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The Changes that Preservice Teachers Have Seen in the Attitudes of Teachers About Social Studies in Elementary Schools

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THE CHANGES THAT PRESERVICE TEACHERS HAVE SEEN IN THE ATTITUDES OF
TEACHERS ABOUT SOCIAL STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Elementary Education
the College of Education and Human Performance
and The Burnett Honors College
University of Central Florida
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Abstract

Ever since national legislation has become involved in the testing of our students, the face of social studies education in elementary school classrooms has changed drastically. With the passage of Goals 2000 in 1993, social studies instruction in elementary school classrooms has seen a steep decline in the time allotted. Also, the attitude of administrators and teachers in elementary schools has taken away the importance of social studies in the classroom. While social studies has seen a big change in the amount of time dedicated to instruction in the past 20 years, there is still hope for the important topics that are taught in elementary social studies classes. The results of 69 preservice elementary teachers who responded to my survey regarding time allotted to social studies education revealed that more than half had only observed social studies in the elementary classroom even once. In my research, I have concluded that teachers have been making up for time lost in social studies by adding it to the other core subjects taught throughout the day.

Dedications

For my husband, Kevin, thank you for your undying love and support for me during this project.

For my parents, thank you for instilling a love and passion for social studies in me that has motivated me to make a difference in the education world.

For my professors, thank you for supporting me through every part of this project and never giving up on me.

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Problem

Since the start of federal education legislation, the face of social studies education in the elementary school setting has changed drastically. The trends of Social Studies education in the elementary schools has been on a sharp decline in the past 20 years and with every different piece of legislation that has been passed, social studies has been passed over, undermined, or just plain ignored. Studies show that from before the passage of Goals 2000 in 1993 to the re-vamping of *No Child Left Behind* in 2008 (Bush, 2008), social studies education instructional time in the elementary school classrooms has declined from 16% of weekly time allotted down to 12% of weekly time allotted (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012). That equates to about an hour less a week. From the research that I have done, I have found that not only has the instructional time of social studies been cut, but also the training of elementary educators in the area of social studies has declined as well (Starr, 2012). One source argues that this lack of content knowledge has given educators a lack of enthusiasm in teaching social studies to their students (Starr, 2012). Not only have the opinions of the teachers in relation to social studies education been altered, but the opinions of the administration as well. A survey was performed by Linter in 2006, asking principals to rank the following nine subjects in order of importance: Art, Foreign Language, Language Arts, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Reading, Science, and Social Studies. The results indicated that the principals thought that Social Studies was the fifth most important, ranking above Physical Education, Music, Art, and Foreign language (Lintner, 2006). There has been some new legislation in Florida for social studies in 7th grade. It requires that all 7th grade students complete civics education and that they complete an End of Course (EOC) exam. This is a step in the right direction for social studies, but what other

legislation will come out for the rest of the strands of social studies? This thesis seeks to explore preservice teacher perceptions of social studies instruction in Central Florida elementary schools by administering a survey.

Without proper instructional time, how are elementary school teachers supposed to teach their students social studies? This is the problem that most teachers in the elementary schools have faced in the past twenty years, when legislation started to emphasize test scores (Bush, 2008). More time has been given to language arts and math which has taken away from the time that was once allotted for science and social studies. For example, in a recent study, elementary school teachers who participated in a study were asked what percentage of the week social studies was taught and in the time where they were teaching social studies, how much of the instruction was made to tie in Language Arts to the Social Studies instruction. Every teacher in the elementary school portion of the study reported that less than 20% of their week was devoted to social studies and of that time, they had to tie in Language Arts. One teacher in this study reported that she had 60% of her social studies time tied into Language Arts (Winstead, 2011). A few states have tried to come up with solutions by adding social studies into their standardized tests. Texas, for example, has created a council who decides what the students need to learn, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS. The education leaders that created TEKS have decided that all students are required to take United States History, Studies since the Reconstruction, World History, World Geography, and United States Government in order to graduate (Williams & Maloyed, 2013). Time given for teachers to teach social studies has declined significantly and although many teachers, schools, and states have

tried to modify their instruction, that precious time lost is taking away much of the content that was once taught in earlier decades.

Although the previous study was focused on secondary education, some studies concerning social studies education provide more pertinent. A lack of time is not the only problem facing social studies education in elementary schools, but also the attitude and knowledge base of the teachers are contributing factors as well. Passions of the teachers reflect on their students and on the learning environment established by the teachers. Not only do the favored subjects show a disregard for time devoted to social studies, but the subjects noted that the environment plays a role as well. One study (Skelar, 2009) focused on a preservice teacher named Amy and what her perceptions of teaching social studies in elementary classrooms were and how that perception changed while she was in her internship. (Skelar, 2009).

Amy was 21 and went to a college in the north east that had a strong focus on preparing their students for the schools. She told them that she was not fond of Social Studies and even though she remembers the “fun” experiences, she doesn’t ever remember learning the point of *why* social studies was important. Also, she said that the majority of her instruction was textbook reading and answering the questions at the end of the chapter, which she stated was “boring”. The experiences that she had in school may have something to do with her view of social studies as boring and unnecessary (Slekar, 2009, p.23).

Because the legislation passed through No Child Left Behind 2002 (Bush, 2002) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) only specifies importance in Mathematics, Language Arts, and Science, administrators do not wish to place social studies in a place of high importance. In fact, they don't view social studies as something that needs to be taught independently in elementary schools at all. In an interview with a number administrators (Lintner, 2006), most of them stated that they thought social studies was important for facilitating other disciplines such as reading and language arts, but if it is not being tested, it is not of immediate importance to the school or the students. Also, they argue that students need math and reading skills to fully comprehend social studies. One administrator said that even though he would like to have social studies be a part of the core curriculum, the time in the day is just too limited to even consider making it part of their core classes. Because social studies isn't being tested on a national level, and legislation doesn't call for improvement in social studies in the country, many administrators let it fall by the way side, thinking of it only as an "appendage" to support the other "more important" core subjects such as mathematics, reading and language arts. While there have been efforts to make standardized social studies tests, they have failed. In Oregon, the state mandated an assessment testing the knowledge of the students in social studies and found that the only way to test social studies, with meaningful questions with written answers, was too expensive and that it would not be quick enough, or cheap enough, to implement (Pahl, 2003). Even though advocates have tried to make social studies testable, social studies is not found to be of importance to the majority of administrators.

Ever since Goals 2000 (Clinton, 1994) and No Child Left Behind (2008) (Bush, 2008) have been cracking down on schools and giving them funding for improvement in the areas of

language arts and mathematics, social studies education in elementary school classrooms has been falling by the way-side. The general time allotted in the elementary classroom for social studies education has dropped significantly in the past twenty years. Also, the lack of knowledge and interest in social studies of the elementary school teachers has been putting a damper on the already limited time for instruction regarding social studies. Finally the administrators in the schools note that since there are no mandated state or federal tests in social studies, the importance of social studies in their schools is not very high and really only works as an appendage to heighten the scores of the core subjects, such as mathematics and language arts (Linter, 2006). While there have been efforts to create standardized social studies tests, they have failed in these efforts because of a lack of time and funding. In conclusion, social studies education has seen a rapid decline in both time allotted and the measured importance by administrators and teachers alike.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine what preservice teachers' perceptions are about the instruction of social studies in the elementary school setting and what the teachers' attitudes about social studies may be. I will be exploring three different aspects related to this problem: instructional time per week, attitudes of teachers and administrators, and the potential barriers with the current end of course tests trying to be developed here in the state of Florida. I will be looking at how the time of social studies taught in the classroom has changed. Analysis of this evidence will bring forth awareness of what little social studies time is allowed, what the attitude of the teachers are in regards to social studies education, and finally how the problem of a lack of time for social studies is being addressed or if it is being ignored completely.

Research Questions

When I began to think of how I was going to gather information, I came up with a few questions to guide my research. These will help me figure out what social studies looks like in the elementary school classroom and what the teachers may think of social studies.

1. According to preservice teachers, is social studies instruction being taking place in elementary schools in Central Florida?
2. What do preservice teachers perceive the attitude of teachers about social studies instruction in the classroom to be?

Literature Review

How has time dedicated to Social Studies instruction been affected?

Many researchers provide a plentiful amount of articles and research focusing upon elementary classrooms and how the instruction has changed. In the past twenty years, two large pieces of legislation have been passed, Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind Act 2001. These pieces of legislation fail to demand the importance of social studies; consequently scholars have watched closely how that has affected the instruction of social studies in the elementary classrooms all across the United States. The pieces of literature that I researched explain that there were a lot changes in the classrooms over the past twenty years. The time dedicated to teaching social studies has dropped by an average of 48 minutes a week (Heafner&Fitch, 2012). Also, the attitudes of the teachers have been hampered by the lack of knowledge and support for their further learning. The teachers say that social studies is boring and irrelevant and that it is their least favorite subject to teach (Starr, 2012). Finally, the administration has placed little to no importance on social studies education and placed it only above the electives (Linter, 2006). These articles have given me a great insight as to the effect legislation has had on the instruction of social studies in the elementary schools and how the attitudes of teachers and administrators has affected instructional practice in the classroom as well.

Elementary school classrooms have seen a decline in the amount of time spent and content given in social studies in elementary school. In this article, the author talks to many different teachers who teach social studies, ranging from 4th grade to 7th grade (Pace, 2012).

The author talked about Ms. Monroe's fifth-grade class (p. 44). Ms. Monroe teaches only social studies and ELA to two different fifth grade classes. Many of her students are low socio-economic status and are minorities. She was allowed 75 minutes twice a week for social studies. Even though she had all of that valuable time, the author says that it was mostly spent on ELA and textbook reading (p.45). Also, the author said that she really didn't focus on the students figuring it out, but she used more of a "tell to teach" method (p. 46). This study was surprising, even though she had big chunks of time, the teacher still didn't teach the amount of social studies as expected

The time that students are actually taught social studies has been on a steady decrease for the last twenty years. Heafner and Fitchett included has many great charts and graphs that show since 1993 all the way to 2008 and how much time is devoted to each subject (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012). The article shows that over 15 years, social studies in the elementary school went from approximately 3.5 hours a week, down to 2.5 hours a week (p. 204). That is nearly less than an hour a week lost. The authors call for a raised awareness about the rapid drop in time allotted in the elementary school classrooms for social studies and to try and fit more social studies in where ever possible (p. 210).

How have the attitudes of administrators changed?

The administration in schools have been placing social studies in a place of less importance for quite a few years now. In a recent study (Linter, 2006) about how important administrators of elementary schools think social studies is in respect to the other core subjects and elective subjects, the author sent surveys to 624 elementary schools throughout South Carolina and received 111 responses. The responses ranked, in order, the importance of different subjects in elementary school. The subjects were: Art, Foreign Language, Language Arts, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Reading, Science, and Social studies. Social studies was ranked fifth, behind these subjects, respectively: Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science (p. 6). The administrators in the elementary schools thought that, out of the core subjects, social studies was the least important and should be cut if time runs out in the middle of the day.

High stakes testing has affected the instructions of social studies in the elementary schools classrooms. Winstead discusses the effect that high stakes testing has had on elementary social studies and how teachers are to try and incorporate social studies in our daily lessons (Winstead, 2011). The teachers who were interviewed in this article said that the view of social studies among the administration and teachers is very low and the focus is been shifted to math and language arts. The teachers finally sat down together and decided that, even though there is no testing and no real emphasis on social studies from the view of administration that they should try to incorporate social studies in the other subject areas (p. 26).

What is the effect of high-stakes testing?

Social Studies has been classified as one of the four core content areas, but has now been placed as a less important subject area (Heafner&Fitchett, 2012). This study shows that the time allotted for social studies in the classroom has dropped 33% between the years 1999 and 2004. This, the author argues, is due to the new wave of standardized tests coming out between those times, due to the No Child Left Behind Act (P. 68). Furthermore, when the teachers had to decide each day what they were going to teach that day, they focused on what was going to be tested (p.69).

All students need to pass a test in English and Mathematics to graduate high-school, but what about social studies? Because social studies isn't tested, the administration in elementary schools has decided that the time given to social studies can be cut back, so what can teachers do (Volger, 2003)? This article talks about what to do with the little time given for social studies and how teachers can make the most out of that time. The author argues that we should integrate social studies in other subjects as well. The standards in these subjects overlap, especially the standards for English Language Arts (P. 209). So by integrating social studies into ELA by, for example, having the students read some historical fiction, you can get the valuable social studies content in while also fulfilling the ELA instruction that the students need as well.

Could it be possible that the reason social studies isn't viewed as valuable is because they haven't been able to find a way to test it? That is the question that one article poses to its readers (Pahl, 2003). One of the problems is that when they tried to formulate a test, it had disastrous results. In 2000, Oregon tried to formulate a test for social studies, but it later failed

because they thought the questions were biased and unreliable (p. 213). The author states that “tests themselves don’t have a general validity. They are used for specific purposes and test student mastery (p.214).” The author thinks that by having a test, social studies may be viewed as more valuable and maybe have some more, or better instruction in the future.

How has the attitude of teachers changed?

Teaching social studies isn’t just about the methodology and pedagogy; the teachers themselves need to learn about the content themselves to be effective (Tanner, 2008). The author of this article argues that the classes that preservice teachers take in college are not effective in teaching them how to teach social studies. The classes prepare them for what to do as far as classroom management, but it doesn’t teach them about the social studies content. (P. 41) Elementary school teachers were polled and, when asked, 77% of them thought that social studies was just about history and geography (p. 42). The author argues that the solution to this problem is for people to research the classes in college before elementary teachers get their degrees and to reform the classes so that the teachers are better prepared to teach when they graduate (p. 43). If we were change some of the classes in the elementary education program, or even add another socials studies requirement, we may be able to help the teachers coming in to the schools be better prepared to teach social studies.

The perception of teachers in regards to social studies sets the tone for how the students look at social studies. The article discusses a teacher and how she and many of her colleagues felt about social studies (Starr, 2012). She talked about social studies as “boring” and “irrelevant”. When asked basic questions about social studies, the teacher could barely

answer a few (p. 241). The author argues that the “lack of content knowledge is, as the research points out, a problem facing many preservice teachers today (p. 242). This in-turn gives the teacher a bad image of what social studies means to their students and what it means to the administration.

In California, a teacher took a small requirement from her school and shifted it to a huge civics lesson during her ELA time (Beddow, 2011). In California, it is required to teach about Cesar Chavez day (p. 28). While most teachers just did a small lesson on who he was, the author decided to make a civics lesson out of it. The teacher used time devoted to writing to write persuasive letters to Cesar Chavez (p. 31). This was a great way for students to get involved instead of just sit through a boring lecture about someone who they have never heard of. The students did really well on this assignment and I think that it is a great way to incorporate writing into social studies.

Texas has come up with a great way to bring the importance back on to social studies. The author of this article talks about the reality of where social studies is now and how we can fix it (Williams&Maloyed, 2013). Since NCLB, no new social studies standards have been created. The new Common Core Standards have yet to talk about their standards for social studies at the elementary level and haven’t released any notation that they will be creating standards for social studies in the first place (p. 27). While 45 states have adopted these standards, Texas is dancing to the beat of their own drum. Texas is now making it a

requirement for students to take United States History, Studies since the Reconstruction, World History, World Geography, and United States Government in order to graduate (p. 29).

Just because No Child Left Behind seems to ignore social studies, doesn't mean that we should look past the importance of the content in this subject. In this article, the author talks about a 21-year-old preservice teacher and her experience with social studies (Sleker, 2009). The researcher was trying to figure out how preservice teachers are taught to teach history in the elementary schools. His conclusion from observing Amy in her internship in the schools was clear. Preservice teachers need to study more fervently the subject of social studies (p. 108).

Concluding Thoughts

Twenty years has passed since Goals 2000 came out and, according to this research, we have seen huge changes in the instruction of social studies in the elementary school setting. The time allowed each day has gone down significantly since 1993. Not only has the time diminished for this content area, but the content that is required has gone down too. Teachers' attitudes about social studies has also soured over the last 20 years. The teachers have also lost content knowledge in the area of social studies, making social studies instruction in elementary classrooms drop even further down the list of items on the agenda. Finally, the administration in different elementary schools has put a damper on the instruction of social studies in the classroom. They say that out of the five core content areas, social studies should be at the bottom of the list. Social studies education in the elementary school has seen a sharp decline with the passage of major legislation in both time and attitude. The following chapters

will provide information on the methodology used, the results, and possible educational implications.

Methodology

To gather information regarding preservice teacher perceptions of social studies in elementary school settings, I surveyed 180 preservice teachers in the UCF College of Education and Human Performance taking Social Studies in the Elementary School, SSE 3312 to paint a picture of what they have witnessed in the elementary schools in regards to Social Studies instruction. Also, these students have given me some insight of the perceptions of teachers and administrators from their field experience hours. I my survey participants have given me a great insight to what Social Studies looks like in the elementary school setting.

IRB process

Before I sent out my survey, I had to get the approval of the Institutional Review Board. I filled out the forms on the IRB for a new study, and I sent it in to be signed and reviewed by the IRB. Once I got approval, I sent out my survey to 180 preservice teachers in the UCF College of Education and Human Performance in the courses SSE3312 and LAE 4314. I received a total of 69 responses.

Data collection

In order to collect the opinions of teachers, I have decided to send out a survey to Elementary Education majors in the College of Education and Human Performance at the University of Central Florida. These preservice teachers have completed field experiences in Central Florida elementary schools as part of their program and coursework. I sent the survey created in Survey Monkey via email, to the professors and they emailed it to their students. .

The following questions are on the survey that I sent out:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SYTJRKE>

Survey

Survey Questions for Preservice Teachers about their Observations of Social Studies in Central Florida Elementary Schools

1. Are you a male or female
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. What academic year are you currently in according to your credit hours?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior

3. Estimate how many hours of field experience/service learning have you done so far in Elementary Education program?
 - a. Less than 20 hours
 - b. 20-40 hours
 - c. 40-60 hours
 - d. 60+ hours

4. What grade level have you observed/taught in? Please circle all that apply?
 - a. K
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. 4
 - f. 5

5. Estimate how many times have you observed social studies in elementary class?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. 2-3
 - d. 4-5
 - e. 6-8
 - f. 9 or more

6. In your service learning/ field experience, describe the social studies lessons being taught in classrooms that you have observed. Please note grade level and topic. Provide one example that stood out in your mind as good or bad? Write none if you haven't observed any social studies.

7. Based on your observations during your field experience so far, what do you perceive elementary teachers' perceptions of social studies instruction in the classroom to be?

8. Have you seen social studies integrated with any other of the subjects being taught in the elementary school classroom and if so, what subjects? Circle all that applies
 - a. None
 - b. English Language Arts
 - c. Math
 - d. Science
 - e. Art/Music/PE

9. Thank you for participating, please add anything you wish this survey had asked about elementary social studies.

Results

In the chart below, I asked the students what grades they observed while they were in their student teaching. They were given a chance to select multiple answers and were asked to select all that apply. This chart shows that most students had a good range of where they taught. This is great for my research because the students have seen multiple different grade levels so I do not have uneven data.

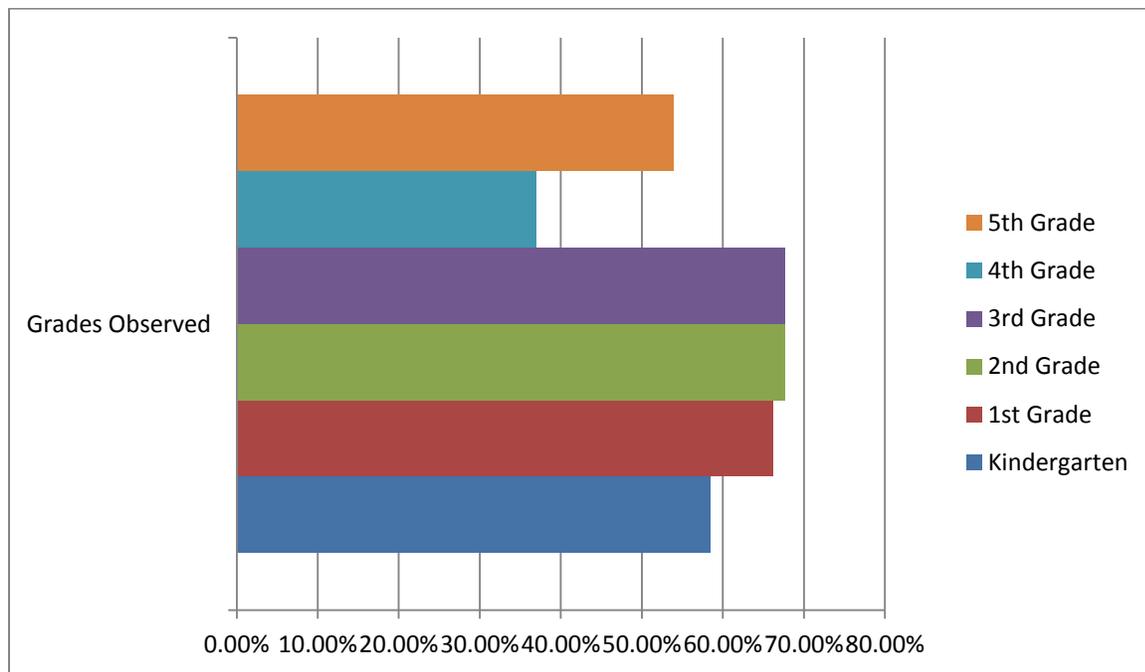


Figure 1: Elementary Grades Observed

In the chart below, I asked the students how many hours they have observed in classrooms while doing service learning. Most students have done at least 20 hours of observing in the classrooms. This is great because it shows me that the students I surveyed have spent a good amount of time observing classes in elementary school. This gives me great

data because they should have seen some social studies implemented somewhere throughout the days they observed.

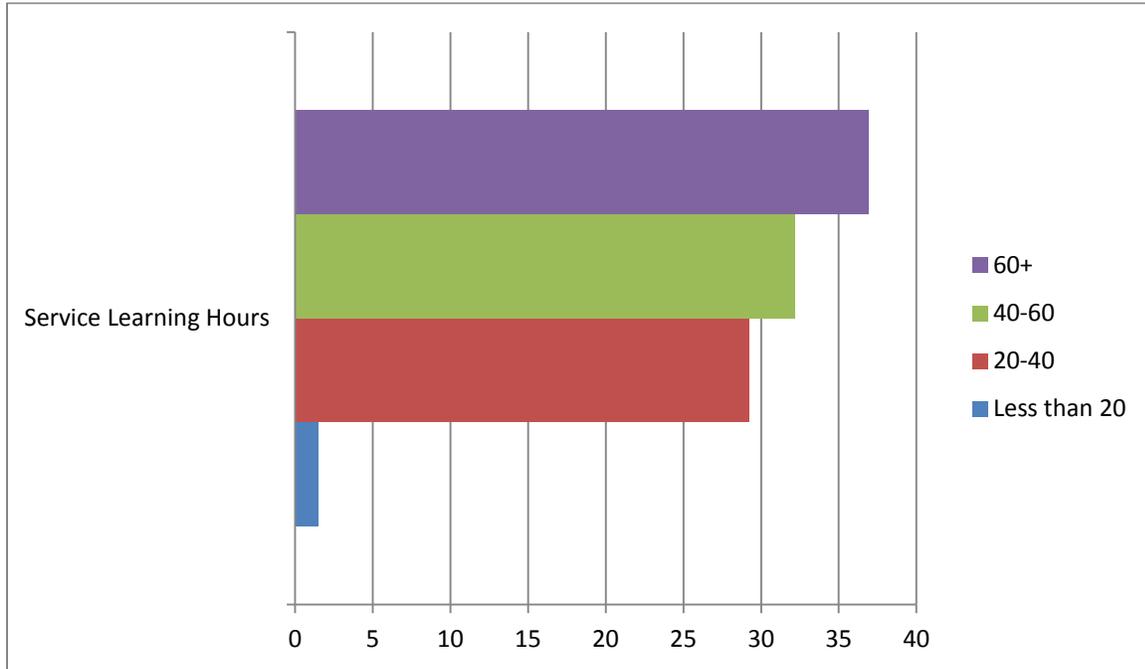


Figure 2: Service Learning Hours Completed

In the chart below, I asked the students how many times the observed social studies being taught in the classrooms they had their service learning hours. It shows that most students have not see social studies taught more than five times. This is very alarming to me. In Figure 2, most students observed at least 40 hours of teaching time and they have not seen social studies taught more than 5 times. This shows that social studies is being skipped and ignored throughout the week.

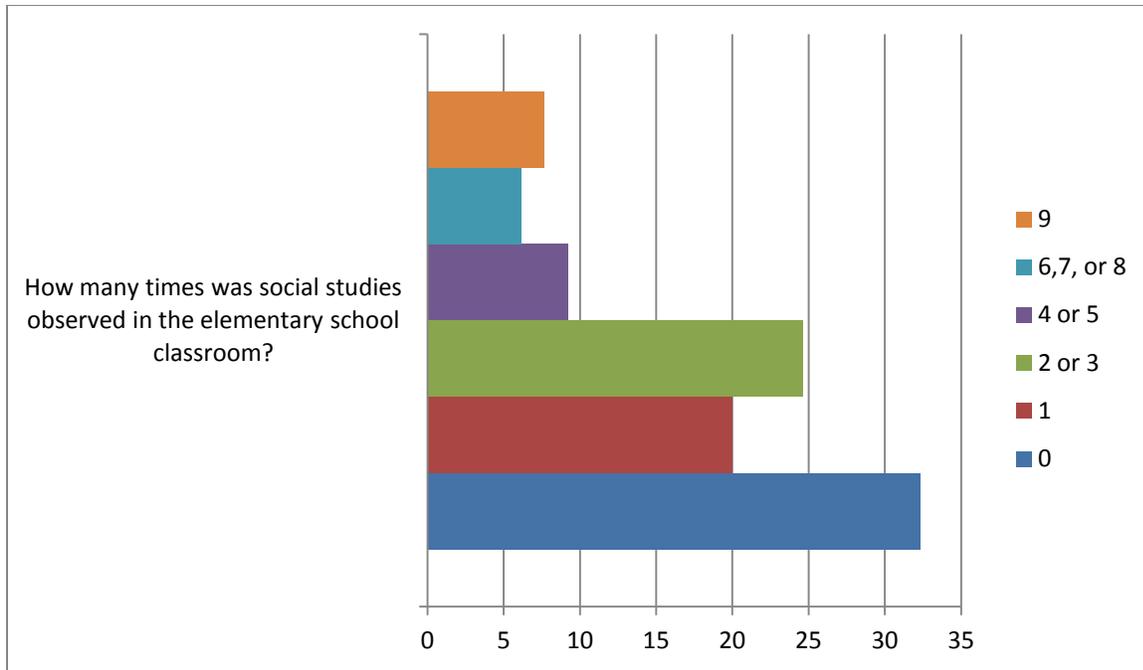


Figure 3: How Many Times Social Studies Was Observed

In the chart below, I asked the students where they saw social studies being integrated, if at all, in other subject areas. Most students saw social studies integrated with English Language Arts. This is great to see, it gave me hope for social studies. While in Figure 3 there wasn't much social studies instruction during social studies time, teachers are finding ways to integrate it into the core classes. This is a great way to supplement the short time given each day to focus solely on social studies.

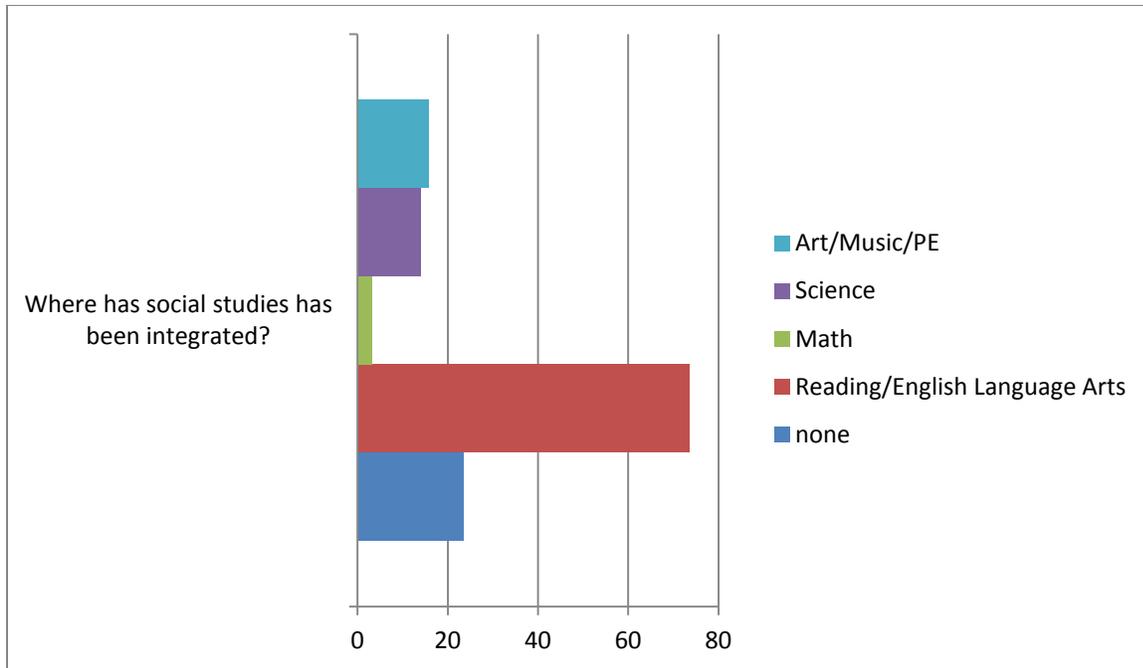


Figure 4: Where Social Studies Has Been Integrated

In the chart below, I asked how often social studies was taught. Most students said that it was barely ever taught on its own in the classroom. This was unfortunately not shocking. This chart shows me that teachers are skipping social studies and focusing on other subjects during time given for social studies instruction. While this data is distressing, I am still holding out hope that social studies will get taught. Because a lot of teachers are integrating social studies in language arts, this may be able to make up for the lost social studies time throughout the week.

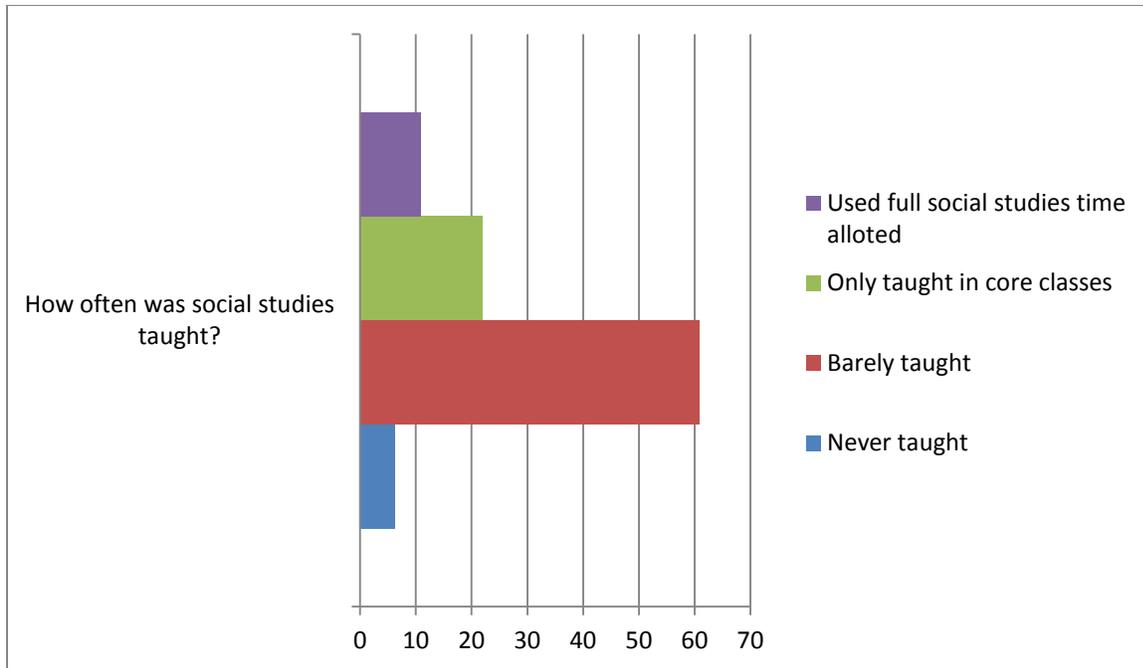


Figure 5: How Often Social Studies Has Been Taught

In my survey I also received some open-ended responses to some of my questions. The first open ended question was: “In your service learning/ field experience, describe the social studies lessons being taught in classrooms that you have observed. Please note grade level and topic. Provide one example that stood out in your mind as good or bad? Write none if you haven’t observed any social studies.” Listed below are some of the responses I received.

4th Grade: Native American of Florida This lesson stood out to me because it seemed extremely uninteresting to the students as well as the teacher(s) including myself. The students watched a video and answered questions afterwards. The students were then asked to fill out a worksheet that was used as the assessment for the lesson. The teacher was not knowledgeable on the subject of the regions where the Native Americans lived. There was little to no differentiated instruction. Overall, it was a terrible lesson to observe.

I have seen one teacher fill out a map with the students of a book they were reading, it was a historical fiction picture book (can't remember the name very well). The children viewed a

map of Japan and America in the story it describes the immigration of one man traveling from Japan.

When I was observing a kindergarten class the students were learning about the first thanksgiving. They were making a "What am I thankful for turkey" and writing five things they were thankful for.

I thought that these responses I gathered from this question were perfect for my research. The lesson taught in 4th grade shows that when social studies is being taught in elementary school classrooms it is not always taught in a way where it will be interesting or beneficial to the students. Also, the response in from the student who observed Kindergarten was a little disappointing as well. The lesson was taught in a very shallow, non-memorable way. Finally, the student who saw the integration of maps with a historical text was quite surprising. While it may not be as hands on as some lessons, this is a great way to incorporate social studies skills (maps and history) into some language arts time.

I also left a section open for the survey participants to add anything they wanted to say about their experiences. I received a very interesting response saying:

There is a major lack of calendar skills. Many of the kids in 1-2nd grade do not even know all the months or correct order of days in the week. Forget what year it is-- sad. I think the SS dilemma would be improved if more teachers were shown how easily it is to combine SS content with other subjects and use more interactive technology to make "boring history" more engaging. Also, it's difficult to teach what you don't know or feel comfortable with and teachers probably avoid the material because of this. It's an unfortunate cycle. Of course, adding SS content to the FSA would make a difference, although for the wrong reasons.

I thought that this comment was great. This student talks about in the classroom he or she observed and how there was a lack of calendar skills taught. Also, there were great points brought up about using technology to liven up historical topics as well. Finally, I thought it was interesting that he or she commented on the fact that most teachers avoid this subject because they themselves dislike social studies or struggle with the concepts. Overall I think that the responses I received from this open ended section of the survey were beneficial and eye opening.

Conclusion

Social Studies is a subject containing many different strands. Social studies includes: economics, civics, government, history, culture, geography, and technology. What I have concluded from my research is that elementary school teachers are not teaching social studies as often as they have in the past. According to Figure 5, the majority students, just over 60%, were observing classes saw that social studies was barely taught in the elementary school setting. This is alarming to me that, even though teachers are allotted the time, they elect not to use their social studies block to teach social studies according to the results in Figure 5. On the plus side, students have seen a lot of teachers integrating social studies into the core classes or block periods according to figure 4. According to the data that I collected, while teachers may not be using the given social studies block (figure 5), they are integrating social studies elsewhere in their curriculum (figure 4). While teachers may not be spending time explicitly on social studies, there is hope for social studies in the classroom.

My research tied into the literature that I found before doing my survey very well. As the literature stated, the amount of time allotted for social studies has gone down significantly (Heafner&Fitch, 2012). The amount of time given each day is 30 minutes a day, not including Wednesdays, were they omit it. In my survey, students showed that social studies was not only omitted on Wednesdays, but other days as well. Also, the literature talks about how some teachers think that integration is the way to go (Beddow, 2011). This is also shown in my research. Students reported that most teachers integrated social studies in other core classes. I think that my research fits well with the literature that I reviewed before conducted my survey.

I was very surprised to see what teachers were doing to teach social studies when they have very little time in the day to teach it. In my survey, a lot of students saw social studies integrated in

other subjects, mainly language arts. This is a great way for teachers to teach social studies when there is not enough time in the day to drive home the important topics of social studies.

This study has opened my eyes to what my job as an elementary school teacher as well as a lover of social studies will look like and what I will do in regards to implementing social studies in my on classroom. I will make sure to make the 30 minutes of social studies a day count; I will do many hands-on activities including project-based learning, no matter what grade level. By having a hands-on approach, I will help my students relate social studies to real world circumstances. Also, hands-on learning will help my students remember what they taught and also have fun while learning. Social studies has a special place in my heart from being taught in a hands-on, interactive way and I want my students to love social studies.

Based on my findings from my survey, there may be a reasonable solution. What if we integrate social studies into the other core classes? While teaching reading, math, and science, we can teach students about history, civics, economics, and US government. These principles that we teach in social studies are important for our students to know and even though we may have a shorter time to teach it, we can integrate into the core classes. There is still hope for social studies in the elementary school students.

Limitations of My Research and Future Research

In my research, there are a few limitations that I experienced. I was not able to send out a survey to classroom teachers and get their view of social studies. In the future, I would really like to interview or survey teachers in Central Florida schools to get a first hand view of what the attitudes of teachers were in regards to social studies. I would really like to conduct some more research in the future. I would like to figure out why social studies has been left out of legislation and state/national standards. I would also like to find out why administrators put less of an emphasis on social studies than the other core subjects taught in the classroom. There is a lot of research left to do in this subject area and I would love to figure out the answers to some of the questions that I still have after conducting my research.

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