branches of government, the first ten amendments to the constitution, learning the number of senators and representatives in congress, or the number of stars and stripes on the American flag in relation to the significance of those specific numbers. Although science is the discipline typically flip-

flopped with social studies in the teaching schedule rotations each week, only 30 per cent of teachers commented on integrating science and social studies. For examples of how this is done, one fifth grade teacher mentioned teaching a specific lesson about George Washington Carver and the experiments that he and his team conducted on peanuts and the products that they were able to discover, mass produce and sell as a result of his experimenting and inquiry methodology. Science integration also comes into play with the study of geography in physical landform identification and description, geographic vocabulary and the scientific method of thought in regards to problem solving.

The integration of reading and language arts and social studies was mentioned 21 times during ten interviews by teachers and seems to lend itself to being the easiest discipline to readily integrate with social studies. Students almost have to know how to read in order to facilitate other learning activities in social studies, including the use of primary and secondary resources. Most all of these require reading. Therefore, it is no wonder that nearly all ten teachers refer to integration of reading and social studies as commonplace in the classroom. Students use guided and independent reading strategies while learning social studies concepts.

Review of Teacher's Lesson Plans

The lesson plans that were shared during the second phase of data collection shed light on many strategies that teachers could utilize for teaching social studies. This part of data collection helps specifically answer the second portion of our research question which was how social studies is taught in elementary classrooms. The purpose of gathering the plans was to read and review additional data on how social studies teaching is documented in lesson plans and how teachers use this blueprint for planning

instruction. All of the plans included documentation of Oklahoma PASS objectives as stated in the interviews with participating teachers. Teachers also included details of how the lessons integrated with reading, writing, music and art. Lessons showed the pacing and sequence of objectives and served as formal documentation of time spent teaching social studies.

Some of the lesson plans addressed the concept of economics and included integration themes. For example, one class created a comparison t-chart of wants and needs. From that list they identified basic needs such as shelter, food, water, water, love and care. They listed secondary needs as clothing, transportation, shoes and soap. They then read *A Chair for my Mother* (1982) as a reading integration and brainstormed ways to earn money in order to purchase those things that we need or want. Students also defined the word consumer and created a flow chart illustrating how we get the goods we need or want from farms, transportation, factories, and stores.

In discussing pioneer life of early settlers, students created a K-W-L chart listing those things they knew, those they wanted to learn, and then as a concluding activity they listed those things they learned in summary. Students read the book *Pioneer Cat* (1988) and used U.S. maps to chart the path of pioneer travel. Students also utilized website information from “Pioneer Life” and sang pioneer songs such as *Home on the Range*, *Sweet Betsy from Pike*, and *I’ve Been Working on the Railroad*. Students made ABC lists of items pioneers might take with them on their journey and made log cabins out of Lincoln Logs. Students also created covered wagons using a variety of available resources, including milk cartons.

Within the topics of multicultural units, students compare and contrast people in different parts of the world and study specific traditions, heritages, culture, interactions, and needs. This study included a variety of learning activities such as locating Japan on a world map and writing about some of their natural resources. Students also read *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (1984) by Ina Friedman. Later in the multicultural unit, students were charged with the task of locating Africa, and determining why it is a continent rather than a country. Students learned Swahili counting while reading *Moja Means One: A Swahili Counting Book* (1996). Students also played games such as African tic-tac-toe with a partner.

Students read *Whoever You Are* (2001) by Mem Fox to gain a broader world perspective in contrast to a country or state perspective. A guest speaker visited the classroom to share about her travels to Italy, show her artifacts and souvenirs with students and teach students a few Italian words. In a study over Mexico, students learned color words in Spanish, created piñatas, learned about the history of sombreros and listened to stories such as *Uncle Nacho's Hat* (1993) and *Too Many Tamales* (1996).

As part of geography integration, one teacher taught Oklahoma Social Studies PASS objective 2.3 Using various kinds of maps by having students create contour maps using yarns and sandpaper where contour lines connect elevation levels. Students also read and used charts from newspapers and the internet to answer questions about specific places or regions as part of their continued study over the five themes of geography. Students integrated writing into their study of PASS objective 4.2 over how people adapt to their environments by describing diverse agricultural resources in the United States to determine how resources make different kinds of work possible. A further look into how

humans interact with their environments included a study of those changes people cause when they use natural resources. Students used a variety of primary and secondary sources to study these effects including: Video, pictures, posters, textbooks, and recent newspaper clippings. Students then compared and contrasted renewable and non-renewable resources.

A first grade teacher taught Oklahoma PASS Social Studies standard 4.2 “Students will recognize that people in different parts of the world eat different foods, dress differently, speak different languages and live in different kinds of houses” by connecting color words with number words in different world languages including Spanish, Chinese, and sign language. Students used a Venn Diagram to show how the languages and writing were alike and different. Students also examined the interaction of the environment and the people of the community by comparing family jobs. During that particular lesson a guest speaker from the community shared his career experience and how his job affects the community. Students in this class also learned PASS objective 2.3, constructing individually and with other students maps with cardinal directions and locations on the map, by drawing and labeling school maps. These maps began locally with labeling the classroom areas and identifying north, south, east and west. They then expanded a map of the playground and marked locations of equipment as well as cardinal directions.

In another lesson over social studies PASS objective 3.5 for first grade, students will identify the events associated with commemorative holidays, students studied the history of Constitution Day. Students compared and contrasted how many different

students are expected to follow the same set of classroom rules just as many different citizens are expected to follow the same rules set forth in our nation's constitution.

The review of these lesson plans confirmed that teachers are teaching social studies in the elementary classrooms in traditional blocks of time, but also weaving other disciplines into their lessons to create a connected framework of concepts. To accomplish this task, teachers are procuring a variety of resources to build their lessons and present them in meaningful, interesting formats for their students. Teachers use many different methods of instruction that match their students' particular learning styles in an effort to motivate them, differentiate instruction, and bring the lesson to life. Creating moments for students to make connections between the social studies concepts and real life is the goal of lesson planning.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Conclusions

This dissertation questioned the accepted belief that social studies is not being taught in regular elementary education classrooms. That belief was based on time studies and a body of research that looked at curriculum and teacher interviews and concluded that the social studies time block is being completely ignored in elementary classrooms. The survey and interview data results from this study would refute that belief by showing that teachers not only teach social studies concepts within their curriculum, but that they continue to do so in the relegated traditional time blocks from the past. Social studies is taught in the majority of elementary classrooms on an alternative weekly schedule with science and is taught for approximately 45 minutes per day during that week. This refers directly back to the study conducted by Smith and Manley (1994) that reported that social studies is often relegated to a 35 minute instructional period due to time constraints.

One participant in this study had to modify the five day schedule so that she would have time to integrate art into her regular classroom curriculum, so in that particular class social studies was taught in a block for four days per week. Many of the teachers agreed that teaching in the week long cycles was best for helping students connect fragments of information to a larger concept and make learning connections that could be better remembered. Of those social studies concepts that are taught, many are integrated within other disciplines, mainly reading. As indicated in chapter 2, it is the standards or key concepts in the social studies curriculum that are being taught through curriculum integration with social studies and reading, language arts and math.

Is social studies taught different than it was 20 years ago? It is still marginalized in comparison to the 3 curriculum giants: Reading, writing and arithmetic. Social studies as a curriculum is de-emphasized as a direct result of No Child Left Behind's emphasis on reading and math curriculum, and from administrative insistence on teaching those areas that are reported to the public as the school's Academic Performance Index score. What is important to note, however, is that the concepts are being taught, not the amount of time spent teaching social studies. The traditional time blocks spent teaching the concepts remains untouched. Integration is still key to including social studies concepts with the core curriculum framework.

The answer to the research question which asked if social studies was taught, would be yes. The second part of that question asked how it was taught. As indicated in chapter 4, it is taught in the traditional time allotment, rotated with a science curriculum on a weekly basis, and is taught through a variety of methods and strategies, including integration. The teaching of social studies is not drastically different than it was 20 years ago, even with No Child Left Behind, and it is still being taught.

Another question that I anticipated to branch from this study and be useful in further research asked if social studies was addressed more in intermediate than primary grades? From the limited sample I utilized in the Lawton Public School district, data would indicate that this is not the case. Social studies was addressed equally in limited amounts of time during the week, with or without other subject matter integration, and key social studies concepts were taught at both levels of elementary instruction. Furthermore, those universal concepts that I referred to in chapter 4 carried across all grade levels and included: Attitudes, citizenship, community, cooperation, honesty,

respect, responsibility, rules and values. Teachers' lesson plans in first grade documented social studies instructions just as methodically and thoroughly as teachers in grades 4 and 5.

The task of identifying specific social studies concepts that lend themselves to curriculum integration more so than others was also mentioned in chapter 1. Specific concepts that lend themselves to math integration included: Climate, economy, population, technology and trade. Those concepts that lend themselves more readily to science included: Change, climate, community, conflict, cooperation, decision making, difference, exploration, family, frontier, natural environment, needs, population, region, resources, socialization and technology. Some concepts tie directly in with music themes studied at the elementary level: Citizenship, cooperation, culture, freedom, independence, nationalism, patriotism, and rights. Those concepts that lend themselves more readily to reading and language arts include: Attitudes, citizenship, colonization, constitution, cooperation, culture, customs, democracy, freedom, frontier, hero, honesty, independence, justice, laws, leadership, nationalism, patriotism, persuasion, power, religion, respect, responsibility, revolution, rights, rules, state, trade and values.

The Effects of No Child Left Behind

Four of the seven teachers interviewed who teach in grade levels requiring state mandated testing in reading and math felt burdened by the pressure for their students to score well on the accountability tests and felt that the pressure directly affected the portion of their instructional day devoted to humanities instruction. This coincides with literature from chapter 2 that suggested that teachers are not supporting efforts to increase time spent teaching social studies because they are too worried about their test scores and

people do not want to invest time or money in those areas where they are not likely to influence results (Savage, 2003).

Three of the ten interviewed admitted to a lack of emphasis placed on social studies within their classrooms due to the high priority placed on the two main areas that affect their schools API (Academic Performance Index) score which is reported and published in the local newspaper, as well as on their state's accountability website and used by real estate brokers when selling homes: Reading and math. According to Howard (2003) the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act has had a negative influence on social studies instruction with elementary teachers reportedly shortening social studies lessons. Some integrate reading and writing with social studies in order to address the diminished attention on the social studies curriculum.

The Center on Educational Policy, an independent and nonprofit research and advocacy organization, reported the "Ten Big Effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on Public Schools" in November 2006. The second effect listed in this study stated that schools are spending more time on reading and math at the expense of subjects not tested; 71 per cent of districts nationwide are reducing time spent on other subjects in elementary schools. The article went on to state that the single subject most affected by this legislation is social studies. The portion of the school day least effected nationwide by this change in curricular focus is physical education; which is required for 90 minutes each week in the state of Oklahoma for every elementary student. How would time be prioritized if social studies were mandated for a specific weekly time slot by the state legislature? Perhaps it too would be taught daily and would not be marginalized by teachers with no power to choose.

The Center on Educational Policy (2006) also listed an increase in the number of student assessments given to students in reading and math nationwide. Additional testing for the 2007-2008 school year will be required for science curriculum, with social studies expected to follow. Test-driven accountability has become center stage in elementary schools nationwide and has become the overpowering focus and mission in high-poverty, low-achieving schools in need of improvement. Gone are the days of fluff and films in the elementary classroom. As if the pressure to increase student achievement is not enough, the paper trail following those schools not performing to the minimum expectation is an overwhelming task itself. The state and federal governments require documentation of school-wide plans of improvement as an attached string to federal aid for additional support to assist in increasing student achievement. More hours and funding for additional professional development is also required for teachers, which often leads to burn-out in high-challenge schools.

The Problems and Pitfalls when Teaching Social Studies

Ten per cent of the teachers surveyed cite a lack of parental support for the teaching of social studies as being a factor in its decline. A particular teacher stated that parents want their kids to be able to do math and read in order to get a job and did not necessarily see it as a priority to understand the history of the country, its people or its culture. This teacher also found it difficult to get parent support in supplying specific materials for special social studies projects due to a non-publicized yet real lack of emphasis on the subject matter within the elementary curriculum.

Twenty per cent of teachers interviewed cited a lack of participation on the part of students as an indicator of their lack of previous participation in meaningful social studies

instruction. Their argument was that students already came to intermediate grades with low expectations of the social studies curriculum due to its lack of emphasis in the early primary grades. Twenty per cent of teachers complained of a lack of resources available for teaching social studies. Both of these teachers worked in Title I schools that receive additional federal funding as a direct result of the percentage of their total student population that qualify for free and reduced lunch. They work in high poverty schools where a high percentage of students qualify. One significant factor to note regarding resources is that Title I monies must be designated for the sole purpose of increasing student achievement in the areas of reading and math. Social studies is not a curriculum area funded with Title I supplemental support. If teachers can tie their social studies objectives to an integrated reading objective they may be able to purchase instructional materials for that purpose, but social studies as a curriculum is not supported by other outside sources of funding unless teachers specifically write a grant or seek donations from local businesses or partners in education.

Twenty per cent of those interviewed indicated that there was simply not enough time within the day to collaborate with other teachers in planning for social studies instruction or sharing best practices. Teachers shared that faculty meetings and professional development days are used for informational sharing purposes other than collaborative teaming and planning for social studies. These teachers felt that their designated planning periods of 40 daily minutes were insufficient on a weekly basis for implementing group discussions involving short and long-term planning sessions. Eighty per cent of teachers indicated that there was not enough time in the day to teach social studies on a daily basis.

As a result, they taught social studies for approximately 40 minutes per day for one week and then rotated that time slot with science the following week. This alternating curriculum schedule was the plan of choice for the majority of teachers interviewed to allow for the teaching of social studies and science. These teachers also argued for integration because they felt that the process allowed them to teach social studies and science for a greater amount of time during the instructional day. Despite the fact that curriculum integration is a difficult and demanding endeavor for educators, the curriculum becomes more meaningful in the lives of the students and integration advances the relevance of classroom learning (Hargreaves & Moore, 2000).

However, even with integration, 20 percent of those interviewed did not feel there was enough time within social studies instruction to teach topics of students' interests. A lack of time for instruction meant that teachers taught only those objectives dictated by Oklahoma PASS. Teachers said that dialogue with students regarding current events or what they were interested in studying was an irrelevant point to consider when planning because there simply was no time. That time, according to one of those interviewed, is regulated by school principals as to how many minutes will be spent teaching reading and math.

Reading is taught for approximately 90-120 minutes per day and math is taught for 90 minutes per day. That leaves little time for humanities when you also count physical education, music, art, computer lab instruction, lunch, recess, school assemblies and other scheduled events. Social studies is overshadowed by reading and math when considered in this schedule. Literature supports integration in cases such as this, indicating that social studies can be integrated into other subjects because there is simply

not enough time in the day to do it any other way. Teachers can wrap other content areas in a cocoon of social studies to solve their time crunch problem (Christensen, Wilson, et.al., 2001).

Another cause for not spending as much direct instruction time teaching social studies was a teacher's frustration with the state adopted social studies textbook not being aligned to Oklahoma PASS objectives. Thirty percent of those interviewed explained that textbooks can oftentimes only be used as secondary resources to support other learning because they do not contain information on those concepts that teachers are required to teach. Another teacher shared that she does not use the textbooks with her class for whole group social studies instruction because the readability level of the text is much higher than her students' current reading levels. There are so many social studies objectives to teach that it would be difficult to find a textbook that addresses them all, which is unfortunate considering that textbooks are the one readily available, paid for resource that teachers have access to and have multiple copies of for all learners.

The Oklahoma PASS objectives are a powerful influence on the teaching of social studies at the elementary level. Even without a textbook to use as a primary resource within the classroom, teachers are teaching from a state-mandated curriculum which lays the groundwork of minimum requirements in the discipline of social studies. They cannot simply pick and choose those chapters from the table of contents of their text that they feel comfortable teaching. This is an advance in the discipline of social studies because it provides some sort of structure and organization to a field of study that is so broad and inclusive and it seeks to provide that framework that teachers were lacking with simple texts. Another positive feature of the Oklahoma PASS objectives is that they

spiral the curriculum just as Hilda Taba prescribed in the 1960's in building concepts of home, family, neighborhoods, communities, states, nations, and the world with a review of interconnected concepts throughout each level. The objectives are progressive and prescribe a minimum knowledge level each year for students to attain and perform proficiently in on standardized exams.

This leads to the influence of the fifth grade Criterion Referenced Tests on the teaching of social studies. First through fourth grade teachers have the option of picking and choosing convenient times to teach specific social studies objectives because their students are not tested on those objectives in the spring each year. Fifth grade teachers, however, have a tremendous amount of pressure to fit their objectives into a specific time frame because their students will be tested on their nation's history each spring. More documentation is evident in fifth grade plans of specific objectives sequenced in a year-long scope and sequence of study in order to teach all of those required objectives prior to April testing. The pressure and high priority associated with that exam is cause for a stronger commitment to social studies instruction in that grade level. Although this study revealed that documentation of social studies teaching in lesson plans was not grade level specific, I would speculate that fifth grade teachers feel more of the pressure to make social studies a higher priority than a first grade teacher.

Elementary principals will tell you that all teachers contribute to high student achievement scores and that effective instruction is cumulative, but the fact still remains that test scores are returned to individual school buildings coded by teacher's last names. Teacher scores are compared at each grade level during data analysis sessions. There remains a feeling of stress and pressure with those teachers of testing grades due to the

accountability that early childhood teachers will not have their names associated with on the final results. Principals select the best and brightest of their faculty to teach those testing grades, and specifically that fifth grade where social studies is tested in addition to reading and math. Teachers are expected to produce the desired results required by the state and their local district goals, and this expectation drives the teaching of social studies in elementary grades.

This is a positive effect for the field of social studies, but may not result in the best teaching of the subject matter. Learning the origins of the original thirteen colonies and facts of the revolutionary war for the sole purpose of bubbles on a numbered answering sheet grid may not be the best motive for instruction. Teachers who bring the subject matter to life out of personal interest, knowledge and love of the content of the curriculum, and a desire to spark curiosity and questioning in the minds of their students have an entirely different purpose for teaching. It is possible to be driven by both motives. However, I would speculate that students experience better teaching and view social studies in a higher regard when taught by a teacher enthusiastic about social studies rather than by a teacher who feels a heavy burden for students to test well over a specific set of objectives. I wonder if that makes social studies more enjoyable to teach in non-tested grades where more flexibility and freedom may be felt in regards to pacing and content coverage; or does that lead us back to our literature review which indicated that social studies was not being taught?

Limitations of this Study

There were limitations of this study that should be considered while reviewing the conclusions summarized earlier in this chapter. One factor to consider is that the location

and district chosen for participation in this study is a rural Southwest Oklahoma district serving approximately 16,000 students and may not be representative of urban settings. The sample size of teachers that received the survey in grades 1-5 in the Lawton Public School district totaled 115, which is a small amount considering that in many schools there are multiple classes at each grade level. This study could be expanded to include more teacher participants.

Another limitation was that only 55 of the original 115 surveys were returned to the researcher after additional notifications were given to return them. Of the 55 surveys returned, only 10 of those teachers were interviewed for the second phase of data collection. One recognizable limitation of that sample was the amount of females compared to males, 9 to 1, that participated in the interview process. Of those interviewed, 3 taught primary grades while 7 taught intermediate grades. One limitation regarding the survey portion of the data collection process is the teachers' understanding of the individual concepts. One teacher might perceive the concept of revolution differently than another, and therefore mark it differently on the Likert Scale due to that difference in understanding or perception. It would not be possible to expect each participant to view the concepts universally when their experiences are so different.

Another limitation of this study would include the lesson plans that were shared with the researcher. Teachers hand-picked those lessons that were shared that reflected quality instruction and those were not collected from all participants. Another implication for future research would be to include the process of observation within the data collection process. Observing quality teaching and including specific details on

subject matter integration might include detailed recommendations for future practice in teaching social studies.

This study not only answered the question of whether or not social studies is taught in elementary classrooms, but also shed light on some examples of how it is done. Sample lesson plans indicated that integration is key in carving out spaces of time within the traditional school day for meaningful learning experiences to take place in social studies instruction. Reading, math and science were woven neatly into similar conceptual frameworks in an effort to create meaningful opportunities for participation. The data also revealed that many objectives within the social studies discipline are overlooked or not taught for a myriad of reasons. Lack of confidence in subject matter, lack of emphasis or value from district or community stakeholders, and lack of emphasis on mandated achievement tests all contributed to that set of untaught concepts.

Of those concepts that are taught, a majority represent those that are assessed on fifth grade state mandated achievement tests. They are the concepts valued by the community that receive more time and focus in the classroom. Respect and responsibility were the two concepts most often taught by teachers and represent those core values that are also reinforced in character education programs in helping to develop future citizens prepared to participate in society. Those concepts also make up the majority of classroom rules and procedures that include behaving in respectful, responsible and safe ways. These concepts are not only enforced at the classroom level, but are also supported and reinforced by school administrators who seek to maintain discipline and effective management within their schools. These concepts receive the most amount of attention,

time and focus as teachers model, monitor, and hold students accountable for them on quarterly progress reports and semester report cards.

Teachers who review the data from this study may be able to pinpoint missing areas within their own social studies curriculum that need to be strengthened and taught more often. Self reflective practitioners may even review the concept list and locate those that they have overlooked. These teachers will continue to find creative and unique ways to incorporate the concepts into the larger time blocks within their school day, especially when social studies is made a higher priority and included as a greater portion of state mandated achievement tests. When social studies counts as a larger portion of a school's academic performance index, it will become more valued by all stakeholders and will receive more of the lion's share of the curricular focus. This change would not only effect the amount of time spent teaching social studies, but could also trigger a transformation in the way in which we think about and teach social studies in the future. An interesting branch of this study may then become, how has the transformation of the social studies discipline transformed our society?

Recommendations for Future Research

The transferability of the survey instrument used in this study was enhanced with the use of the pilot study prior to data collection. Therefore, the instrument has increased credibility and can be used by other researches in replications of this study. The interview data collected is unique to educators in the location of this district within this particular region of Oklahoma. Researchers should also not expect for administrators expectations relating to lesson plan formatting and documentation of PASS objectives to be a similar finding. Concepts surveyed specific to the state of Oklahoma and PASS

objectives should be replaced in other studies located outside of Oklahoma. California Concepts and other universally accepted concepts from NCSS may be used and understood on a national level.

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APPENDIX A

MEMO

To: Lawton Public Schools
Elementary Principals

Date: September 30, 2006

Re: Research project
(Approved, Dr. Linda Dzialo)

Principals,

My name is Jennifer Evers Holloway and I am conducting a research project in the Lawton Public Schools district at elementary school sites for grades 1-5. The study is entitled "Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Classrooms" and is looking at the question of whether or not teachers in grades 1-5 are teaching social studies. If they do teach it, are they teaching it within a designated time frame or do they integrate it within their curriculum? The enclosed survey asks teachers which concepts they teach and how frequently they teach them. Those who wish to volunteer for the interview portion of the project are encouraged to do so by including that information on the back page of the survey. Results from this research project will not be reported or linked to any particular school site, nor will any specific teacher names be reported during data collection or reporting.

I am enclosing in this packet informed consent documents and surveys with self-addressed return envelopes for one teacher per grade level in grades 1-5 to complete and return to me. Teachers should sign and date the informed consent documents and return them in the envelope provided with the completed survey by October 31, 2006. I will contact volunteers for interviews in November and schedule those accordingly. This project should not interfere with quality teaching or learning that occurs each day in your building. I do not wish to consume a great amount of your teacher's time or energy, but enlist your support to highly encourage your teachers to complete this survey and return it to me by October 31, 2006.

Thank you for your efforts,
Jennifer Evers Holloway

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form for research being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus

PROJECT TITLE: Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Classrooms
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jennifer Holloway
FACULTY ADVISOR: Dr. John Chiodo
CONTACT INFORMATION: 108 Waverly Drive
Tulsa, OK 74101
(918) 948-1699
jjholloway@cox.net

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. This study is being conducted at The University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an elementary school teacher in grades 1-5 in the Lawton Public Schools district in Lawton, Oklahoma and are 18 years of age or older. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is: To determine whether or not social studies is really taught in elementary grades 1-5. If social studies is being taught, how is it being taught? What is the role of integrative teaching? What concepts are being taught?

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Complete a 5 minute survey indicating how often you teach specific social studies concepts. You may be asked to participate in a 30 to 45 minute follow-up interview answering questions about how you teach social studies in the elementary classroom. You may also be asked during that interview to share some samples of completed social studies lesson plans that you have recently taught.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The study has the following risks: There are no anticipated physical or emotional risks to participants in this study.

The benefits to participation are: The information gathered during the data collection process will aid future research in the field of social studies education by adding detailed information on specific social studies concepts that are being taught in elementary classrooms, how they are taught, and what role curriculum integration plays in lesson preparation.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office at 108 Waverly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74104. All records will be shredded upon completion of the study on May 31, 2007. Only approved researchers will have access to the records. Only the primary researcher will have access and that data will only be used for educational purposes.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted by telephone: Jennifer Holloway, 918.948.1699 or Dr. John Chiodo, advisor, 405.325.5317. Email contact may also be made by using either of the following addresses: jjholloway@cox.net or jjchiodo@ou.edu. You are encouraged to contact the researcher(s) if you have any questions.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405.325.8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

Survey of Concept Teaching

Directions: Please read the list of teaching concepts in the left column. Circle the number corresponding with how often you teach or have taught that concept in your classroom during a full academic school year. Also answer the eight demographic data items. Please return this completed survey and your consent form to Jennifer Holloway in the self-addressed envelope provided by your building administrator.

Concept	Never Taught	Sometimes Taught	Often Taught
Attitudes	1	2	3
Change	1	2	3
Citizenship	1	2	3
Climate	1	2	3
Colonization	1	2	3
Community	1	2	3
Conflict	1	2	3
Constitution	1	2	3
Cooperation	1	2	3
Culture	1	2	3
Customs	1	2	3
Decision making	1	2	3
Democracy	1	2	3
Difference	1	2	3
Economy	1	2	3
Exploration	1	2	3
Family	1	2	3
Freedom	1	2	3
Frontier	1	2	3
Hero	1	2	3
Honesty	1	2	3
Independence	1	2	3
Justice	1	2	3
Laws	1	2	3
Leadership	1	2	3
Nationalism	1	2	3
Natural Environment	1	2	3
Needs	1	2	3
Patriotism	1	2	3
Persuasion	1	2	3
Population	1	2	3
Power	1	2	3
Race	1	2	3

Concept	Never Taught	Sometimes Taught	Often Taught
Region	1	2	3
Religion	1	2	3
Resources	1	2	3
Respect	1	2	3
Responsibility	1	2	3
Revolution	1	2	3
Rights	1	2	3
Rules	1	2	3
Service	1	2	3
Socialization	1	2	3
State	1	2	3
Technology	1	2	3
Trade	1	2	3
Values	1	2	3

Demographic Data

- Gender: **MALE / FEMALE** (Circle one)
- School where you currently teach: _____
- Grade level taught: _____
- Years of teaching experience: _____ years
- Specialty areas/background area of interest: (Circle any of the following that apply)

Music	Art	Physical Education
Science	Math	Lang. Arts/Writing
Reading	Social Studies	General
Other: _____		
- Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview with the researcher?
YES / NO (Circle one)
- Telephone number and email address where you can be contacted to arrange an interview:
Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form for research being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus

PROJECT TITLE: Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Classrooms

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jennifer Holloway

FACULTY ADVISOR: Dr. John Chiodo

CONTACT INFORMATION: 108 Waverly Drive
Tulsa, OK 74101
(918) 948-1699
jjholloway@cox.net

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. This study is being conducted at The University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an elementary school teacher in grades 1-5 in the Lawton Public Schools district in Lawton, Oklahoma and are 18 years of age or older. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is: To determine whether or not social studies is really taught in elementary grades 1-5. If social studies is being taught, how is it being taught? What is the role of integrative teaching? What concepts are being taught?

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 30 to 45 minute interview answering questions about how you teach social studies in the elementary classroom. You may also be asked during that interview to share some samples of completed social studies lesson plans that you have recently taught.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The study has the following risks: There are no anticipated physical or emotional risks to participants in this study.

The benefits to participation are: The information gathered during the data collection process will aid future research in the field of social studies education by adding detailed information on specific social studies concepts that are being taught in elementary classrooms, how they are taught, and what role curriculum integration plays in lesson preparation.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office at 108 Waverly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74104. All records will be shredded upon completion of the study on May 31, 2007. Only approved researchers will have access to the records. All audio tape recordings of interviews will be locked in the filing cabinet as well. Only the primary researcher will have access and that data will only be used for educational purposes. All audio tape cases will be broken with a hammer; the cassette tape will be pulled out, cut in sections and thrown away on May 31, 2007.

Audio Taping Of Study Activities:

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device/video recording device. Participants have the right to refuse to allow such taping without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

- ☐ I consent to the use of audio recording.
☐ I do not consent to the use of audio recording.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted by telephone: Jennifer Holloway, 918.948.1699 or Dr. John Chiodo, advisor, 405.325.5317. Email contact may also be made by using either of the following addresses: jjholloway@cox.net or jjchiodo@ou.edu. You are encouraged to contact the researcher(s) if you have any questions.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405.325.8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

Forty per cent of teachers interviewed use trade books to teach social studies concepts including the following titles: Magic Tree House #22: Revolutionary War on Wednesday by Mary Pope Osborne; Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse; The Day Pearl Harbor was Bombed: A Photo History of World War II by George Sullivan; The Day the Women Got the Vote: A Photo History of the Women's Rights Movement by George Sullivan; The Buried City of Pompeii by Shelley Tanaka; If You Lived when there was Slavery in America by Anne Kamma; The Table Where Rich People Sit by Byrd Baylor; Cool Women: The Thinking Girl's Guide to the Hippest Women in History edited by Pam Nelson and written by Dawn Chipman, Mari Florence, and Naomi Wax; Journey to Ellis Island: How my Father Came to America by Carol Bierman; A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman by David A. Adler; Remember the Ladies: 100 Great American Women by Cheryl Harness; A Cool Drink of Water by Barbara Kerley; Liberty's Journey by Kelly DiPucchio and Richard Egielski; Don't Know Much about the Pilgrims by Kenneth C. Davis; Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman by Kathleen Krull; People by Peter Spier; A River Ran Wild by Lynne Cherry; and Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride by Pam Munoz Ryan

APPENDIX F

LIST OF ACRONYMS

API	Academic Performance Index
CCC	California Concepts Collection
CWT	Curriculum Walk Through
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCSS	National Council for the Social Studies
PASS	Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills