The Relationship Between Teacher Attitudes Toward Florida History And The Methods And Materials The Teachers Use To Teach Florida History

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD FLORIDA HISTORY AND THE METHODS AND MATERIALS THE TEACHERS USE TO TEACH FLORIDA HISTORY

by

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ABSTRACT

Reacting to an impression that history is not viewed as significant as other curricular subjects such as reading, math, or science, there were multiple purposes for this research: first, to document the attitudes of the fourth grade teachers in one county in Florida towards the subject of Florida history. The teachers’ perceptions of the importance of the topic to and for the students, to the administration, and to them personally was surveyed in addition to the perceived preparation of the teachers to teach Florida History. The second purpose was to ascertain the perception of fourth grade teachers regarding preference and efficacy of their methods; third, to discern the teachers’ views as to the effectiveness and value of the available materials; fourth, to determine the amount of instructional time devoted to the teaching of Florida History; and fifth, to discover if there is any correlation between teacher attitudes toward Florida History and the methods and materials that they use to teach the subject.

Eighty-eight of the 210 fourth grade teachers employed in the county during the research interval responded to a survey that was part Likert scale and part fill-in. The results of this research were in agreement with the premise that teachers perceive themselves as unprepared to teach history; however, the teachers of this county thought that Florida History was important to and for their students, the administration and them personally. Although the teachers advocated the use of constructivist approaches to teaching Florida History such as cooperative learning, student projects, and role-playing, the majority of the teachers utilized lecture as their predominant instructional method due to insufficient classroom instructional time (only one in five teachers included Florida History in the daily schedule). The textbook was the leading material of choice overwhelming tradebooks, computer software, and videos. Although there was a relationship discovered between the teachers’ attitudes and the methods they espoused, there
was no relationship between the teachers’ attitudes and the materials they employed to teach Florida History.
Dedicated to my family and friends

for their love and support
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background

Why study history? With today’s emphasis on nationally normed test-related topics of reading, mathematics, and science, why bother to include history into a time-and-management-stressed instructional curriculum?

Although curricular content has been a concern since the establishment of schools, the case for the importance of history in the academic curriculum in the present study begins with a statement from the Bradley Commission on History in Schools:

History belongs in the school programs of all students, regardless of their academic standing and preparation, of their curricular track, or of their plans for the future. It is vital for all citizens in a democracy, because it provides the only avenue we have to reach an understanding of ourselves and of our society, in relation to the human condition over time, and of how some things change and others continue (Gagnon & the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, 1989, p. 21).

Generally included under the umbrella of social studies along with civics, geography, economics, and sociology, there have been efforts by historical purists to treat the study of history as a unique entity. The Bradley Commission was created in 1987 in reaction to concerns about the inadequate quantity and quality of historical curriculum taught in American elementary and secondary classrooms (Gagnon & the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, 1989, p. 16).

During the last decade of the twentieth century, a conference of teachers, historians, and curricularists was commissioned to create National Standards for History, published by the National Center for History in the Schools (1996). According to the members of the conference:

Knowledge of history is the precondition of political intelligence. Without history, a society shares no common memory of where it has been, of what its core values are, or of what decisions of the past account for present circumstances. Without history, one cannot undertake any sensible inquiry into the political, social, or moral issues in society. And without historical knowledge and the inquiry it supports, one cannot move to the informed,
discrimination citizenship essential to effective participation in the democratic processes of governance and the fulfillment for all our citizens of the nation’s democratic ideals (p. 1).

Walter Parker, author of *Social Studies in Elementary Education* a textbook for undergraduate teachers, mimics the style and substance of the assertion from the National Center for History in the Schools:

Without historical understanding, there can be no wisdom; without geographical understanding, no social or environmental intelligence; without economic understanding, no sane use of resources and, therefore, no future; and without civic understanding, no democratic citizens and, therefore, no democracy. This is why social studies matters (2001, p. vii).

Hunkins, Jeter, and Maxey (1982), also authors of an undergraduate text, *Social Studies in the Elementary Schools*, offer a lengthy list of benefits from instruction in social studies. They believe that social studies should:

1. Help students acquire behaviors that will enable them to be effective members of social groups.
2. Help students becomes skilled in using decision-making processes when considering social concerns. Social studies can contribute to students’ thinking abilities by stressing problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and the procedures necessary for processing specific information. These skills grow from opportunities to work independently and to observe, classify, interpret, synthesize, and evaluate data.
3. Help students understand events and people of the past, and how they have influenced the present.
4. Enable students to develop a sense of identity. They should be able to describe their values and why they have them.
5. Help students become effective citizens. It should encourage them to use effectively the processes of a representative democracy. Students should be aware of and committed to their responsibilities as citizens of particular communities, starting with the classroom and the school community and extending to the state, the nation, and the world.
6. Promote an appreciation and understanding of diversity. The aim is to encourage students to gain true acceptance of, rather than just a tolerance for, those who are different.
7. Enable students to develop a “future view,” a view of alternative futures and the possible roles they might play in creating and managing those futures.
8. Enable students to appreciate the creative genius of the human race and to value the
    products of such creativity in both the arts and technology.
9. Provide students with questioning attitudes and skills in order to carry out
    independent and cooperative investigations, with the hope of motivating continued
    learning beyond formal schooling.
10. Provide students with an understanding of and skill in group dynamics – working
    with others in both small and large groups.
11. Enable students to understand the dynamic interactions between their nation and
    their world. They should understand the workings of government, economics, and
    culture.
12. Heighten sensitivity by helping students see people’s commonalities as well as their
    uniquenesses.
13. Motivate students to continue to be students of the human family and to apply such
    learnings to the betterment of the human race (p. 4)

Despite justification and support for the importance of social studies in the classroom,
teachers do not perceive social studies to be as important as other subject areas (Saxe, 1994). In
1984, John Goodlad confirmed in a major study that significantly more time was devoted to
language arts and math than to social studies. In the primary grades, David Jenness (1990) found
that social studies is “known as ‘afternoon time’: that is, social studies is taken up after lunch or
close to dismissal, when the serious work is over” (p. 382). Many teachers do not understand
what is to be accomplished by social studies and as a result often skip the social studies period
altogether (Savage & Armstrong, 1987).

Adding to the lack of importance attributed to the topic by classroom teachers is their
own perceived lack of preparation to teach history. Over 80 % of today’s history teachers did
not study it in depth in college (Wineburg, 2004) and consequently, rely heavily on the textbook,
based on practicality (Zevin, 1990). Heavy reliance on the textbook is also fostered by the
controversial nature of the subject matter. Without a sound foundation in the subject matter,
teachers are confused as to which people and events are critical to historical curricula and allow
the textbook to decide. This point is illustrated with the following review of Florida History, a
subject mandated by the state for the fourth grade.
Review of Florida History

The history of the United States begins with the history of Florida. When Juan Ponce de Leon set sail from the West Indies in March 1513, ostensibly to discover the fountain of youth, he headed north towards Bimini; but due to a tropical storm, his vessel beached on uncharted land somewhere between what is now known as Cape Canaveral and Melbourne Beach. Taken with the verdant flora he discovered inland, Ponce De Leon christened his new discovery, “La Florida,” to commemorate the festival of flowers. Although it is doubtful that Ponce de Leon was the first white man to sight the beaches of Florida, he is credited with the first recorded visit. Therefore, Spain, his sponsoring country, was able to lay claim to all the land and the riches it may contain.

Geographically, Florida was between the gold and silver looted from the countries in Central and South America by the Spaniards and the mother country. Consequently, possession of Florida ensured a stronghold on the trade route via the Gulf Stream as the Spanish ships passed around the peninsula laden with their bounty. Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain requisitioned privateers from her country to relieve the Spanish ships of their treasure resulting in skirmishes, battles, and wars between opposing countries, and sunken ships off the coast of Florida. Famous pirates and their exploits became legendary.

Domestication of the wild flora and fauna was difficult. Encounters with the Native Americans were usually contentious and bloody. In order to establish colonies, the Timucuan, Tocobagas, and Calusas had to be conquered. Although the Timucuan towered over the heads of the Europeans, the Spanish subdued and eventually eliminated the tribe through their superior weaponry or the introduction of their diseases to which the Native Americans had no immunity.
Fortifications were required for protection from the wild elements that existed beyond the city
calls and for protection from pirates and militia from opposing countries.

As the land beyond Florida’s boundaries became the nation of the United States, social
issues of the nation surfaced in Florida. As more and more Europeans arrived in the new world,
more and more of the Native Americans became displaced or eliminated. A Creek tribe from
Georgia which the British renamed the Seminoles sought refuge in Florida. However, more
Europeans were also arriving in Florida and territorial rights resulted in three wars with the
Seminoles. The solution to the Seminole situation was a treaty signed after the second war that
would send the tribe to Arkansas. Some of the chiefs objected, the third war was fought, and
those Seminoles that survived escaped into the Everglades.

The issue of slavery was also present in Florida. Slavery had been established through the
consignment of the Native Americans by the Spanish. As the growth of cotton spread in the
north of Florida so did the use of African slaves. When the state of Florida was admitted into the
union in 1845, it was admitted in conjunction with another state, Iowa. The policy at the time
was to admit one slave state (Florida) and one non-slave state (Iowa) to maintain a balance in
Congress. During the Civil War, Florida sided with the Confederacy.

The purpose of this historical review is not to deliver a complete chronological rendering
but rather to explain that Florida’s history is one of conquest, the conquest of the sea, the land,
and its peoples. Conquest can mean piracy on the high seas or the massacre of groups of people
such as occurred between the Native Americans and the Europeans. It can also mean the
subjugation of people into slavery for economic gain. The rationale of inhumane treatment of
others conflicts with today’s standards of political correctness. Also difficult is the
pasteurization of the events of Florida’s history to make them acceptable to a fourth grade
audience. A knowledge of the true details of Florida’s past could be traumatic to a nine-year-old; therefore, events have to be carefully scrutinized before presentation on the elementary level. Teachers who feel unprepared to teach history turn to textbook publishers to provide the necessary distillation of the subject matter and teach what the publishers present.

Heavy reliance on textbooks grants publishers the ability to specify what students are to gain from the study of a topic. However, publishers are strongly influenced by the movement to nationally standardize their products. Interest in accountability has required the specific identification of guidelines, objectives, benchmarks, and grade level expectations as outlined in sources such as *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (1994), *National Standards for History* (1996), or *Connections, Challenges, Choices: Report of the Florida Commission on Social Studies Education* (1991). Testing has become the assessment of choice to ascertain whether the specified goals, objectives, and benchmarks have been met.

On January 8, 2002, the national *No Child Left Behind* act was passed. Due to this legislation, states are mandated to test students during the school year with a norm-referenced exam that targets reading, mathematics, and in some grade levels, science. The importance of this test (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test or FCAT) as a requirement for continuation to the next grade has resulted in a curricular shift towards drill and focus on test-taking skills. Subject areas such as social studies that are not tested yearly are neglected (Owens, 1996; Steffey & Hood, 1994) and in some cases dismissed.

In a chapter included in the *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (1991), Stephen Thornton characterizes teachers as “curricular-instructional gatekeepers in social studies” (p. 237). It is the teacher who decides how much time is devoted to a subject, what topics will be taught, to whom these topics will be taught, when and how long
each topic will be taught, and how well the topics are to be learned (Brophy, 1982). These decisions are not made in a vacuum but rather are influenced by the frame of reference of the teacher or what the constructivists describe as the background knowledge of the learner, in this case the teacher – background knowledge that is comprised of the teacher’s own previous experiences with the subject and the attitudes that are results of the experiences. As defined by Gagné (1975), an acquired internal state that influences the choice of personal action towards some class of things, persons, or events is called an attitude (p. 66). Gagné elaborated on three different aspects of attitudes that could be analyzed separately or together which Triandis had previously introduced:

1. Cognitive component – the idea which is generally a category used by humans in thinking
2. Affective component – the emotion which charges the idea

Discordance may occur if all three aspects of attitudes are not in alignment. For example, if a teacher is expected to teach certain curriculum (behavioral component) that is not in accordance with his/her beliefs (cognitive component), an attitude of “I’ll do it but I don’t have to like it” may result. Additionally, if the goals and aspirations of the individual (cognitive component) are blocked from self-actualization (Maslow, 1999), an attitude of apathy (affective component and behavioral component) may be the consequence.

Since attitudes are capabilities that influence an individual’s choice about the kinds of actions to take (Gredler, 2001, p. 137), perceptions of capabilities, identified as “self-efficacy” by Bandura, are critical components of attitudes. Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Relevant to this study are the
teachers’ perceptions regarding their effectiveness to teach Florida History based on their self-reported undergraduate preparation; their professional development and continuing education; their personal interest or pursuit of the subject; and especially their attitudes toward the teaching of Florida History.

The Problem Statement

According to the Sunshine State standards, the teaching of Florida’s colorful history is mandated in the fourth grade. Although the requirements are stipulated, the methodology for teaching Florida’s history in its 67 counties is not. Consequently, the curriculum may consist of strict reliance on the textbook; it may be enriched with the addition of a variety of ancillary activities; or the curriculum may be any of a number of combinations and permutations of both. The decision rests with the classroom teacher, who may or may not find the teaching of Florida History relevant. There is no consistent curriculum for teaching Florida History and it is surprising to note that although mandated, there are few if any studies on the content of the curriculum for Florida History.

Purpose of the Study

At an annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in 1998, Mary Haas and Margaret Laughlin presented the results of an open-ended survey they conducted on behalf of the National Council for the Social Studies to discover the perceptions, beliefs, and classroom practices of elementary social studies educator members. Two major concerns illuminated by the survey were “the position of social studies in the curriculum is being threatened by state and/or district testing mandates and budget decisions” and “the lack of current instructional materials” (p. 8). With regard to teaching approaches, 90% used the textbook for instruction, videos were used less than once per week, and fewer than 25% of the
respondents used the computer at least once a week. The teaching method was “eclectic and more dependent upon the topic under study rather than dominated by a philosophy that supports a single particular curriculum and instructional approach” (p. 9). While the Haas and Laughlin survey queried the broader category of social studies, the present study investigates similar concerns in the field of Florida History.

Florida mandates that five benchmarks in the Sunshine State Standards be accomplished in the teaching of Florida History during the course of the fourth grade year.

*Standard 6: The student understands the history of Florida and its people.*

*Benchmark SS.A.6.2.1: The student understands reasons that immigrants came to Florida and the contributions of immigrants to the state’s history.*

*Benchmark SS.A.6.2.2: The student understands the influence of geography on the history of Florida.*

*Benchmark SS.A.6.2.3: The student knows the significant individuals, events, and social, political, and economic characteristics of different periods in Florida’s history.*

*Benchmark SS.A.6.2.4: The student understands the perspectives of diverse cultural, ethnic, and economic groups with regard to past and current events in Florida History.*

*Benchmark SS.A.6.2.5: The student knows how various cultures contributed to the unique social, cultural, economic, and political features of Florida.*

(See Appendix A for further descriptions of the objectives for Florida History).

Achieving the benchmarks requires methodology and materials. The purpose of this study is, first, to query teachers regarding their attitudes towards teaching Florida History and their perceived preparedness to teach the topic; second, to ascertain the perception of fourth grade teachers regarding preference and efficacy of their methods; third, to discern the teachers’
views as to the effectiveness and value of the available materials; fourth, to determine the amount of instructional time devoted to the teaching of Florida History; and fifth, to discover if there is any correlation between teacher attitudes toward Florida History and the methods and materials that the use to teach the subject.

Research Questions

Attitudes and Preparedness

1. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as their attitudes toward Florida History?

2. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as their level of preparedness to teach Florida History?

Methods

3. From a list of accepted effective teaching methods, what do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the most effective methods for teaching Florida History?

4. From a list of accepted effective teaching methods, what do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the methods they most commonly use for teaching Florida History?

Materials

5. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the materials that they use in the teaching of Florida History?

6. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the percentage of time that they use materials (textbooks, trade books, computer software, and videos) in the teaching of Florida History?

Instructional Time
7. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the amount of instructional time they spend teaching Florida History?

Attitudes Related to Methods and Materials

8. How do teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History affect the methods that they use to teach Florida History?

9. How do teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History affect the materials that they use to teach Florida History?

Limitations

1. This study was conducted in Brevard County and therefore has limited generalizability to other counties in Florida.

2. Of the 55 elementary schools in Brevard County, 49 are A schools, 3 are B schools, 1 is a D school, and 1 presently has no rating.

3. The survey requests responses that are self-reporting.

Assumptions

1. The teachers in Brevard County responded with honest and accurate information regarding their attitudes toward Florida History and the methods and materials that they use to teach Florida History.

2. The researcher analyzed and interpreted the data correctly.

Definitions

Perceptual Definition:

Attitude - The three components of attitude are generally accepted to be: affective (feelings), cognitive (beliefs), and behavior (actual actions) (Spooncer, 1992; Baron and Byrne (1984)
defined attitudes as "...relatively lasting clusters of feelings, beliefs, and behavior tendencies directed towards specific persons, ideas, objects or groups" (p. 126).

Methodological Definitions:

1. Direct Instruction (lecture) – a pattern of teaching that consists of the teacher’s explaining a new concept of skill to a large group of students, having them test their understanding by practicing under teacher direction (controlled practice), and encouraging them to continue to practice under teacher guidance (guided practice) (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2000, p. 339).

2. Group Work or Cooperative Learning – students work in partnerships or teams of as many as six; instruction of teams can range from explicit procedures to guide them through the learning activities to general procedures that leave much of the organization to the students (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2000, p. 452).

3. Demonstration – a demonstration lesson represents a direct teaching strategy in which the teacher models the behaviors of presentation, analysis, and synthesis. It differs from an experiment in that the teacher knows the outcome of a demonstration (Ellis, 2002, p. 129).

4. Student Projects – (1) construction activities which are opportunities for students to make models or replicas of items or places used in the past or present; (2) processing activities which require students to duplicate the steps people use to acquire food, clothing, shelter, and other consumer goods (Hoge, 1996, p. 85).

5. Role Playing – students explore human relations problems by enacting problem situations and then discussing the enactments (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2000, p. 59).

Importance of the Study

An investigation into the perceptions and practices of the teaching of Florida History may address issues raised in other studies. It may ameliorate fears as to the status of social studies as
a core content area, basic in the elementary curriculum (Haas & Laughlin, 1998); and create understandings about how teacher’s personal perceptions influence instructional design, content selection, questions raised, and pedagogy employed (Brophy, 1982; Grant, 1999; Lawless, Smith, Kulikowich, & Owen, 2001; Risinger, 1991; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993; Thornton, 1992).

Since there is a dearth of research on the teaching of Florida History, this study may be of importance for supplying some information to interested parties on a topic previously uninvestigated. The state of Florida may be interested in knowing the teachers’ attitudes, methods, and materials for the teaching of a mandated subject in one county. Issues regarding teacher perceived preparedness might be relevant to state universities and workshop organizers for professional development.

The Brevard County School District may find the results particularly pertinent. In addition to perceived preparedness to teach Florida History, this study will also reveal teacher-reported attitudes toward the teaching of Florida History. Methods utilized and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the materials used in Brevard County to support the methods will be noted. Anticipated results are:

1. This study may reveal differences in instructional methods and materials between teachers who value knowledge of Florida History and those who do not.
2. This study may reveal that although the teachers report great importance to the use of a particular method, they may be utilizing an alternative method to teach Florida History.
3. The study may also reveal attitudes toward the inclusion of various materials as part of the curriculum.
4. Through analysis of the curricular components, the study may reveal insights into the range of reliance on the textbook vs. the use of ancillary materials.

5. This study may reveal the instructional time allotted for Florida History in Brevard County.

6. This study, when compared to the Haas and Laughlin study, may reveal consistencies in the behaviors, methods, and materials that are used in the social studies venue.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since this study is an examination of how teacher attitudes affect their curricular choices in the field of social studies, the first topic of discussion in this literature review is an analysis of attitude framed in Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy. Operating under the assumption that teacher self-efficacy is a function of experiences, the college preparation and induction support of preservice teachers is presented next. Third, the importance of social studies/history/Florida History is developed including a discussion of the importance of the teacher in curricular decisions. A description of some of the methods and materials utilized in the instruction of social studies/history/Florida History is submitted last.

Bandura’s Theory of Self-Efficacy

Providing the foundation for the discussion of attitudes is Bandura’s social-cognitive learning theory of self-efficacy. According to the theory, there are two components to self-efficacy: outcome expectancy (the belief that certain behaviors can lead to specific outcomes in a generalized sense) and efficacy expectations (individuals’ beliefs about their own competence to bring about the outcome) (Benz, Bradley, Alderman, & Flowers, 1992, p. 274). There are four areas identified by Bandura as sources of information used to determine self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and positive emotional tone (Wingfield & Nath, 2000). Pajares (2002) defines the four areas as:

1. Mastery experiences – the interpreted result of one’s previous performance
2. Vicarious experience – the observation of others performing tasks
3. Verbal persuasion – exposure to the verbal judgments that others provide
4. Emotional tone – the affective reaction to a task
Applying each of these elements to a teacher in the position of teaching social studies, the individual will have strong feelings of self-efficacy based on mastery of the subject at the undergraduate level, professional development workshops, or one’s own study of the topic. Observing colleagues viewed as successful models for teaching social studies increases one’s self-efficacy as does verbal praise. However, it is the positive emotional attitude toward the topic which may be most critical for actual skill in an endeavor may be overruled by self-doubts (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura, how people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their own capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing (Pajares, 2002). To paraphrase the Army slogan: “Be all that you can be,” Bandura’s approach is that the individual can be all that he/she thinks he/she can be (assuming knowledge and skills are in place). Perceived self-efficacy is not concerned with the number of skills one has, but a belief about what one can do under different sets of conditions with whatever skills one possesses (Bandura, 1977, p. 37).

Relating Bandura’s self-efficacy to the three components of attitude (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) introduced by Triandis and further elaborated by Gagné, feelings of high self-efficacy based on personal mastery of the subject and positive experiences teaching the subject will affect the beliefs and values portions of the cognitive component and the emotional factor of the affective component. According to the outcome expectation portion of Bandura’s theory, previous positive experiences will affect the expectation of continued positive experiences. If the individual perceives that the endeavor has value and the individual is successful in the endeavor, then the behavior will probably persist. Based on feelings of self-efficacy, the successful teacher of social studies will continue to teach social studies successfully.
Preparation and Support of Preservice Teachers

The Old English root word for teaching, *taecan*, means to show, to instruct, or, in more literal terms, to provide signs or outward expressions of something one knows (Hansen, 1995, p. 1).

1. *Vacare*, meaning “to call,” is the Latin derivative for the word “vocation.” Teachers accept the invitation to enter the teaching vocation for a variety of reasons. Researched by Lortie in 1975, Tusin (1999) condensed Lortie’s work into the five most frequently cited rationales:
   1. the interpersonal theme, the desire to work with children and youth
   2. the service theme, the idea of contributing in a profession of moral worth
   3. the desire for continuation in a specific subject or school setting
   4. material benefits such as salary, prestige, and security, especially for women
   5. time compatibility, especially for women who were mothers and wives (p. 12).

Despite intrinsic factors such as making a difference in the lives of children, giving back to society, or a love of learning (Tunis, 1999), beginning teachers leave the profession at a disproportionately higher rate than teachers who have been teaching for more than ten years (Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997). According to the WestEd newsletter published in February 2002, 11% of the teachers in the United States quit after 1 year, 21% after 2 years, and 39% after 5 years.

Certainly salary considerations contribute to the attrition rate; however, Sonia Nieto in her book, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* (2003), lists the following dropout factors in addition to the low compensation:

1. the ever increasing complexity of society
2. the growing diversity of the student body and the relative homogeneity of the teaching force
3. lack of respect for teachers
4. and most critical, the school climate – whether or not it supports new teachers as professionals (p. 3).

Addressing each of Nieto’s point individually, today’s technology is advancing quicker than the financially-strapped educational system can accommodate. Preparing youngsters for a future that is technology driven is difficult when schools do not have the resources or the technological examples on which to learn. Nor are examples of technological examples available in every home which segues to Nieto’s second point. Elementary school student rosters may include children from varying economic backgrounds and from over one hundred nationalities with corresponding primary languages; however, the majority of teachers have been and continue to be Caucasian women (Tusin, 1999) who speak English. Recent political emphasis on education has intensified the focus on accountability in the schools and the teaching profession. Criticism of instructional methods by political candidates is magnified by the media fueling the lack of respect for teachers from students, their parents, and late-night talk show hosts. According to Nieto (2003), on the one hand, there is a curious reverence for the profession of teaching and on the other, a persistent disapproval of the job that most teachers are doing (p. 1). Support for Nieto’s last point appears in The Dropout Teacher (Stinnett, 1970). In Stinnett’s book, Corey observed that influence in the nature of the job and the limits of responsibility contribute as much to teacher dissatisfaction as the obvious factor of salary (p. 3).

Teacher Induction

Establishing the self in the first years of teaching can be a challenging experience as the beginning teachers find their long-held beliefs challenged, their perceptions of the work of teachers incomplete, and their preparation inadequate for the tasks of teaching (Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1999, p. 157); all of which may greatly affect the beginning teachers’
attitudes toward teaching. Teachers may embrace conflicting beliefs that create dilemmas for them in practice or result in contrasting beliefs being used to justify contradictory actions in different contexts (Calderhead, 1996) or teachers may avoid altogether viewpoints other than their own (Zarnowski, 19919). According to Gagné, attitudes do not determine specific acts (Gredler, 2001, p.137); rather, they make certain classes of individual action more or less probable (Gagné, 1985, p. 219).

During the induction period, beginning teachers assimilate the traditions and codes of culture that give meaning to the procedures of daily school life as they attempt to understand and adjust to their roles. Since teachers do not leave their values at the door when they enter their classrooms (Nieto, 2003), conflicts may arise between the individual’s attitudes or values and “the system.” Referring to the work of Gagne and Triandis discussed in chapter one, when teachers find their beliefs and values (cognitive component) in opposition to the accepted practices, they may sense discomfort and feelings of disassociation (affective component) which may eventually lead to resigning and abandoning teaching (behavioral component). Consequently, many new teachers exit the profession in the first few years due to the importance of a thwarted self and a threatened teacher identity (Diamond, 1993). Even tenured teachers who display creativity or originality in opposition to “the system” can be made so uncomfortable that they finally leave the vocation (Corey, 1970). Those who continue learn survival skills, adjusting their ideals to fit their immediate circumstances (Wilson & Sykes, 1989) becoming a member of what Schempp, Sparkes, and Templin, (1999) refer to as the “society of the silent.”

Teacher External Support Systems

Recently, induction programs for the beginning teacher such as mentoring (Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1999) and peer coaching (Showers & Joyce, 1996) have been implemented
to stem the flow. In 1994, Bainer and Didham conducted a study on mentoring and other support behaviors in elementary schools. From surveys that were returned by 488 teachers in a midwestern state, six factors surfaced (mentoring, socializing, collaborating, career strategizing, supervising, and grounding) and were all deemed important in the elementary school setting. The results also suggest that (1) an active informal network of support relationships exists in elementary schools so fostering an artificial one is unnecessary and (2) a broad based network is preferable to a single mentor. Beginning teachers often contact their subject area or grade level colleagues first when seeking information – people who may or may not have mentor status.

Since beginning teachers are expected to deal with the same classroom crises and workloads as seasoned veterans (Corey, 1970; Danielson & Dwyer, 1995), it is helpful for all novices, struggling or not, to have an experienced mentor (Halford, 1998; Roehrig, Pressley, & Talotta, 2002) to turn to for information and support. A study done in 2002 by Geibelhaus and Bowman demonstrated the importance of training for the mentor. Two groups of undergraduate students were compared after their field experiences (student teaching) on the basis of the supervisory teachers. The experimental group’s managerial teachers were trained in the Praxis III/Pathwise framework. The results appear to indicate that cooperating teachers trained in the general principles and practices of mentoring and supervision with a successful framework to guide interactions have a more positive impact than do those with no training (p. 252).

Fisher (2000) wrote in her book, The Teacher Book – Finding Personal and Professional Balance, of the importance of a positive school atmosphere in maintaining the teachers’ focus. Negative relationships that include criticism, faultfinding, gossip, competition, and one-upmanship drain energy from the affirmative work of teaching which endorses Nieto’s fourth point. In addition to a supportive school climate and feelings of collegiality (Hoerr, 1996;
Weasmer & Woods, 2000), beginning teachers cite strong administrative support as crucial to their job satisfaction (Brown, 2002; Singh & Billingsley, 1998; Yoon & Gilchrist, 2003; Youngs, 1979).

**Teacher Preparation to Teach Social Studies**

Preparing the beginning teacher for the task of teaching social studies can be challenging. According to Wunder (2003), preservice teachers could narrate vivid memories in terms of a teacher, content, or activities. Generally, however, preservice teachers relating to their own experiences with social studies report boredom and uninteresting as the key characteristics (Owens, 1997) and an inability to make connections between university methods classes and the implementation of instruction in the student teaching assignments (Morin, 1996). Despite the recent movement of universities to maintain links with their preservice alumni (Allan & Miller, 1990; Halford, 1998), professional development workshops in the study of history and history teaching are relatively infrequent and state teacher testing does not always include subject-specific pedagogical knowledge (Wilson & Sykes, 1989). During induction, teachers learn that subject matter knowledge is not among the higher priorities of school politics, classroom management, and meeting children’s social and emotional needs (Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1999). The unfortunate conclusion is that although elementary teachers interviewed by Mills in 1988 believed that social studies was an important component of the curriculum, Hawkins found in 1997 that preservice teachers ranked social studies very low on their priority list of subjects to teach. It seems obvious that one necessary prerequisite to successful instruction is the development of teachers’ knowledge and teaching skills in each subject to the point that they can enjoy and feel successful at teaching that subject to their students (Brophy, 1982, p. 6).
Importance of Social Studies/Florida History

Although there is some disagreement about the genesis of social studies as a school subject, there is general agreement that the term “social studies” entered the educational jargon in 1916 as a result of the meeting of the National Education Association Committee on Social Studies (Brophy & VanSledright, 1997; Schug & Beery, 1987; Steffey & Hood, 1994). Originally concerned with civic education, social studies evolved into a complex amalgamation of social science disciplines including history, geography, sociology, and government (Beck & McKeown, 1988).

In 1963, Paul Hanna composed an article in which he rationalized the “expanding communities curriculum,” which has become one of the dominant approaches to social studies (Brophy and VanSledright, 1997). Based on his perceptions of Piaget’s theories of child development, the expanding communities curriculum began with the world that the child knew (starting with themselves and their families) and gradually advanced into the neighborhoods (second grade), communities (third grade), the state (fourth grade), the nation (fifth grade), and eventually the nation (Beck & McKeown, 1988). “Although this approach is sanctified in state guidelines, in teacher-training programs, and in social studies textbooks, it is not grounded in cognitive research on how children learn or in developmental studies of what they are capable of learning” (Gagnon & The Bradley Commission, 1989, p. 32). Proof of the perpetuation of this approach is the present study investigated the teaching of Florida History in the fourth grade.

Reacting to perceptions of “fluff” in the integrating history in the social studies approach, critics have rallied for a resurgence of history as a distinct discipline (Brophy and VanSledright, 1997). Beck and McKeown (1988) attribute students’ lack of understanding of American history to the discipline of history losing its order and cogency as a domain of knowledge when
combined with other social science disciplines under the umbrella of social studies curricula. Diane Ravitch (1987) contends that even small children in the primary grades can be taught a serious study of history. Despite the efforts of the historical purists, the study of history at the elementary school level resides in the social studies context.

Fueling the debate over the appropriate approach to the teaching of history is the lack of a clear definition, purpose, or nature of the social studies curriculum (Bragaw & Hartoonian, 1995). Schreiber (1984) simply defined social studies as the study of people – people alone or people as they interact with other people and their environments. These sentiments are echoed and slightly revised by Savage and Armstrong in their 1987 definition of social studies as the study of human beings as they encountered and continue to encounter the challenges of life on earth. Ross (1992) emphasized the civic element of social studies as “the preparation of young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society” (p. 4). In 1992, the Board of Directors of National Council for the Social Studies (1994) adopted the following definition:

Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (p. 3).

Due to the fractured nature of its development and lack of clear definition of the goals of social studies, there have been problems with determining a theoretical focus for research. Armento (1986, p. 945) bemoans, “one of the major problems with much past social studies research is that many of those studies are not based on any explicit theoretical foundations, and
fail to explain the results in the context of general theoretical principles within which the findings might make sense.” Armento further explains that typical social studies investigation usually examines the correlative or causal relationship between an instructional technique or teacher behavior and student outcomes such as Harmon and Hedrick’s (2000) later study of enhancing vocabulary and conceptual learning in social studies or research using cooperative learning strategies to improve literacy skills in social studies (Karnes & Collins, 1997). Elliot Eisner contributed a chapter to the Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning: A project of the National Council for the Social Studies published in 1990 in which he also lamented the virtual absence of research on his topic of including art, music, or literature with social studies. He was able to find only a single doctoral dissertation completed by a student at Harvard on the subject.

The Importance of Florida History

Echoing the lack of research in social studies is the dearth of studies on the teaching of Florida History. Curricular indecisiveness created by fuzzy social studies definitions and meager research agendas is further compounded by the colorful and scandalous nature of Florida’s history. Sifting through the events created by unique and idiosyncratic forefathers (Burnett, 1986; Collins, 1971) and scams and scalawags (McIver, 1994) can confound teachers bent on determining the appropriateness of a topic for fourth grade students. Yet, no other state equals Florida in days of concrete history (Gannon, 1996; Robertson, 1927; Tebeau, 1971).

St. Augustine was a century old before Charleston was founded. Forty-three years before there was a settlement in Virginia, Fort Caroline and its settlement existed on the St. John’s River. Fifty-six years before the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, French Huguenots, under the courageous Ribaut, had established the principles of religious freedom in America through a Florida colony sponsored by the great French Admiral Coligny. More than a century before missions were established in California, a Franciscan monk had written a grammar of the language used by the Indians, with whom he and his brother
friars worked in a chain of 45 missions that extended along the Atlantic seaboard of Florida and Georgia (Hanna, 1930, p. 218).

In April 1857, George R. Fairbanks, who is generally regarded as the founder of the Florida Historical Society, delivered an address in which he presented the goals of the fledgling organization among which were “to keep and preserve all that is known in trust for those who come after us…and to teach our children that first essential knowledge, the history of our own state” (Shofner, 2004, p. 8).

Teacher Influence and the Social Studies Curriculum

Stephen Thornton (1992) provides the following criteria in his chapter, “How do elementary teachers decide what to teach in social studies?”:

1. a commitment to cover the major facts and skills in the textbook
2. consideration of how and what the students would be capable of learning
3. their beliefs about social studies subject matter (p. 89).

By focusing on Thornton’s third point, teacher attitudes, feelings of self-efficacy, and the teaching of social studies may be combined. As discussed, preservice teachers do not ascribe great importance to the teaching of social studies and, due to lack of preparation, teachers with low feelings of self-efficacy do not envision themselves as particularly capable to teach the subject. According to Bandura (1977), people fear and avoid threatening situations in which they do not feel competent and confident; this may explain the lack of emphasis on social studies in the elementary school curriculum. Discussion of a controversial yet historically relevant issue may be classified as one of Bandura’s “threatening situations.” Inclusion of contentious events in the curriculum may adversely integrate with the three aspects of attitude previously presented. Scholl (2002) added a fourth dimension – evaluation, which consists of the charge of some degree of goodness or badness to an attitude object. A teacher, focusing on the “good”
characteristics of a particular historical phenomenon, concept, or event, may discover that the parents, the community, and the school board may be centering on the “bad.” The effects of the teacher’s behavior may vary from a brief reprimand to expulsion from the school system. Since judgments of efficacy also determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or adverse circumstances (Bandura, 1986, p. 394), even though the teacher’s cognitive component toward the controversial subject may remain, the behavioral component may change - the subject of controversy will probably not be addressed in the classroom by that teacher in the future.

Concurrent to self-efficacy in Bandura’s learning theory is the behavior model (Gredler, 2001). Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling; from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). The difficulties encountered by the teacher in the recent example could have been averted if the teacher had modeled his/her behavior on that of the vicarious experience of other teachers. Is the controversial issue on the agenda in their classrooms? If not, there may be a reason. Teacher modeling for young students is especially significant in the instruction of social studies. A teacher’s attitudes toward the subject will be evident in the amount of time spent on the subject, in the delivery of the information, and in the materials chosen for instruction.

Methods and Materials for Teaching Social Studies/Florida History

In contrast to the experiences of Armento and Eisner, there has been an abundance of social studies research in the last ten years (Nelson & Nelson, 1999). Trends in historical study include history as inquiry (Saxe, 1994), as problem solving (Levstik & Barton, 2001; Savoie & Hughes, 1994), as project-based (Diffily, 2002) and as part of a literary/historical approach.
Currently educators agree that there is no one best way to teach social studies (Karnes & Collins, 1997). Method implementation may be influenced by differing philosophical approaches to teaching (Calderhead, 1996) such as objectivism and constructivism.

According to Driscoll (2000), objectivists view reality as independent from and outside the learner, so that learning for them becomes a matter of transferring what exists in reality to a frame of reference for the learner (p. 15). Knowledge exists outside of the learner and it is the responsibility of the teacher to dispense the information to the learner.

Objectivist instructional methods would include lecture and demonstration. In contrast, “constructivists believe that learning occurs as students relate what they have learned from their past experiences to the new situation” (Maxim, 2003, p. 191). In creating a constructivist environment for learning, teachers should strive towards the following goals of learner independence:

1. To recognize that human beings actively construct knowledge and they should not be viewed merely as passive receivers
2. To teach a research methodology that enables children to look for information to answer questions they have raised, and to use the conceptual framework developed in the course (e.g., to apply the concept of system to new areas)
3. To help youngsters develop the ability to use firsthand sources – both the materials provided and the materials they gather in their communities – as evidence from which to develop hypotheses and draw conclusions
4. To conduct classroom discussions in which youngsters learn to listen to others as well as to express their own views
5. To legitimize the search – that is, to give sanction and support to open-ended discussions where definitive answers to many questions are not found
6. To encourage children to reflect on their own experiences
7. To create a new role for the teacher, in which he or she becomes a resource rather than an answer giver
8. To utilize people in the community as resources (Ellis, 2002, p. 12-14).

Instructional approaches such as group work or cooperative learning, student projects, and role-play would fall under the purview of constructivist methods.
Instructional practices may also be influenced by self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers:

1. Teachers' beliefs of personal efficacy affect their instructional activities and their orientation toward the educational process.
2. Teachers with a low sense of efficacy tend to hold a custodial orientation that takes a pessimistic view of students' motivation, emphasizes rigid control of classroom behavior, and relies on extrinsic inducements and negative sanctions to get students to study.
3. Teachers with high efficacy beliefs create mastery experiences for their students whereas teachers with low instructional self-efficacy undermine students' cognitive development as well as students' judgments of their own capabilities.
4. Teacher self-efficacy also predicts student achievement and students' achievement beliefs across various areas and levels (Pajares, 2002).

Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy would probably opt for the constructivist methods (cooperative learning or group work, student projects, and role-playing) of instruction whereas low self-efficacy teachers with their emphasis on control would probably select lecture or demonstration (objectivist methods).

In 1991, Risinger stated that although there was a consensus on the instructional strategy that seemed to be the most effective way to teach any subject – small cooperative group work, he contended that the most frequently used strategy among social studies teachers is “class recitation where the teacher directs questions to individual students or the entire class and waits for a response” (p. 4). Although instructional methods such as lecture, group work, demonstration, student projects, and role playing are discussed and explained in undergraduate social studies texts and books that encourage the usage of a particular method (e.g., Cooperative Learning in Social Studies by Robert Stahl, 1994; Role-playing for Social Values: Decision-making in the Social Studies by Shaftel, 1967), few studies could be found relating the use of a specific teaching method to the study of history or social studies.
The Textbooks vs. Trade Books and Original Sources Argument

Although using the textbook remains the major mode of instruction in most classrooms because of its efficiency and scope (Sewall & Emberling, 1998) and teacher insecurities as specialists in the area (Hawkins, 1997), reliance on the textbook as the testament of experts is ill-founded for three reasons:

1. The instructional materials are not written by a team of recognized experts either in child development or in social studies but rather by employees of the publishing company.
2. The textbook series are not developed and revised through successive field testings.
3. Rather than reflecting the feedback from the teachers, the publishers’ efforts are geared toward the textbook adoption guidelines established by state departments of education and major school districts (Brophy & Alleman, 1996).

The research that follows relates to the inclusion of children’s literature (trade books) and original sources as a means of teaching history/social studies.

Ediger (2000) asserted that children’s literature needs to be an inherent part of any social studies unit since the human condition is so prevalent in the humanities as well as the social sciences; however, the idea was not a new one. McGowan and Guzzetti (1991) cited Rippa who credited Johann Friedrich Herbart, the early-nineteenth century educational philosopher, with the concept. Herbart urged teachers to correlate history with literature to instill desirable social attitudes in children. Supporters of Herbart’s request to enhance history instruction by the use of children’s literature included Laughlin and Kardaleff (1991) and John Hoge (1996). Jarolimek (1990) concurred:

Literature and literary materials should play an important part in social studies instruction because they convey so well the affective dimension of human experience. The realism achieved through vivid portrayals in works of literature stirs the imagination of the young reader and helps develop a feeling for and an identification with the topic being studied (p. 207).
Utilizing children’s literature is an appropriate vehicle for engaging the emotions of children while addressing skills such as geographical goals (Singleton, 1993; Flaim & Chiodo, 1994) or the use of timelines (Allemen & Brophy, 2003); and aiding in the development of racial (Anderson, 1987; Edwards & Queen, 2002) or global awareness (Stewig, 1992; Lickteig & Danielson, 1995). Children’s literature can reflect the concerns of students’ everyday lives and offer them methods and solutions to a wide range of problems (Reicken & Miller, 1990).

The use of children’s literature provides a refreshing alternative to the boredom and watered-down approach of the basal textbook. Ediger (2000) found social studies textbooks to be too rigid and formal. Schug and Beery (1987) claimed that textbooks are hopelessly out of date and fail to keep pace with the new knowledge from the social sciences. Van Middendorp and Lee (1994) cite poor organization, poor literary quality, and encyclopedic nature with errors or commission and omission particularly relating to controversial subjects. In a comparison of textbooks and trade books, Richgels, Tomlinson, and Tunnell (1993) state that textbooks are devoid of voice, drama, and coherence.

In contrast, trade books can be found that equate more easily with the student’s reading level and are more interesting than the basal. In a compressed version of social studies, the publisher omits or limits certain details, pictures, and material with primarily factual information presented (Davis & Palmer, 1992). Galda and DeGroff (1990) stress that aside from first-hand experiences, there are no better ways to help children learn facts, form concepts, and begin to feel the life of human history than through reading books. Savage and Savage (1993) likewise urge teachers to integrate literature into the middle school social studies curriculum, rendering it more relevant and meaningful for students. Fiction can bring historical figures alive while nurturing the child’s creativity and imagination, leading to higher level thinking skills (Stix &
George, 1999). Learning about history from more than one source may promote interest in history, critical reading, interpreting facts, historical thinking, and historical understanding (VanSledright and Kelly, 1998; Zarnowski, 1999). Presenting evidence from a variety of authors, Bamford and Kristo (1998) remind educators to utilize non-fiction children’s literature as well.

When selecting a quality piece of children’s literature, Savage and Savage (1993) recommend that teachers consider how one selection can be used to meet multiple purposes. Not only can historical content be taught but reading strategies as well. Children’s literature as an ancillary to social studies offers students the opportunity to question the author (Beck & McKeown, 2002), increase vocabulary (Baer & Nourie, 1993), and develop comprehension (Dunn, 2000).

In 1971, Margaret LaRoe published “Social Studies: The Florida Story” which was a curricular compendium sponsored by Dade County Public Schools. Included in the course of study was the recommendation to use not only textbooks and trade books but also original sources such as Jonathan Dickinson’s Journal or God’s Protecting Providence. Being the Narrative of a Journey from Port Royal in Jamaica to Philadelphia between Aug. 23, 1696 and April 1, 1697 (Andrews & Andrews, 1961) which is a diary of a pastor and his family shipwrecked on the east coast of Florida. Everglades: River of Grass (Douglas, 1947); and Journey into Wilderness: An Army Surgeon’s Account of Life in Camp and Field During the Creek and Seminole Wars, 1836-1838 (Sunderman, 1953) were also included.

Computers and Videos

Information regarding the incorporation of computers/technology with the teaching of history could be obtained in books such as Using Computers in the Social Studies (Budin,
Kendall, & Lengel, 1986), *Using Computers to Teach Social Studies* (Rooze & Northup, 1986), *Social Studies on the Internet* (Berson, Cruz, Duplass, & Johnston, 2004), *Social Studies Discoveries on the Net* (Fredericks, 2000), and *Technology Tools in the Social Studies Curriculum* (Braun, Fernlund, & White, 1998). However, no studies could be found by the researcher relating the use of any technology to the teaching of history/social studies.

**Summary**

The literature reviewed has investigated the preparation and support of preservice teachers, the perceived importance of Social Studies/Florida History, and some of the methods and materials available to teach Social Studies/Florida History including the textbook vs. trade book and original source argument. The methodology for the study is explained in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was, first, to ascertain the attitudes of the fourth grade teachers of Brevard County toward Florida History; second, the methods and materials that they use to teach Florida History were queried; and third, correlations between the teacher attitudes and the methods and materials that they use were drawn. This chapter explains the population, the research design, the research instrument, and the procedures used to obtain the results of the study.

Population

The study took place in Brevard County, Florida, which is located on the east coast. The Brevard County School District services the children of families employed at largely technical and/or engineering enterprises such as the Kennedy Space Center, Harris Corporation, Intersil, and Northrop-Grumman. Five paid school board members and one superintendent, supported by four area superintendents, create and implement policy for the approximately 80 schools in the county educating over 70,000 students.

At the time of this research, there were 210 fourth grade teachers employed in the public school system of Brevard County. Acceptance of the study by the Brevard County School District contained the caveat that the study be conducted in accordance with district policy, i.e., principals have the discretion to determine whether the teachers employed at their schools will participate in research studies. Eighty-eight fourth grade teachers participated in the study.

Research Design

There were several key considerations in selecting the research venue: (a) gather the most data possible from (b) as many participants as possible during (c) an inescapably difficult
segment of the school year to describe the status of the teaching of Florida History in Brevard County. Since one of the propositions of the research was to discover how many people were choosing the same instructional method using a variety of materials, the data needed to be quantified. A concurrent proposition was to discover how the attitudes of the subjects related to their choices of methods and materials. Quantitative descriptive studies involve collecting data to discover the current status of topic and/or the attitudes of some group of people usually via a survey (Gay and Airasian, 2000). Since the concurrent proposition suggested a possible relationship between two variables, a correlational descriptive study was chosen as the research design using a survey as the research instrument (Fink, 1995).

### Research Instrument

One of the purposes of the survey was to ascertain the methods and materials used during the entire fourth grade year for the teaching of Florida History; consequently, the optimal occasion for survey completion would be the culmination of the Florida History experience, the end of the school year. To enhance attention to the survey during a period of high stress and activity, length of the questionnaire, ease of response, and facility of return concerns were examined. The length of the survey was restricted to two pages; a two-page format was chosen rather than a one-page front-and-back to avoid overlooking the back page. Since no more that a seven-point scale is recommended (Thomas, 2004), a 5-point Likert scale was used for 41 of the 49 questions for ease of response and the utilization of the courier available in each of the fifty-five schools facilitated return of the surveys (Dillman, 1991).

The two-page survey consisted of 49 questions in ten sections. Section 1 contained 14 questions targeting attitudes toward the teaching of Florida History and was pilot tested in two
undergraduate social studies methods courses at a local university for accuracy and validity. No significant wording changes were necessary.

Sections 2 and 3 queried personal preparation for the teaching of Florida History. Sections 4, 5, and 6 attended to usage and perceptions of teaching methods. Methods queried were selected from *Effective Elementary Social Studies* (Hoge, 1996) and sanctioned by a panel of professional experts. Since there is a significant gap between what social studies authorities say about the aims and methods of social studies and the classroom beliefs and practices (Mills, 2001), an opportunity was provided (section 5) for the participants to explain any differences between perceived effectiveness of methods (section 4) and actual usage (section 6). Section 7 addressed materials usage and section 8, the time spent in actual instruction of Florida History. The materials section of the survey queried the use of the textbook and ancillary materials (videos, computer software, and trade books) that are recommended resources in the Brevard County school district adopted textbook for teaching Florida History, *Florida; Harcourt Brace Social Studies* (2002). Section 9 questioned demographics; section 10 offered the opportunity for additional comments. Sections 5, 7, 8 and 10 requested written information; all of the other sections were 5-point Likert scale questions requiring single answer, check the box, responses. The survey may be found in Appendix B.

**Procedure**

The study was begun after approval of the proposal by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Central Florida (Appendix C) and permission from the Brevard County School District (Appendix D) were granted. In compliance with Brevard County policy, manila envelopes containing cover letters to the principals (Appendix E), cover letters for the teachers (Appendix F), and surveys (Appendix B) for the 210 fourth grade teachers employed in Brevard
County were delivered to the principals of the fifty-five elementary schools on May 10, 2004. District policy precluded follow-up postcards to participants advocated by Dillman (2000), so e-mails (Appendix G) were sent to the principals on May 17, 2004 petitioning participation. Anonymous completed surveys were returned to the researcher in enclosed envelopes via school courier prior to the yearly close of school (May 20, 2004). The eighty-eight returned surveys were number coded by the researcher upon receipt and the results were entered into SPSS.

Data Analysis

In the preliminary analysis, a principal-component factor analysis was used to illuminate the number of underlying factors. The factor analysis was performed using Varimax, an orthogonal rotation, in the SPSS Base 10.0 Applications Program. Items were included in clusters based on factor loadings of .51. Using coefficient alpha, reliability estimates were computed for each factor. Means and standard deviations were computed for all Likert scale sections of the survey. Multiple regressions were performed to establish relationships between attitudes and methods and materials. Results and tables are further explained in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents an analysis of the data resulting from the responses to the survey relative to the research questions with a preliminary discussion of the demographics of the respondents.

Demographics

There were 210 fourth grade teachers employed by the Brevard County School District during the school year 2003-2004, the year of this study. Eighty-eight (41.9%) of the teachers responded to the survey: seventy-eight were females and ten were males; eighty-four respondents taught at an “A” ranked school, three at a “B” school, and one “no response.”

There were five categories for the respondents to identify their education level. Thirty-five had a Bachelor or Arts degree in Elementary Education while twenty-two had obtained the degree plus certification in Elementary Education. Sixteen of the respondents had Master of Arts degree in Elementary Education and ten had the same degree with the addition of certification in Elementary Education. Five responded to the “other” category.

Five categories were used to query the number of years of teaching experience: 1-5, 6-12, 13-20, 20-30, and 30+. Thirty-four of the participants had 1-5 years of teaching experience, twenty-six had 6-12, thirteen had 13-20, ten reported 20-30 years, and five were in the 30+ category. The same categories were used to query the number of years of fourth grade Florida History teaching experience. Sixty-three of the participants had 1-5 years fourth grade Florida History teaching experience, twenty-two had 6-12 years, and three reported 13-20 years of experience. None had taught fourth grade Florida History for more than twenty years. The demographics of the respondents are shown in Table 1 by number of males and females (gender),
the school ranking, the educational level (degrees held), the years of experience of the respondents, and the number of years of fourth grade Florida History teaching experience.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Degrees Received</th>
<th>Degrees Received</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Florida History Experience</th>
<th>Florida History Experience</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA+Cert</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA+Cert</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA+Cert</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Questions

Research questions one and two addressed the attitudes and preparedness of the participants.

Research Question 1: What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as their attitudes toward Florida History?

The first 14 questions in the survey targeted the teacher attitudes toward the teaching of Florida History. Table 2 indicates the question number, the content of the question, the means in descending order, and the standard deviation for each attitude.
### Table 2

#### Attitudes of Fourth Grade Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Importance of Florida History</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Enjoyment of teaching Florida History</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Knowledge of Sunshine State Standards for FL Hist</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to me</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to students</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Colleague Support</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to colleagues</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Availability of Computers</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Awareness of Professional Development</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Colleague sharing of FL History ideas &amp; materials</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Materials well-supplied for teaching FL History</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rating of FL History with other subjects</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Time to work with peers on FL History curriculum</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Rating Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = no opinion; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

A principal components analysis with a Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was performed on the responses to the attitudes portion of the survey (the first 14 questions). Four factors were extracted as shown in Table 3.
Table 3  
Rotated Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Curricular and Material Support</th>
<th>Importance of Florida History To Teacher</th>
<th>Importance of Florida History To Students</th>
<th>Importance of Florida History To Peers/Admin.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8</td>
<td>.622</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 14</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>.848</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>.823</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>.688</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.671</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor one was titled “curricular and material support.” The curricular portion of the title related to the sharing of ideas in question six (.679), question eight asked about time to work with peers on curriculum and instruction (.622), and the opportunities to learn more about Florida History in question fourteen (.570). “Material support” was addressed also in question six (.679), the availability of computers in question ten (.642), and particularly in question seven, “Teachers in this school are well supplied with materials for Florida History instruction” (.559).

Factor two was named “importance of Florida History to the teacher” as the attitudes reflected in this factor were of a personal nature indigenous to the individual teacher. Question twelve targeted knowledge of the Sunshine State Standards for Florida History (.848), question eleven the perceived enjoyment of teaching Florida History (.823), and particularly question thirteen “Florida History is important to me” (.688).
Factor three was titled “importance of Florida History to the students” based on the teacher’s perceptions of the importance of the Florida History to the student queried in question five (.724) and importance that the teacher placed on the student learning of Florida History asked in question one (.628). Student learning of Florida History was also addressed in question nine which inquired into the importance of Florida History relevant to other subjects taught on the fourth grade level (.671).

Factor four was identified as “importance of Florida History to peers and administration” due to the values attributed to question two (.859), “Florida History is perceived by the administration at this school to be an important part of the curriculum” and question four (.560), “Florida History is perceived by the teachers at this school to be an important part of the curriculum.” Peer influence and support is also reflected in question three, “I feel supported by colleagues to try out new ideas in teaching Florida History” (.706). The names given to each factor, the variance each explains, and its reliability coefficient are presented in Table 4.
Table 4

Rotated Component Matrix Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Number</th>
<th>Factor Name</th>
<th>Additional Variance Explained</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Curricular and Material Support</td>
<td>29.131</td>
<td>.6688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to Teacher</td>
<td>13.312</td>
<td>.7855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to Students</td>
<td>10.375</td>
<td>.5558 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to Peers/Administration</td>
<td>8.825</td>
<td>.7396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*or .6237 if question 9 is omitted.

Means of the four factors and standard deviations are shown in Table 5. The means are based on a five point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, and strongly agree). Factor two (the importance of Florida History to the teacher) had the highest mean (4.35) between “agree” and “strongly agree.” Factor three (the importance of Florida History to the students) with a mean of 3.92 (rounded to 4.0) and factor four (the importance of Florida History to peers and the administration) with a mean of 3.91 (rounded to 4.0) register in the “agree” category. Therefore, the results indicate that the teachers of Brevard have strong positive attitudes toward the importance of Florida History for themselves, personally; to and for their students; and for their peers and administration. The mean of 3.20 for the first factor (curricular and material support) suggest that the teachers of Brevard County have no opinion regarding the availability or importance of materials to the teaching of Florida History.
Table 5

Means for Factors of Teacher Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Number</th>
<th>Factor Name</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Curricular and Material Support</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to Teacher</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to Students</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Importance of FL History to Peers/Administration</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2: What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as their level of preparedness to teach Florida History?

Survey participants were asked to rate how well they thought that college courses and inservice workshops had prepared them to teach Florida History. They were to check the appropriate response on a five-point Likert scale (no preparation, prepared inadequately, prepared somewhat, prepared moderately well, prepared very well). The mean for college preparation was 1.88 which falls between “no preparation” and “prepared inadequately” and for inservice workshops was 2.11 (between “prepared inadequately” and “prepared somewhat”). In other words, the fourth grade teachers in Brevard County rated themselves as inadequately prepared to teach Florida History. Thirty-seven (42%) of the respondents indicated that they had not received training from any other source. Three participants were self-trained through independent study and one had attended a week seminar in St. Augustine.

There were two questions in the survey that also investigated independent study using a five-point Likert scale (never, 1 or 2 times a year, 1 or 2 times a semester, 1 or 2 times a month, and 1 or 2 times a week). The first question (“I engage in activities to learn more about Florida
History”) had a mean of 2.92 and the second question (“I read scholarly materials related to Florida History”) had a mean of 2.34. Both means fell between “1 or 2 times a year” and “1 or 2 times a semester.”

Research questions three and four targeted the methods used by the teachers in Brevard County to teach fourth grade Florida History.

Research Question 3: From a list of accepted effective teaching methods, what do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the most effective methods for teaching Florida History?

In Section 4 of the survey, the participants were asked to rate five teaching methods (lecture, group work, demonstration, student projects, and role playing) on a Likert scale with a five-point range from ineffective to most effective. The method that the Brevard County fourth grade teachers reported as most effective was student projects with a mean of 4.07 (between “very effective” and “most effective”) and the least effective method reported was lecture with a mean of 2.44 (between “somewhat effective” and “effective”).

“Other” was included in Section 4 offering the participants the opportunity to include a method not mentioned. Of the 88 participants, 19 or 21.5% responded to this question. The respondents were asked to specify a method; one of the nineteen did not. Of the eighteen remaining responses, “field trips” was written eight times with a mean effectiveness of 4.5; “class discussion” was included three times with a mean effectiveness of 3.33; CRISS strategies were rated as the most effective by two participants resulting in a mean of 5; videos were also included by two participants (one at “somewhat effective” and the other as “very effective” for a mean of 3); games (very effective), power point (effective), and the Internet (effective) were
each included once. Table 6 (shown in research question 4) presents the teachers’ perceived effectiveness of each method. Methods are listed as they appeared on the survey.

Research Question 4: *From a list of accepted effective teaching methods, what do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the methods they most commonly use for teaching Florida History?*

Section 6 of the survey utilized the same teaching methods that were queried in research question 3 (lecture, group work, demonstration, student projects, and role playing); however, the five-point Likert scale rated usage of the method from never to every lesson. Lecture, group work, and demonstrations were reportedly utilized most often and role play was the least with a mean of 2.49 (between “once or twice a year” and “once or twice a month”). Table 6 displays the means and standard deviations for all five methods.

Of the eighty-eight participants, eleven responded to the “other” portion of Section 6; however, although one utilized “other” during every lesson, the respondent did not specify what the “other” was. Of the ten that did specify, three referred to field trips that occurred once or twice a year; one respondent ventured on field trips four times a year. Two respondents utilized CRISS strategies – one every lesson and the other once or twice a month. Additional methods written once each were “application” (every lesson), games (every lesson), reading (once or twice a week), and power point (once or twice a year).

No dependent t-tests were performed between the perceived effectiveness and the actual usage of the methods to teach Florida History as the perceived effectiveness was expressed in percentages and the actual usage was reported using a Likert scale.
The data in Table 6 show that perceived effectiveness of a particular method did not match its usage. For example, role play had the highest mean in perceived effectiveness (3.71) yet had the lowest mean in actual usage (2.49). Conversely, lecture had the lowest mean for perceived effectiveness (2.44) yet had the highest mean for actual usage (3.82). Section five of the survey had a write-in opportunity for the respondent to offer explanations for the discrepancies. Time was mentioned the most often (21 tallies) by the twenty-eight (31.8%) participants who answered. Each of the following constraints was mentioned twice: money, classroom space, student behavior problems, and materials. Student ability/attention span and lack of parental support were each listed once. The FCAT was only identified specifically by five of the respondents. One participant wrote, “I feel that lecture and demonstration does not
involve the student very much and research has proven lecture is not very effective.” Another summed the problem as “trying to cram 500 years of Florida History in 9 months, in addition to science units, 28 chapters of math, reading, and writing!”

Research questions five and six queried the usage of materials to teach Florida History.

Research Question 5: What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the materials that they use in the teaching of Florida History? and Research Question 6: What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the percentage of time that they use materials (textbooks, trade books, computer software, and videos) in the teaching of Florida History? were combined in section 7 of the survey. Respondents were asked to report the percentage of instructional time taught using the following materials: textbook, videos, computer software, trade books, or “other.” The category “other” provided the opportunity to list any materials that were not mentioned. Use of the textbook was the predominant material utilized by the teachers of Brevard County (mean 72.78 %).

Trade books are utilized by the teachers 10.74 % of the instructional period followed by videos (8.84%) and computer software (3.44%). Fifty-nine of the eighty-eight participants (or 67%) did not respond to the “other” portion of this section of the survey. Of the twenty-nine who did respond, one listed a percentage for “other” but did not reveal its identity. Table 7 displays the usage percentages for the materials listed in the survey including the material and percentage of use by the twenty-eight “other” participants.

Section 7 also offered the participants the opportunity to rate the materials mentioned in Table 7 on a five-point Likert scale (not available, poor quality, fair quality, above average quality, and excellent quality). The mean for the textbook is 3.5 rating the textbook between fair and above average quality. Videos (µ = 2.69) and trade books (µ = 2.38) rated as poor to fair
quality; computer software which is used the least also had the lowest mean (1.74) between “not available” and “poor quality.”

Table 7

Materials Usage (Percentage of Instructional Time) and Perceived Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Percentage of Instructional Time</th>
<th>Perceived Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>72.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade books</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Software</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Own (unspecified)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Point</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRISS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR books</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-curricular materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides to history using literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explorer books</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Speakers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns are not reflective of same respondents

Note. 1 = not available; 2 = poor quality; 3 = fair quality; 4 = above average quality; 5 = excellent quality

Instructional time for Florida History was the focus of research question seven.

Research Question 7: *What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the amount of instructional time they spent teaching Florida History?*
This information was queried in section 8 as a write-in or fill in the blank type of question. Sixty or 68.18% of the participants responded to the question. The following table encompasses all of the responses listing the greatest amount of instructional time first (daily) and the number of respondents (19) to the least amount of instructional time.

Table 8
Reported Instructional Time for Florida History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional time</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses (60)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four times a week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to four times a week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other day</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to four times weekly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times a week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to three times a week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-three times/wk or three-four week units</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice a week</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two weeks out of four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two weeks out of a month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three weeks out of six</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four weeks out of eight</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four weeks of a nine week grading period</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ½ weeks out of semester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a unit &amp; whenever it can be integrated into current events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>91.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five of the respondents specifically mentioned the FCAT implications upon the instructional time devoted to Florida History. Their answers were (1) “before FCAT, once a week; after FCAT, daily,” (2) “we concentrate on social studies after FCAT writes,” (3) “daily except two weeks before FCAT,” (4) “daily when FCAT is over,” and (5) “daily until FCAT preparation begins in January and then in March after FCAT.” The combination of these five
FCAT responses with the fifty-five listed in the table comprise the total of sixty respondents to these two research questions.

Research Question 8: *What is the relationship between the teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the methods that they use to teach Florida History?*

To answer this research question, a multiple regression was performed using SPSS. Method was used as the dependent variable with the factor score for each attitude serving as predictors.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>4,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>4.11**</td>
<td>4,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.56*</td>
<td>4,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Projects</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3.37**</td>
<td>4,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Playing</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>4,83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01

Using teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the methods they use (lecture, group work, demonstrations, student projects, and role playing), the following equations were produced:

1. \[ \text{Lecture} = 3.818 + (-.226)(\text{curricular and material support}) + (.04116)(\text{importance of Florida History to teacher}) + (-.07481)(\text{importance of Florida History to students}) + (-.103)(\text{importance of Florida History to peers/administration}). \]

Results indicate that the use of the lecture method will be positively influenced by the importance of Florida History to the teacher but negatively affected by perceptions of curricular and materials support and the perceived importance of Florida History to the
students, fellow teachers, and the administration. \( R^2 = .06 \), which means that only 6% of the variance in lecture could be accounted for by the factors. The remaining .94 of the variance may be explained by other factors such as time constraints and testing emphasis.

2. Group Work = 3.705 + (.07525)(curricular and material support) + (-.01753) (importance of Florida History to teacher) + (.127)(importance of Florida History to students) + (.217) (importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

The group work method is more likely to be utilized by teachers with positive attitudes of curricular and material support and perceived importance of Florida History to students, peers, and the administration. The use of this method may be negatively affected by the perceived importance of Florida History to the teacher. \( R^2 = .17 \), which means that 17% of the variance in group work could be accounted for by the factors. The remaining 83% of the variance may be explained again by other factors such as time constraints and testing emphasis.

3. Demonstration = 3.182 + (.239)(curricular and material support) + (.123)(importance of Florida History to teacher) + (-.002938)(importance of Florida History to students) + (.265)(importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

Results indicate that the demonstration method is positively impacted by attitudes of curricular and material support and importance of Florida History to the teacher, his or her peers, and the administration. The use of this method may be slightly negatively affected by the teacher’s perceived importance of Florida History to the students. The factors account for 11% of variance in demonstration \( (R^2 = .11) \): 89% of the variance may be explained by other factors such as lack of time and emphasis on testing.
4. Student Projects = 2.898 + (.207)(curricular and material support) + (.147)(importance of Florida History to teacher) + (.153)(importance of Florida History to students) + (.07403)(importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

Utilization of the student projects method is positively influenced by all four attitude factors. The factors account for 14% of the variance in student projects (R² = .14); the remaining 86% of the variance may be explained by other factors such as lack of time and emphasis on testing.

5. Role Playing = 2.489 + (.299)(curricular and material support) + (.102)(importance of Florida History to teacher) + (-.04982)(importance of Florida History to students) + (.194)(importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

The role playing method is likely to be used by teachers with positive attitudes toward curricular and material support and the importance of Florida History to themselves, their peers, and the administration. Those teachers who do not perceive Florida History as important to or for their students are less likely to use role playing. R² = .10, which means that 10% of the variance in role playing may be accounted for by the factors and 90% may be explained by other factors such as time and testing.

Table 9 presents the values for R², standard error of the estimate, F statistic, and degrees of freedom for each of the five methods analyzed. The attitude factor scores produced statistically significant (p ≤ .05) equations for group work (F₄,₈₃ = 4.114; p = .004), demonstration (F₄,₈₃ = 2.559; p = .045), and student projects (F₄,₈₃ = 3.367; p = .013), indicating that there is a predictable relationship between the use of these three methods and the attitudes of the teachers.

Research Question 9: What is the relationship between the teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the materials that they use to teach Florida History?
To answer this research question, a multiple regression was performed using SPSS. Material was used as the dependent variable with the factor score for each attitude serving as predictors.

Table 10

The Relationship of Teacher Attitudes and Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>20.93</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>4,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>4,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Software</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>4,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Books</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>11.35</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>4,75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. p<.05

Computations of the relationship between teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the materials they use (textbook, videos, computer software, and trade books) can be predicted using the following formulas:

1. **Textbook** = 72.634 + (-1.254)(curricular and material support) + (-1.735)(importance of Florida History to teacher) + (-2.001)(importance of Florida History to students) + (-1.910)(importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

   All four attitude factors negatively affect the use of the textbook; however, the mean value of 72.634 indicates that teachers are likely to utilize the textbook regardless of their attitudes.

   R² = .03, which means that only 3% of the variance in textbook can be accounted for by the factors. The remaining 97% of the variance could be explained by other factors such as time constraints and testing emphasis, two factors that would also contribute to the use of the textbook.

2. **Videos** = 8.867 + (.02974)(curricular and material support) + (-.366)(importance of Florida History to teacher) + (.325)(importance of Florida History to students) + (.747)(importance
Teachers’ use of videos may be positively affected by perceived curricular and material support and importance of Florida History to the students, their colleagues, and the administration. The use of videos will be negatively impacted by the teachers’ perception of the importance of Florida History to themselves. \( R^2 = .01 \), which means that only 1% of the variance in videos can be accounted for by the factors; the remaining 99% of the variance may be explained by other factors such as lack of time, testing emphasis, and lack of awareness or quality of available videos.

3. Computer Software = 3.494 + (.775)(curricular and material support) + (.494) (importance of Florida History to teacher) + (.03912)(importance of Florida History to students) + (-.784) (importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

The use of computer software is positively influenced by perceptions of curricular and material support and the importance of Florida History personally and to the students but negatively influenced by perceptions of the importance of Florida History to colleagues or the administration. The factors account for 4% of the variance in computer software (\( R^2 = .04 \)); 96% of the variance may be explained by other factors such as time constraints, testing emphasis, and technology deficiency (lack of availability of computers or implementation knowledge).

4. Trade Books = 10.819 + (1.736)(curricular and material support) + (3.220)(importance of Florida History to teacher) + (-.120)(importance of Florida History to students) + (.672) (importance of Florida History to peers/administration).

Teachers who have strong feelings of curricular and material support and who find Florida History important to themselves and the administration are more likely to use trade books to
teach Florida History. The perceived importance of Florida History to the student will negatively affect the use of trade books. $R^2 = .09$, which means that 9% of the variance in trade books can be accounted for by the factors; 93% of the variance may be explained by other factors such as time constraints, testing emphasis, or lack of familiarity with trade books.

Table 10 presents the values for $R^2$, standard error of the estimate, $F$ statistic, and the degrees of freedom for each of the four materials analyzed. Further statistical analysis indicates that none of the materials had a statistically significant value ($p<.05$). Therefore, there is no predictable relationship between the teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of Florida History and the materials that they use.

**Other Comments**

Section Ten of the survey presented the opportunity for the participants to write in additional comments. Nineteen of the eighty-eight (21.5%) respondents elected to contribute. The comments are categorized by time, training, and materials.

Although the teachers of Brevard County advocated the use of student projects as their method of choice, the lack of time to prepare, the amount of instructional time consumed by actual participation in projects, and the subsequent cleanup often influenced its use. The use of the textbook becomes the method of choice due to its expediency and its effect on classroom control (some administrators object to the noise factor associated with student projects). Teachers A and B summarized the problem succinctly as “Because of time constraints we cannot teach nearly enough history” and “In a 6 hour 15 minute school day, there is only 4 hours and 50 minutes of instructional time. Problematic…you bet.” Similarly, Teacher C states “The lack of time during the school day is a major constraint on our Social Studies program. Although I do
believe Florida History is an important part of the curriculum, reading and math take precedence;” echoed by Teacher D, “I am a first year teacher and teaching Florida History has been the most difficult subject. There are great ideas and projects in the Social Studies book but the time is limited. As it is I only have 30-40 minutes for Social Studies. It seems difficult to get my class interested and excited about Florida History.”

The emphasis on topics that appear on the FCAT such as reading and math alluded to by Teacher C is repeated by her peers. Teacher E laments “Reading, math, and writing are the priority in fourth grade. Science follows and then social studies.” Teacher F concurs “Social Studies is my favorite subject to teach. Unfortunately at this time, the focus is on reading/math, FCAT performance and writing instruction. Little time is specifically allotted to Social Studies in fourth grade.” Teacher G adds “I would love to focus more time on teaching Florida Social Studies, however, with the mandatory reading block and math and science demand I am left with little time in the day.” In terms of Brevard County mandates, Teacher H states “Reading, writing, and math are considered by Brevard County to be most important fourth grade subjects.” Teacher I comments on her attempts at integrating curriculum: “I think Florida History is important. However, when we have to teach them the reading, writing, math, and science so heavily for the FCAT assessment, this topic gets pushed to the back burner. And saying that curriculum integration is the key and can be done is not so. Not when you have to contend with lack of parent involvement and students not doing homework. I also taught for many years at a D school and the problems are only slightly easier to contend with here.” (Respondent taught at an A school.)

Two other teachers made the following observations about their preparation to teach Florida History: (1) “I have found it difficult to find any trainings or in-services offered by the
county in Florida History. I love this topic (specialized in history at college of ed.) but the kids seem to hate it. I would love to take a class to St. Augustine but due to cost and other factors haven’t been able to” (2) “I would like to learn more about Florida History. I have never studied it since I moved here 10 years ago - although I have done some reading.”

The availability of materials was the focus of the final group of teachers. One teacher noted that “Videos and computer software would greatly enhance the program. We go to St. Augustine as a field trip.” Another teacher commenting about the St. Augustine field trip added “The field trip to St. Augustine is very expensive for my students and I cannot get enough volunteers to chaperone because they cannot afford the fingerprinting etc. fee.” However, yet another found the trip to be valuable on multiple levels: “I collect resources from various sources – when we took our field trip to St. Augustine we bought books and got additional info.”

The final comment quoted exemplifies the scope of the curricular frustrations encountered by the teachers of Brevard County: “I would like texts that are developed and designed to teach using other methods. Texts are designed for ‘lecture,’ leaving the teacher to rewrite and develop their own curriculum. When teaching math, reading, writing, language, science, social studies, and math there is not time during the workday to develop your own curriculum. I typically work 50-60 hours per week, 10-20 unpaid, and cannot sacrifice home and family responsibilities more than that. I do the best I can, but math, reading, and writing and last science are priorities due to FCAT.”

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the data from the surveys in answer to the nine research questions. Demographics and additional comments from the respondents were also included. Discussion of the results is in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Overview

The status of history as a curricular subject equal in importance to other elementary subjects is being threatened by the current emphasis on the educational testing of reading, writing, mathematics and science. Compounding the problem is the fact that teachers’ perceive themselves as unprepared to teach history or formulate appropriate curricular decisions regarding the subject of history. The purpose of the present study was to discover the position of Florida History relative to other fourth grade subjects and the perceptions of the teachers’ level of preparedness in one county in the state of Florida. Additional purposes were to ascertain whether the attitudes of the fourth grade teachers of Brevard County influenced the methods and materials that they use to teach Florida History.

During the 2003-2004 school year, there were 210 fourth grade teachers employed by the Brevard County School District, all of whom were mailed survey questionnaires. Eighty-eight (41.9%) completed the surveys. A factor analysis with a principal component analysis extraction method followed by a Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was performed on the responses to the attitudes portion of the survey (the first fourteen questions). Four factors were extracted: curricular and material support, importance of Florida History to the teacher, the teachers’ perceptions of the importance of Florida History to the students, and the teachers’ perceptions of the importance of Florida History to the administration. These factors were utilized in the Pearson’s Product Moment Regression performed to determine relationships between attitudes and methods and materials.
Results and Discussion

1. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as their attitudes toward Florida History?

Responses from the participants in the present study indicate that Florida History is important to the fourth grade teachers of Brevard County. The teachers enjoy teaching Florida History, they have knowledge of the Sunshine State Standards, and the topic is important to them personally. The teachers who participated in the present study advised that they believe that Florida History is important to their students and that is an important field of study for them to learn. Administrative and collegial support is significant for this group; however, there is a consensus that there is not enough time to work with peers on the Florida History curriculum. The majority expressed no opinion about the availability of materials including computers or the opportunities for professional development.

Discussion of Research Question One

Critical to the issue is that although the teachers of Brevard County think that Florida History is an important topic to and for the students, they did not rank Florida History as significant as other curricular subjects. The disparity between their personal regard for the topic and the emphasis placed upon it in the classroom may be the result of outside pressures such as district or the state mandates regarding the instruction of other subjects which significantly limits the amount of instructional time available for the teaching of Florida History. Educational policy places teachers in the uncomfortable position of nonalignment between their belief system and their behavior. Although the teachers might prefer to have their students learn about the Spanish explorers and the mission system so integral to the discovery and development of Florida, they are required to drill the skills necessary for educational testing.
2. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as their level of preparedness to teach Florida History?

In addition to having “no opinion” about their awareness of professional development opportunities previously mentioned, the Brevard County fourth grade teachers rated themselves as inadequately prepared to teach Florida History. They perceived that they had not had adequate training on the university level, from professional development, or any other source. The majority did not report engaging in independent study.

Discussion of Research Question Two

Since Florida is experiencing a growth spurt and many of its teachers are relocating from other parts of the country, one may assume that newly-arrived teachers may have knowledge of their own state but may have little acquaintance with the richness of Florida’s history. Without a firm foundation in the subject, a teacher may resort to a pedagogical style that is inappropriate for the teaching of Florida History.

3. From a list of accepted effective teaching methods, what do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the most effective methods for teaching Florida History?

The list of accepted effective teaching methods included lecture, group work, demonstration, student projects, and role playing. The teachers rated the effectiveness of the methods in the following order: student projects, role playing and demonstrations (tied for second place), group work, and lecture. The respondents were given the opportunity to write in a method that they preferred; field trips, class discussion, CRISS (CReating Independence through Student-owned Strategies) methods of instruction, and videos were each mentioned more than once but none more than eight times.
4. From a list of accepted effective teaching methods, what do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the methods they most commonly use for teaching Florida History?

From the same list used in question three, the respondents were asked to report their actual utilization of the method. Methods ranked by usage were lecture, group work, demonstrations, student projects, and role playing. With the exception of role playing, perceived effectiveness of a method was the inverse of its actual usage. There was a write-in section of the survey to explain this discrepancy. Twenty-eight of the eighty-eight respondents contributed to this portion; time was mentioned by twenty-one of the twenty-eight as the most significant constraint to their teaching methods. The influence of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test, the purpose of which is to assess student achievement of the skills prescribed in the Sunshine State Standards in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science) was only acknowledged specifically by five of the respondents.

Discussion of Research Questions Three and Four

The significant feature of the results of questions three and four is the juxtaposition of the two. Although the teachers rated the effectiveness of instructional methods as student projects being the most effective and lecture being the least, actual usage reflected the inverse with lecture as the primary usage and student projects the least. Lecture as the prominent mode of instruction negates the opportunities to foster curiosity and creativity in the students. Working cooperatively with a group of peers on a project from inception to completion teaches children valuable skills that have significant transfer later in life. If the daily schedule is consumed by lecture and drill, where is the sense of wonder and discovery so necessary to engage apathetic and truant students? What are the prospects for guest speakers, field trips, videos, or other
supplementary experiences so vital to the enrichment of a diverse student population? Clearly, pressures prevail that force teachers to act in opposition to their own instincts.

5. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the materials that they use in the teaching of Florida History?

The teachers were given a list of materials (textbooks, trade books, computer software, and videos) to which they were encouraged to supplement with the additional materials that they employ. The materials mentioned by the twenty-nine respondents were the Internet, field trips, teacher’s own materials (unspecified), the library, current events, power point presentations, CRISS strategies, maps, accelerated reader books, cross-curricular books, Florida guides, explorer books, guides to history using literature, and guest speakers.

6. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the percentage of time that they use materials (textbooks, trade books, computer software, and videos) in the teaching of Florida History?

Responding teachers reported that the textbook was used greatest percentage of time (72.78%) in the teaching of Florida History. Lagging far behind were trade books (10.74%), videos (8.84%), and computer software (3.44%). The participants also rated the four materials as to their perceived quality. Although the largest percentage of instructional time was consumed by the textbook, textbooks were rated only between fair and above average in instructional quality by the respondents. Videos and trade books were rated as poor to fair quality and computer software was assessed between not available and poor quality. None of the materials prelisted by the researcher or written-in by the respondents were rated as excellent quality.

Discussion of Research Questions Five and Six
Although the participants in the present study catalogued additional items to the materials queried, the textbook was the material of choice by a substantial margin. Since teachers are opting to use the textbook due to their time constraints and the textbook’s efficiency, perhaps a solution to the amount of history inclusion in the elementary program would be the implementation an integrated curriculum. Using an integrated curriculum with Florida History as the dominant focus was mentioned by one of the participants, unfortunately, negatively. The apprehension expressed was that the curriculum would have to be formulated by the teacher and again, due to time constraints, it was easier to teach with county adopted texts. Perhaps notice of interest in an integrated curriculum should be given to the textbook publishers.

7. What do Brevard County fourth grade teachers report as the amount of instructional time they spent teaching Florida History?

Sixty of the eighty-eight participants responded to this question. Of the sixty, 31.66% reported that they taught Florida History daily, 10% twice a week, 8.33% once or twice a week, 6.66% three times a week and 6.66% reported every other week. Every other day was mentioned by 5% of the respondents. This statistic could be interpreted to mean that one third of the teachers taught Florida History daily; however, if the ratio is created with the total eighty-eight respondents, the percentage of those who teach Florida History daily is 21.59% indicating that approximately one in five teachers is teaching Florida History daily in the fourth grade and 6.81% are teaching Florida History twice a week with additional percentages decreasing respectively. These statistics support the position that Social Studies/Florida History is not ranked with equal importance as those subjects that are tested on the FCAT.

8. What is the relationship between the teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the methods that they use to teach Florida History?
Of the five methods surveyed (lecture, group work, demonstrations, student projects, and role playing, only the use of three could be predicted by the attitudes of the teachers: group work, demonstration, and student projects. The more positive a teacher felt about the teaching of Florida History, the more likely the individual would utilize group work, demonstration, or student projects.

9. *What is the relationship between the teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the materials that they use to teach Florida History?*

There was no statistically significant relationship between the teachers’ attitudes toward Florida History and the materials that they use to teach Florida History. These results were foreshadowed by the four factor extraction from the teacher attitude toward Florida History portion of the survey. Three of the four factors related to the teachers’ perceptions of the importance of Florida History to themselves, their students, and their peers/administration. The fourth factor (curriculum and materials) had a mean value of 3.2, registering in the “no opinion” range of the survey. The teachers probably had no opinion about the materials used to teach Florida History and no relationship was discovered between their attitudes and the use of materials because they intended to use the textbook (the textbook was reported by the teachers as the material used 72% of the instructional time devoted to the teaching of Florida History).

**Summary**

The findings from this study seem to support Tusin’s (1999) teacher profile. The teachers in Brevard County who responded to this survey were predominantly female who perceived themselves as unprepared to teach the content of Florida History and consequently relied heavily on the use of the textbook. Although the teachers value the subject, due to time
constraints Florida History is not granted as much instructional time as the other fourth grade curricular components.

In a comparison of this study with the Haas and Laughlin (1996) study, although the demographics differed, the findings were remarkably similar. The participants in the Haas and Laughlin study reported a minimum of 16 years of teaching experience; the majority in the present study had 12 or less. Participants in both studies perceived that social studies/history was regarded as an important content area for student learning by the administration, their peers and the teachers themselves; however, priority was given to other subjects. Utilization of the textbook was reported as 90% in the Haas and Laughlin study, 72% in the present study. As related to textbook use, Schug, Western, and Enochs found in 1997 that until curriculum developers create materials that are more attractive to teachers than those produced by current publishers, little is likely to change. Video and computer use lagged significantly below textbook use in both studies. The concerns about the curricular status of social studies/history discussed in the Haas and Laughlin study were also reflected in this study. In response to the historical purist argument, regardless of history’s inclusion in the superset of social studies (Haas and Laughlin study) or as a separate entity (the present study), history is getting short shrift. Those who believe that the study of one’s state history is an important component of an individual’s education have cause for alarm.

Another startling finding of the present study is that it exemplifies the clash of two educational philosophies, constructivism and objectivism. Generally constructivist theories rely on the assumption that knowledge is constructed by the learners as they attempt to assimilate knowledge from their experiences (Driscoll, 2000; Gredler, 2001; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). Teaching methods that immerse the student in the learning experience such as
group work, student projects, or role playing may be categorized as constructivist methods and
teachers whose attitudes are more constructivist in nature are more likely to use them. Lecture
and demonstrations, where the student passively receives the information presented, classify
closer to an objectivist paradigm. Although previous research has determined that group work or
cooperative learning is perhaps the most effective method to teach any subject (Risinger, 1991),
student projects was discovered to be the most effective instructional method perceived by the
fourth grade teachers of Brevard County. Lecture was perceived to be the least effective method.
However, when relating reported usage, lecture was used more often than any other method.
Evidently, although the teachers alleged that constructivist oriented methods are more effective
for the learning of Florida History, due to time constraints, they opt for the objectivist - lecture –
rated the most ineffective method.

A similar dichotomy emerges upon analysis of materials usage. Generally, a group of
teachers who espoused constructivist methods would utilize materials that support those
methods. Examples of materials that would immerse the student in the topic of Florida History
would be original sources, trade books, maps, videos, or computer software. Yet
overwhelmingly, the teachers of Brevard County rely on the textbook for their instruction, a
textbook that they rated between fair and above average quality. Although the attitudes of the
teachers toward Florida History do not influence their materials usage, the convenience of the
textbook apparently does. Larry Cuban (1983) researched teacher instructional patterns from
1890-1980 and found that during the ninety year time period consistently teachers lectured, used
a question and answer format, and relied heavily on the textbook. The pattern continues.

Additional insights garnered from this study are first, that approximately only one in five
teachers (28 nonresponses) in Brevard County devotes instructional time daily to the teaching of
Florida History. This supports earlier research about the perceived importance of social studies in the curriculum and fuels the fears as to the status of social studies as a core content area. Second, the influence of the FCAT was not as pervasive as anticipated. Although time was frequently mentioned as an instructional constraint, the influence of the FCAT on instructional time was not. Perhaps its effect was assumed by the participants; further research may be warranted in this area.

The importance of a knowledge of history to a young student cannot be denied. For youngsters to understand their places in the time/life continuum, they must have an awareness of events that preceded them in order to prepare goals for their future. Florida is a unique state with serious social, political, and geographic problems. No other state has the socio/economic/racial diversity by region evidenced in Florida. The growth of Florida’s population is exponential creating development vs. environment predicaments. Florida is frequently under attack by hurricanes and due to its inadequate infrastructure has difficulty evacuating its citizens in the face of disaster. In order for today’s students to implement policy for Florida’s future problems, they must be civic minded individuals prepared with the information that explains the evolution of Florida – a knowledge of Florida History.

Clearly, if Florida History is to receive the attention that it so rightfully deserves, a curricular shift is required. Preservice teachers should be receiving the preparation that would create competent and confident history/social studies teachers who are comfortable with the presentation of controversial topics. Instructional methods that promote the students’ construction of their own historical knowledge with a variety of materials should be the norm. Textbooks should be resources, not the curriculum. Unfortunately, that is not the case.
Reflections on the Research Issues

Upon examination of the survey instrument itself, it became increasingly evident that the participants were more likely to respond to the items that required a check-in-the-box than those that requested written information. Less than half of the participants responded to sections 5 and 10 that asked for additional comments. When doing further research on this topic, questions might be created in an easier format.

Another insight garnered from reflection on the research is the awareness of the gatekeeper status of the principals. It was difficult for the researcher to ascertain whether the rate of survey returns was a function of the principal’s decision or the teacher’s interest. Since this procedure followed in the present study is mandated by the county, access to all teachers and having confidence in their replies may continue to be a problem for future research.

A dilemma encountered when interpreting and generalizing research in Brevard County is the character of the FCAT-related rating system employed by the state of Florida. Of the 55 elementary schools in Brevard County, 49 were A schools, 3 were B schools, 1 was a D school, and 1 had yet to be rated at the time of the present study. The positive skewing of school ratings may have influenced the results. Additional studies researched in counties with a more equitable distribution of rated schools might reveal even less time devoted to the teaching of Florida History as more instructional time in lower rated schools may be focused on the improvement of reading, writing, and mathematics FCAT scores. The rate of return of the surveys might also be influenced by the reluctance of a principal from a lower rated school to permit participation in the research of the present study.
Recommendations for Further Research

The preparation of teachers to instruct their students in Florida History warrants further research. Although the teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach Florida History was surveyed in the present study, a more in-depth analysis of the backgrounds of the elementary social studies staff may reveal the necessity for coursework, workshops, or online study to fulfill a requirement for teacher elementary certification.

Since there is meager research available on the teaching of Florida History, further studies might relate to the other sixty-six counties in Florida. Research studies might discover the topics (explorers, tourism, flora and fauna) that the teachers are examining in the study of Florida History. Students might be surveyed to ascertain which topics they find the most enjoyable and those that are not. The true influence of state-wide testing on the social studies curriculum would be another valuable study.

A quote by Shofner (2004, p. v), “If you hear it, it is news; if you read it, it is history” reflects the importance of reading to the study of history. Obviously, a skilled reader can make more inferences and draw better conclusions from historical events than a non-skilled reader. A skilled reader is able to relate problem resolutions discovered in the past to current problems occurring in a modern world. Although there is abundant research on reading in the content areas, perhaps there needs to be more research on the readability of the content in historical texts. Often history is taken from sources written by and for adults, extolling their exploits and accomplishments. Students need to understand that history is the record of extraordinary events that happened to ordinary people like themselves that transformed those individuals into historical figures. Vocabulary and grammar that is implemented may be beyond the grasp of an interested but frustrated fourth grader. Perhaps further research could ensure that the study of
our state history is enthralling and captivating, generated by enthusiastic and knowledgeable instructors absorbed by immersed and engaged learners. Zabernek (1998) states that

the duty of schools is to teach about citizenship and social justice. Students must work to be informed, active citizens who have a knowledge of history and public affairs, have a sense of belonging and have the confidence to make a difference (p. 37).

Perhaps further research will make it so.
APPENDIX A

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS

GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE FOUR
Sunshine State Standards
Grade Level Expectations
Social Studies
Grade Four

Standard 6: The student understands the history of Florida and its people.

Benchmark SS.A.6.2.1: The student understands reasons that immigrants came to Florida and the contributions of immigrants to the state’s history.

Fourth Grade
1. understands reasons that immigrants came to Florida (for example, fleeing oppression, economic opportunity, health reasons).
2. knows contributions of immigrants to Florida’s history, including Hispanics.

Benchmark SS.A.6.2.2: The student understands the influence of geography on the history of Florida.

Fourth Grade
1. knows selected physical features of Florida (for example, bodies of water, climate, elevation).
2. understands ways geographic features influenced the exploration, colonization, and expansion of Florida.

Benchmark SS.A.6.2.3: The student knows the significant individuals, events, and social, political, and economic characteristics of different periods in Florida’s history.

Fourth Grade
1. knows people and events related to the early exploration of Florida.
2. knows significant events in the colonial period of Florida.
3. knows key events leading to Florida becoming a state.

4. knows causes, key events, and effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction of Florida.

5. understands selected aspects of migration and immigration to Florida after the Civil War (for example, reasons, obstacles, important contributions).

6. understands some ways industrialization and urbanization have affected Florida (for example, the growth of railroads and highways, the development of large population centers, tourism).

7. understands ways Florida changed during the 1920s and 1930s and understands ways everyday life was impacted in Florida by the Great Depression (for example, economic boom and bust).

8. knows selected economic, political, and social transformations that have taken place in Florida since World War II (for example, civil rights movement, space program).

9. understands the contributions of selected significant men and women, including African-Americans and Hispanics, on the development of Florida (for example, Ponce De Leon, Henry Flagler, Mary Bethune Cookman, Chief Osceola, Governor Bob Martinez).

Benchmark SS.A.6.2.4: The student understands the perspectives of diverse cultural, ethnic, and economic groups with regard to past and current events in Florida History.

Fourth Grade

1. understands the unique and diverse cultural make-up of Florida (for example, Caucasian, Hispanic, Haitian-Creole, African-American).

Benchmark SS.A.6.2.5: The student knows how various cultures contributed to the unique social, cultural, economic, and political features of Florida.

Fourth Grade
1. knows ways various cultures contributed to the unique social, cultural, economic, and political features of Florida.
Florida History Survey

**Section 1.** Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements. Put an X in one box on each line that represents to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think it is important for my students to learn Florida History.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Florida History is perceived by the administration at this school to be an important part of the curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel supported by colleagues to try out new ideas in teaching Florida History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Florida History is perceived by the teachers at this school to be an important part of the curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that Florida History is important to my students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers in this school regularly share ideas and materials related to Florida History.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers in this school are well supplied with materials for Florida History instruction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I have time during the regular school week to work with my peers on Florida History curriculum and instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Florida History is equally as important as other 4th grade subjects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I have adequate access to computers for teaching Florida History.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I enjoy teaching Florida History.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am well informed about the SSS benchmarks for Florida History.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Florida History is important to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am aware of opportunities to learn more about Florida History.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section 6.** Usage of Teaching Methods (Recognizing that you use a variety of methods during a lesson, put an X in the box that most closely reflects how often you use each method for teaching Florida History.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or twice a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Every Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Group Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Demonstration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Student Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Role Playing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Other (Please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 7.** Materials Usage (Please write in a percentage that reflects how often you use each material when teaching Florida History. Then rate the quality of each category.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>% of Instructional Time</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
<th>Poor Quality</th>
<th>Fair Quality</th>
<th>Above Average Quality</th>
<th>Excellent Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Textbook</td>
<td>37. Textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Videos</td>
<td>38. Videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Computer Software</td>
<td>39. Computer Software</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Trade Books (not textbooks)</td>
<td>40. Trade Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Other (Please specify)</td>
<td>41. Other (Please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 8.** How often do you teach Florida History (daily, once or twice a week, etc)?

**Section 9.** Demographics (Please place an X in the box that most closely reflects you.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-12</th>
<th>13-20</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>30+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. How many years have you taught elementary school?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. How many years have you taught fourth grade Florida History?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Do you teach in an A, B, C, D, or F school?</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 10.** Additional Comments

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX C

IRB COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): Elizabeth Dewey

PROJECT TITLE: The Relationship between Teacher Attitudes toward Florida History and the Methods and Materials the Teachers use to Teach Florida History.

Committee Members:

[ ] Contingent Approval
Dated: __________________________

[ ] Final Approval
Dated: __________________________

[ ] Expedited
Dated: 3 May 2004

[ ] Exempt
Dated: __________________________

Signed: __________________________

Chair, IRB

Dr. Sophia Dzięgielewski

NOTES FROM IRB CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): __________________________
APPENDIX D

SCHOOL BOARD OF BREVARD COUNTY

ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
To: Mrs. Elizabeth Dewey

From: Office of Accountability, Testing, & Evaluation
Brevard Public Schools

Subject: Acceptance of Application to Conduct Research

Date: April 26, 2004

Dear Mrs. Dewey:

Thank you for your application to conduct research in the Brevard Public Schools. This letter is official verification that your application has been accepted and approved through the Office of Accountability, Testing, & Evaluation.

In the future if you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Program Evaluation Specialist at 321/633-1000 extension 328. Good luck and please submit your research findings and summary to:

Office of Accountability, Testing, & Evaluation
Research Results
Brevard Public Schools
2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, Florida 32940
March 10, 2004
Dear (Principal)  

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Central Florida working under the supervision of a faculty member, Dr. Kay W. Allen. In addition to my role as a doctoral student, I am also a public school teacher at Sabal Elementary School. Florida History is a topic of special interest to me. Knowing that Florida History is a mandated subject at the fourth grade level, I am hoping to contact fellow public school teachers to gather some information about how it is taught.

Would you please distribute the enclosed surveys to the fourth grade teachers at your school? The survey answers are study related and all information on the survey will be kept completely confidential. Participation is voluntary pending your approval. There is no anticipated risk or direct benefit to the participants. Unfortunately, I cannot compensate the participants for their time, but their participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about research participants’ rights, you may contact the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board at (407) 823-2901.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be willing to communicate with you. I can be reached by e-mail at edewey@bellsouth.net. You can reach my UCF supervisor, Dr. Kay Allen, at (407) 823-2037.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Beth Dewey
May 10, 2004

Dear Fourth Grade Teacher,
I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Central Florida working under the supervision of a faculty member, Dr. Kay W. Allen. In addition to my role as a doctoral student, I am also a public school teacher. Florida History is a topic of special interest to me. Knowing that Florida History is a mandated subject at the fourth grade level, I am contacting you to gather some information about how it is taught.

I realize that this is an extremely busy time of the year for you; however, it is also the time of the year your curricular activities are coming to a close. The enclosed survey is best answered at the end of your entire fourth grade year with respect to Florida History. Would you please take a few minutes to fill out the survey included with this letter and return it to me via district courier by May 17, 2004? Your answers are study related and all information on the survey will be kept completely confidential. The information from the survey will be seen only by me, the researcher, and my supervisor. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer and you may discontinue participation or withdraw your data at any time without consequence. There is no anticipated risk or direct benefit to participants. Unfortunately, I cannot compensate you for your time, but your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about research participants' rights, you may contact the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board at (407) 823-2901.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be willing to communicate with you. I can be reached by e-mail at edewey@bellsouth.net. You can reach my UCF supervisor, Dr. Kay Allen, at (407) 823-2037.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Beth Dewey

APPENDIX G

E-MAIL TO THE PRINCIPALS
Dear Principals of the Elementary Schools in Brevard County,

My name is Beth Dewey and I recently contacted you about a Florida History survey that I need to have completed by the fourth grade teachers of the county. First, I want to thank those of you who did distribute the survey to your fourth grade teachers. Thanks to you, I have some very valuable insights to report in my dissertation about the attitudes, methods, and materials reported by the fourth grade teachers in Brevard County. Unfortunately for my study to be valid and verifiable, I need to have 100 surveys returned and to date I have 46.
I realize that this is an extremely busy time of the year for everyone. However, the survey is best administered at the end of the year as a culminating activity. I did my best to keep the survey short and easy to complete. If I could contact the fourth grade teachers directly to distribute the survey, I would gladly do so. However, the preferred method for distribution of the surveys is via the principals. So now I am begging. If you did not distribute the survey to your fourth grade teachers, would it be possible for you to send it out as soon as possible so that I may have the responses by Friday? After Friday, it will be difficult to get in touch with you or the teachers.

I am attaching a copy of the survey, the cover letter for you, and the cover letter for the teacher for your convenience. Please ask your teachers to return the surveys via the school courier to:

Beth Dewey  
Sabal Elementary School

Again, many many thanks to those of you who already participated.

Sincerely,

Beth Dewey
REFERENCES


Dunn, J. E. (2000, October). Reading in the content areas: Unlocking the secrets and making them work. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 44*(2), 168-170.


Scholl, R. W. (2002). *Attitudes and attitude change.* Retrieved February 4, 05, from [http://www.cba.uri.edu/scholl/Notes/Attitudes.htm](http://www.cba.uri.edu/scholl/Notes/Attitudes.htm)


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