HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULA:
SHIFTING PARADIGMS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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TO:

My family and friends,
for their understanding and support,

Linda,
for her mentoring,

and my dogs,
for not allowing any naps.
ABSTRACT

One of the enduring characteristics of history and social studies curricula in the past century has been their continuous recycling of previous trends. From the progressive educators at the turn of the century to the "new social studies" movement in the 1960s and 1970s, the social studies curricula continued to demonstrate a lack of awareness of its own history. This trend continues today, but with a new twist. The culture wars have brought about an awareness of content that is different from past curricula. History has evolved over the course of the twentieth century from the grand narrative to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the past. This has migrated into secondary classrooms as teachers' help students grapple with various interpretations of historical events.

The purpose of this dissertation is to review these historical changes, and to investigate what is being taught in American classrooms today. To learn this, I surveyed a group of teachers involved in a program sponsored by the College Board entitled Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS), a multi-grade approach to building student skills and content mastery to prepare them for the rigors of an Advanced Placement course in high school.

One finding indicated that the issue of content versus process remains potent today. A second finding demonstrated that the teachers surveyed have strong reactions to standards-based testing. A third finding indicated that middle
school teachers, with an academic background in history, were more likely to identify with the multi-disciplinary approach to history than their high school counterparts, who viewed their work more in terms of a federation of social sciences. Finally, the teachers surveyed raised questions about teacher education, and particularly what combination of disciplines secondary teachers should be trained to teach: history or social studies?

Although sixty percent of the teachers surveyed claim they are social studies teachers, they are teaching more history (fifty-nine percent) than social studies (thirty-two percent). Because the culture wars appear to be far from over, the findings also provide fertile ground for future research as we strive to understand what is being taught and learned in American classrooms.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the past twenty years, a familiar cry has arisen about the state of education in America. Our students are not learning enough and not testing well in comparison to other countries. A 1983 report concluded that American students “lagged behind the rest of the world in all subjects,”¹ and stimulated a national effort to articulate academic standards across the nation. As during the campaign to improve education in the early stages of the Cold War, a host of politicians, academics, and educators sought to address these concerns. Their collaboration has brought about significant changes in many academic disciplines at the secondary level. One change was the development of performance and content standards for history and social studies. However, a precise definition of what these two disciplines are continues to be elusive. Whose history are we teaching? How are the social science disciplines reflected in the curriculum? What strategies should be employed in teaching our youth, and how can educators help students truly learn? How can we measure what is learned? In the search for answers to these and other questions, educators continue to seek a more precise definition of the history and social studies curricula in order to promote more effective learning strategies.

In order to demonstrate the success of students in a particular subject area, it is important to specify first what exactly we are trying to teach students in that curriculum. Both history and social studies curricula are currently in a state of flux. From the culture wars of the 1990s to the state standards movement of today, there
are no universal definitions of what should be included in the history and social studies curricula. Consequently, history and social studies educators face a turning point at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The content wars, brought upon by the national standards movement of the mid-1990s, are far from resolved. Much of the furor over the teaching of United States (US) history has focused on whose history is being taught. However, the standards movement also has raised a myriad of other content and pedagogical questions as well: What are our students learning? Can our students demonstrate higher thinking skills? How are educators defining their task as they respond to the change brought about by the standards movement? And most importantly for this study, are they teaching history or social studies or some combination of the two? It is this evolution of the definition of content and subsequent instructional strategies in the history and social studies curricula that I seek to define and understand.

Some Definitions: History and Social Studies Curricula

To begin at the beginning then, it is important to define terms. Both the history and social studies curricula have evolved in terms of their meaning over the course of the twentieth century. In order to understand where these curricula are heading in the future, it is important first to understand where they have been and how they have changed over time.
At the turn of the twentieth century, history was approached as a study of classic influences of European roots on American development. The traditional history narrative emphasized a political and diplomatic analysis—the "martyrs and myths" version of history—that is, the winners and their accomplishments and how they influenced Americans' image of themselves in terms of the world. At the turn of the twentieth century, the United States was a growing imperial power. After winning the Spanish-American War, the US gained possession of Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, in addition to the previously acquired territories of Samoa, Guam, and Hawaii. The US was entering into the realm of world politics as a major player for the first time in its history, and there was concern among some leaders that the images of the US as a freedom-loving country remain unaffected, despite the opposition of anti-imperialists to this expansion of US power. At the same time, immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe to the US was at an all-time high, and the schooling of these new immigrants and their children was designed to implant feelings of loyalty to their adopted country. Thus, the study of history was used to ensure a positive image of the US and to reinforce the loyalty of its new and not-so-new citizens.

This emphasis on history as a political influence on its citizens remained in place through the "war to end all wars" and Woodrow Wilson's idealism during the early decades of the century. However, when the Great Depression hit, another aspect of American history took root.
James Truslow Adams has been credited with the coining of the term the “American dream” in his book *The Epic of America*, first published in 1931. In the dark days of the Depression, which deepened in the years to follow, the ideal of each citizen being able to make his mark on his future because of the opportunities that America offered became a hallmark of the American way. The idea of “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” was not a new one, and the recognition of merit and existence of opportunity due to a democratic system of government struck a deep chord in the American psyche. This celebration of merit and character remains with us today in the US. From Horatio Alger’s stories of “luck and pluck” in the late nineteenth century, to Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream of all being judged by the content of their character in his 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech, to President Bush’s vision of “no child being left behind” in the current educational system, the idea that the American dream is within our grasp appears to be deeply rooted in who Americans are.

While the idea of the American dream is alive and well, the history curriculum has become more complex regarding how our past is taught. History educators today do far more than teach about the heroes of US history in their curriculum. According to Gary Nash, one of the authors of the national standards for history,

> History is a broadly integrative field, recounting and analyzing human aspirations and strivings in various spheres of human activity: social, political, scientific/technological, economic, and cultural. Studying history—inquiring into families, communities, states, nations, and various peoples of the world—at once engages students in the lives, aspirations, struggles, accomplishments, and failures of real people, in all these aspects of their lives.
This analysis of history from the “bottom-up” approach is quite different from the old school of the grand narrative emphasizing the great men of history. When Thucydides wrote the first history (History of the Peloponnesian Wars), he explained why the winners of these wars were great and glorious. Historians today recognize the need to acknowledge multiple perspectives, including the perspectives of the “losers” and other less visible members of society. This emphasis on multiple perspectives is supposed to lead to the development of greater critical thinking skills on the part of the student. Again, in Nash’s words,

Properly taught, history develops capacities for analysis and judgment. It reveals the ambiguity of choice, and it promotes wariness about quick, facile solutions which have so often brought human suffering in their wake. History fosters understanding of paradox and a readiness to distinguish between that which is beyond and that which is within human control, between the inevitable and the contingent. It trains students to detect bias, to weigh evidence, and to evaluate arguments, thus preparing them to make sensible, independent judgments, to sniff out spurious appeals to history by partisan pleaders, to distinguish between anecdote and analysis.3

Teaching this new history has prompted a variety of organizational strategies. For example, Jack Zevin suggested that a history curriculum could be organized around three major approaches: by themes, by chronology, or by place.4 The National Council for History Education (NCHE) further delineated the themes into strands, such as the origins, central ideas and influence of major religious and philosophical traditions.5 The National Standards for History (developed at the University of California, Los Angeles—UCLA—in 1994) emphasized five spheres of human activity. It promoted developing a “habit of the mind” in leading students through the historical thinking skills necessary for analysis of these spheres. In order for students
to understand history, they must also have a grasp of economics, science, technology, politics, culture, and geography. According to Zevin,

Analyzing these five spheres of human activity requires considering them in the contexts both of historical time and geographic place. The historical record is inextricably linked to the geographic setting in which it developed. Population movements and settlements, scientific and economic activities, geopolitical agendas, and the distribution and spread of political, philosophical, religious, and aesthetic ideas are all related in some measure to geographic factors. The opportunities, limitations, and constraints with which any people have addressed the issues and challenges of their time have, to a significant degree, been influenced by the environment in which they lived or to which they have access, and by the traces on the landscape, malignant or benign, irrevocable left by those who came before."

Today, the study of US history appears to be divided into two factions. There are those who believe the curriculum should emphasize patriotic virtue (e.g., Lynne Cheney, Diane Ravitch, and E.D. Hirsch, Jr.) to the exclusion of other aspects of history, and those who emphasize that history is a complex study of human motivation and aspiration (e.g., Charlotte Crabtree, Gary Nash, and Ross Dunn). Most academics would agree with a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of history. These interpretations and their impact on current history curriculum will be examined in further depth in chapter two.

The Social Studies Curriculum

While the substance and scope of the history curricula has shifted in the twentieth century, the definition of social studies has been largely a slippery
proposition from its very inception. At the turn of the twentieth century, the progressive movement led to reform in many areas of American society. The progressives left a mark on local government and its accountability (initiative, referendum, and recall in most states), helped to initiate the direct election of senators, pressured the president to create national parks, and pushed for a secondary school education for all children. During the course of this grass-roots reform movement, the progressives reassessed the purpose of education. In the course of this questioning, a new discipline was created—social studies.

To progressive educators, social studies should emphasize the relationship between students and society, examining the "seamless web of human relations." The National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) defined social studies in 1921 as "the term . . . used to include history, economics, sociology, civics, geography, and all modifications of subjects whose content as well as aim is social." But what did this mean? The definitions of social studies were vague and open to many interpretations. Recently, a 1996 article in NCSS in Retrospect, defined the historical definitions of social studies in this manner.

Three general perspectives have dominated: (1) social studies should mean the teaching of history; (2) social studies should reflect its populist and progressive roots but should have as its core the teaching of scientific/analytical history supplemented by the various social sciences; and (3) social studies should recognize its populist and progressive roots but emphasize the education of democratic citizens through an integration of content that centers on social/personal problems and issues as studied in a reflective process.

Thus, there has been no real agreement as to the definition and purpose of social studies from its very origins. This confusion has only increased over the
intervening years. As the report continues, "Others would argue that social studies is a myth because it has rarely been practiced as a [kindergarten through grade twelve] curriculum. In this view, social studies teachers consider themselves practitioners of one or more of the social sciences or of history . . . and social studies is merely a label for a school curriculum area."¹⁰ Many educators place an emphasis on citizenship education within the context of the social studies curricula, and all agree that social studies is a federation of social sciences, including the study of history. To fully understand the problems facing educators in the twenty-first century regarding the history and social studies conundrum, it is important to examine the history of both the history and social studies curricula, and where they appear to be heading. That is the focus of chapter two.
The goal of social studies and history reformers over the ages has always been well intended. Whether that intention was to promote good citizenship, or to examine historical problems, or to delve into the role of the individual in society, all curricular goals have been meant to improve the lives of students through knowledge. But from the American Historical Association’s Committee of Ten in 1893 and the progressives, who created social studies in 1916 to the “new social studies” movement of the 1960s, all have been disappointing in terms of successfully accomplishing their curricular goals. The goals themselves have been difficult to define in terms of content, and the strategies employed have varied widely. It appears that very few educational researchers agree on this fundamental question: what should students learn in history or social studies and how they should learn it?

History and Social Studies Curricula: 1900–1940

Although a great deal has been written about both social studies and history curricula, very little has been written about how these curricula compare with each other. Therefore, an examination of the history of the social studies curriculum may bring some clarification when it is contrasted with the history curriculum. It is only through attempting to understand the curricula of these two areas that we may be able to define the state of social studies and history curricula today.
The social studies movement grew from the American Historical Association's (AHA) Committee of Ten at the turn of the twentieth century. In response to its call for better prepared young men to enter universities, educational reformers began to request that the growing public school system produce better educated citizens. The reformers from the AHA initially attempted to set up a curriculum that would be applicable to all students, regardless of their later aims in life. By emphasizing modernism and social reform, students would be prepared for their future roles. America's ideal future could then be attached to the great engines of modern progress: the capitalist market, social diversification, democracy and scientific knowledge.²

Other progressive reformers, such as John Dewey, had other goals for educators. In *Democracy and Education* (1916), he attempted to define democracy and demonstrate how it could be applied to educational reform at the cusp of the twentieth century. Just as the political progressive reformers sought to change American society from the bottom up, Dewey believed that the power to change the educational system needed to begin at the school and student level first.

Power to grow depends upon need for others and . . . [p]lasticity or the power to learn from experience means the formation of habits. . . . Active habits involve thought, invention and initiative in applying capacities to new aims. . . . The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact.³
Dewey believed in a Roussaeuan approach to education. Just as Rousseau’s Emile was to be a child of nature, Dewey believed that a child’s natural curiosity should be his or her guide in education. This fostering of intelligent autonomy of individual students was exemplified in Dewey’s history course. This history course was constructed so as to help the child “gradually shape his expression to social ends, and thus make them, through his growing control, more and more effective in the corporate life of the group. . . .” Following Dewey’s argument, natural curiosity should dictate the curriculum. From Dewey’s perspective, the social studies curriculum should emphasize social unity, cooperative living, and the rational, orderly, progressive development of technology from the spinning wheel to the modern, industrial, corporate society. Thirty years later, while reflecting on his “Chicago Experiment,” Dewey admitted that “historical material was subordinated to the maintenance of community or cooperative group in which each child was to participate.”

In fact, Dewey had great success with his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, but it did not last long. Small student-teacher ratios, superb teachers, and a hand-picked student body all contributed to his chances for educational success. But funding was a problem. As other educators translated Dewey’s ideas into classroom practice, many of his concerns about social imagination and the historical roots of occupations were lost. For many, Dewey stood for group activity, learning by doing, relating material to the interests of the child, and doing projects. Statements by Dewey such as “the true center of correlation of the school subjects is
... the child's own social activities" were used to justify a variety of group and social activities within the school. Often these methods placed an emphasis on group conformity that went beyond anything Dewey intended. For instance, Dewey believed that motives and choices grow out of social situations; he did not believe, as many other educators were to argue, that individual motives and goals should conform to the wishes of the group. Dewey wanted to free individual action, not submerge it in the mediocre standard of group consensus.

In 1915, the AHA and NEA formed another committee to study the high school curricula. This committee was populated largely by secondary teachers, and from their report the nascent social studies curriculum was born. The first major result of the committee's work was the publication in 1915 of Arthur W. Dunn's *The Teaching of Community Civics*. This work formed a large part of the final report in 1916. "The keynote of modern education is 'social efficiency,'" the NEA committee declared, and instruction in all subjects should contribute to this end. Their conscious and constant purpose should be the cultivation of 'good citizenship,' beginning in the neighborhood and extending to the world community."

*Social Studies: The Early Years*

The National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) began in 1921, and outlined the major disciplines it thought necessary for the education of good citizens. This idealization of citizenship really has its roots in the founding of the United States, where the embrace of republicanism imposed a public duty on all educated men.
These duties and privileges associated with citizenship extended over the next two centuries to encompass all groups in American society with increased suffrage and civil rights. But besides the social efficiency of educating good citizens, there was little that the NCSS could agree upon in terms of a definition of what exactly "social studies" was. "NCSS [tended to define social studies] as a federation rather than a fusion of the social studies subjects. The NCSS wanted to avoid 'college domination' while still involving university scholars."^9

The 1916 committee (heavily weighted with members from secondary education) defined the social studies as

those whose subject matter relates directly to the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of social groups. . . The keynote of modern education is 'social efficiency,' and instruction in all subjects should contribute to this end. . . the selection of a topic and time devoted to it should depend 'not upon its relative proximity in time, nor yet its relative present importance from the adult or sociological point of view, but also and chiefly upon the degree to which such topic can be related to the present life interest of the pupil, or can be used by him in his present processes of growth."^10

During the 1920s, this approach resulted in the teaching of current events along with citizenship activities.

In the 1930s, the AHA and NEA commissioned another committee to study social studies curriculum. This "Committee of Seven," unlike the 1916 commission, was composed largely of university professors. The committee outlined a plan for a comprehensive study of the state of social studies and for making suggestions for its improvement, including objectives, content, organization, grade placement, instructional methods, testing, and teacher preparation.^11 As Hertzberg summarizes,
... the report sought to counter some of the contemporary tendencies in the social studies. It rejected the idea of a general social science and of a curriculum detached from the traditional social science disciplines. A curriculum based on problems of democracy was held to be insufficient. The static perfectionisms of indoctrination for both the status quo and utopianism were rejected in favor of a progressive, dynamic view suitable for a progressive, dynamic society.

Thus, it could be said that the content versus process debate began with this new challenge to the social studies along with questions regarding the curriculum and teacher preparation. However, the progressives were not finished with their visions for an improved society.

Two versions of this progressive society came from William Heard Kilpatrick and Harold O. Rugg, respectively. Kilpatrick was a professor at Teachers College (now known as Columbia University) and an original proponent of the social efficiency movement. In his Project Method (1918), Kilpatrick advocated that the key to a revitalized curriculum lay somewhere in the child. "Central to Kilpatrick’s endeavor was a redefinition of subject matter. Rather than minimum essentials or something set out to be learned, he saw subject matter as a rich reconstruction of the child’s experience, one that ‘results in uplifting insight, inclination, and power’." Kilpatrick’s critics took exception with this Rousseaucean approach to learning, and by the 1930s, even John Dewey called for a more concrete approach to the curriculum.

Rugg represented the reconstructionist school of curriculum. Rugg’s curriculum was based on an integration of content that focused on social problems, in an attempt to implement and extend the recommendations of the 1916 Commission.

Rather than have teachers attempt the almost impossible task of "correlating" history, geography, civics, economics and sociology (taught as separate subjects), we postulate that more effective outcomes will be secured by weaving together lesson by lesson the facts, movements, conditions, principles
and social economic and political "laws" that depend upon one another and that can be fully comprehended only when they are woven together.}\(^{15}\)

Rugg and his colleagues wrote experimental pamphlets on such topics as immigration, slavery, and architecture as a symbol of socio-economic status. Within the first nine years of their publication (1922-1931), over 750,000 pamphlets were distributed to subscribing school systems. Eventually, these were worked into a book, *Man and His Changing Society*, which sold 1,317,960 copies and 2,687,000 accompanying workbooks from 1929-1939.\(^{16}\) While Rugg’s book did well for a while, his message calling for the restraint of the free enterprise system during the worst of the Great Depression eventually proved to be his demise.

In 1936, Rugg was attacked for his infatuation with "collectivism" and was accused of "Sovietizing our children" by the conservative weekly, the *National Republic*.\(^{17}\) Although the Cold War was still a decade away, this rejection of progressive reforms as thinly disguised advocates of collectivism, socialism or communism was already underway. "The assaults on Rugg, far better organized and more strenuous than the attack on the New Historians of the 1920s [e.g., Charles Beard], expanded into an ultranationalist crusade to eradicate allegedly anti-American textbooks for public schools,"\(^{18}\) observed historian Gary Nash. The progressive texts of Rugg gave way to the consensus viewpoint of authors such as Samuel Morison and Henry Steele Commager. The Progressives found both their content and process under attack, not only in terms of social studies, but also in terms of history. "More troubling, the dispute did serious damage to the Progressives’ belief in the power of
history—interpreted, reinterpreted, and argued over—to serve the nation’s best interests.”

The emphasis of the social studies curriculum in the 1930s shifted to one of social reconstruction. In the midst of the Great Depression, Linda Symcox notes,

... [the] social reconstruction movement envisioned the curriculum as the vehicle by which social injustice would be redressed and the evils of capitalism corrected. Through a radical reform of the social studies curriculum, a new generation of students would be critically attuned to the defects of the capitalistic system, and prepared to improve it.

As the Great Depression wore on, and the situation abroad heated up in the Far East and in Europe, the focus of the American people turned inward. Japan’s attack on China in 1931 and the rise of Adolph Hitler to power in Germany in 1933 provided another reason for the American people to shift towards isolationism. This myopic view was reflected in both US foreign policies in the mid-to-late 1930s and in the curriculum offered in schools. In 1935, NCSS separated from the AHA, as it feared the effect of college and history dominated curriculum choices. Consequently, the increasing lack of interest by academics in the secondary curriculum only became more pronounced during the 1940s and 1950s.

**Shifting Paradigms: 1941–1958**

During World War II (WW II), citizenship education and patriotism became a central emphasis of both history and social studies curricula. In 1942, the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom was formed. One of its concerns focused on the historical illiteracy of America’s school children. However, “arising as
it did in the midst of a war, [this concern] hardly rippled the surface of American public opinion in 1943-44; winning the war preoccupied the nation,” writes Gary Nash. While such institutions as the Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom and the New York Times called for more and better American history to be offered in the schools, the NCSS responded that history did not matter to students, further widening the gap between the history and social studies curricula. The social studies curriculum focused increased attention on current events, more formal attention to citizenship education, and on international organization and postwar planning strategies as its core. Students were encouraged to join scrap metal drives and do volunteer work for the Red Cross.

At the end of the war, educators emphasized the democratization of secondary schooling and on preparation for work (either preparing students for vocational training or college). This “life adjustment movement,” as it was called, emphasized the utility of secondary education. “Life adjustment education is designed to equip all American Youth to live democratically with satisfaction to themselves and profit to society as home members, workers, and citizens.” This emphasis on democracy did not, however, result in the emergence of a new, national, updated version of the social studies curriculum. History, although diminished in emphasis, and civics, although changed, remained as the spine of the social studies structure. However, another trend in the secondary curriculum had enveloped the social studies by the end of WW II. This “core curriculum” was a fusion of two or more school subjects. This idea had its origins in the 1920s, but gained considerable ground in the 1940s and 1950s. By the late 1940s, eleven percent of all junior high
schools with more than 500 pupils had some sort of core curriculum. This "unified studies core" had disciplines fused around a single theme or problem, or was centered around an "experience-centered core," based on the personal and social needs of adolescents—sometimes planned, sometimes created as they went along. By the 1950s, the block-core, in which two subjects were correlated in a single time block (usually English and social studies), had been incorporated into one-third of all junior high schools and ten percent of all combined junior and senior high schools across the nation. "The core was a diffuse movement that ranged from imaginative and well-based curricula involving active student participation to blatant anti-intellectualism,"²⁶ Hertzberg remembers.

Calls for general reform in social studies were largely absent in the 1940s and 1950s. References to the teaching of history became less and less frequent in methods texts and articles. One of the more popular methods texts in the 1950s, by Maurice Hunt and Lawrence Metcalf, emphasized a reflective process. "The text argued for the study of social problems through a reflective process, an argument closely related to Dewey and progressive education reforms. . . . [However] a competing point of view on the 1950s based on the discovery once again that students were deficient in basic information about their country was articulated by Arthur Bestor . . . [who] found social studies ‘soft,’ if not unintellectual."²⁷ The process versus content debate was underway in the criticisms of the teaching of social studies by Arthur Bestor, who found social studies lacking the historical content that he believed students needed.
Arthur Bestor, a professor at the University of Illinois, had been educated at the Lincoln School at Teachers College, Columbia University, (Hertzberg notes), in its progressive glory days or, as he viewed it, before progressive education became regressive education. . . . The term “social studies” should be abolished, Bestor urged, since it was unnecessary and because it led to educational faddism, trivia, and confusion. Fortunately, Bestor stated, most social science courses in the schools were actually history; however, the term should be dropped before it was too late. . . . Bestor’s own historical clock stopped with the 1916 NEA report, which he regarded as the work of “educationalists.” . . . Thus by removing the rise of the social studies from the historical context, he obviated the necessity of coming to grips with the meaning and problems of their historical development and made it possible to advocate a course of action which ignored them. 28

Hertzberg argues that Bestor was short-sighted in his criticism of the social studies curriculum, but the fact remains that the social studies curriculum as a whole embraced an anti-intellectual stance in the 1950s. Many schools across the nation adopted social studies courses that emphasized group process over the learning of any specific content. For example, public schools in Minneapolis initiated a “common learnings” program across the system in 1950. “The two hour daily program combined English and social studies into a single course. It emphasized the personal and social problems of students rather than subject matter. . . . ‘Common learnings’ was devoted to studying problems ‘meaningful to youth’ and building the ‘right attitudes.’” 29

By the end of the 1950s, many educators were questioning this emphasis on group process over learning specific content. Bestor was not the only critic of the social studies curricula. The publication of the 1958 NCSS yearbook, edited by Roy A. Price, New Viewpoints in the Social Sciences, was a clear demonstration that the debate over excellence in education, the primacy of the individual disciplines, and the
importance of social sciences was now heaving and bubbling. The yearbook also foreshadowed some of the problems that would soon arise. The social science contributors to the report were unacquainted with the schools or their curricula, even in their own disciplines. The social studies contributors, on the other hand, were in somewhat of a quandary about how these new viewpoints were to accommodate the traditional purpose of the social studies: citizenship education, the concern about education for all youth, “gifted” or not, and the curricular scope and sequence.\textsuperscript{30} Thus, social studies in the 1950s was again under the microscope with both university and secondary educators questioning its purpose and content.

\textit{Transitions in the History Curriculum}

In the 1940s and 1950s, the history curriculum began its movement towards a more uniform narrative. “... [H]istorians of the ‘consensus’ school rejected the conflict model of the progressives. Instead, they focused on uncovering a broadly shared set of values that, they argued, overrode ethnic and class distinctions. ... Political history also remained the backbone of school history ...”\textsuperscript{31} The focus of the 1950s remained the emerging Cold War. Public school teachers became the target of people intent on “ferreting out communist subversion ... More than half the states required teachers to sign loyalty oaths.”\textsuperscript{32} By the time the height of McCarthyism had run its course with Joseph McCarthy’s censure, a feeling of inadequacy settled in again on the American public.
This sense of deficiency led to another national effort to improve the state of education in the United States. The National Science Foundation (NSF) was formed in 1950, and by 1957 six national projects in math and science for the secondary curricula had been formulated. “... professionals wanted schools that would offer excellence in academic subjects and were less concerned with student involvement in social issues.” By the time the Soviets launched Sputnik in 1957, this concern spilled over from math and science into other subject areas. Sputnik spurred the space race with the Soviet Union and pointed to shortcomings in the American educational system. The US needed to demonstrate the superiority of democracy through technological breakthroughs. The National Education Act was passed by Congress in 1958 to improve the quality of academic work produced by US schools. The social studies movement, with its emphasis on divergent fields of study and democratization, contradicted trends towards more rigorous academic study in the fields of mathematics and science. The “new social studies” movement had begun.

From the “New Social Studies” to the Bradley Commission: 1958–1987

The “new social studies” incorporated much of the consensus derived from the NSF. The NSF had five major points: (1) a focus on academic disciplines and their structures (models, theories, concepts, generalizations and methods of investigation) through the inquiry or discovery method; (2) high school was the place to begin this as this was where the individual disciplines were most firmly ensconced;
(3) emphasis should be placed on gifted and talented students; (4) the most efficient way to institute change was to change materials of instruction; (5) the vehicle of the process should be the project; and (6) inservice was necessary for educators to use the materials effectively.34

What was missing in the reform equation at the opening the 1960s was a direct and specific linkage of social studies reform to the ideology and procedures of the powerful educational projects in math and science. Whereas the challenges presented by the Soviet launching of Sputnik in 1957 were powerful and clear to math and science educators, social studies educators did not have such straightforward objectives. Social studies lacked a clear and coherent definition. Charles R. Keller, a former professor of history and director of the Advanced Placement Program, argued that the present unhappy situation was due in part to the fact that the social studies were not “a subject” but “a federation of subjects” that was often merged in confusing ways. . . . Too many teachers emphasized the creation of good citizens rather than the disciplines. Rather, students should become acquainted with facts and ideas and learn how to think and understand. . . . The emphasis should be on learning and discovery rather than on teaching—on analysis, critical thinking, and interpretation. 35

In the late 1950s and 1960s, therefore, the “new social studies” was developed and involved inquiry-based learning modules, such as the Amherst Project, which promoted students’ “learning how to learn.”36 On the surface, it still sounds like a very good idea. Units were developed with teachers, to incorporate the many different points of view that could be expressed about the particular topics. However, Richard Brown identified the principal weaknesses of this method as lack of continuity in the curriculum, subject selection, a lack of clarity in the goals for a
transformed history course, and the difficulty in the reading level of the materials selected. \(^{37}\)

Yet another strategy for building a curriculum was proposed by Jerome Bruner in 1966. He stated that a theory of instruction should address readiness to learn, a spiral organization of the content to make it easily grasped by the learner, and a curriculum which allows the learner to extrapolate beyond the given information. This allows the student to construct his or her own knowledge, which she or he then will hopefully remember much better than a fact that has been memorized.

Besides using cognitive theory, Bruner also took into account the work of Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized the role of social interaction in the development of cognition.

Every function in the child's cultural development [Vygotsky says] appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. \(^{38}\)

Emphasizing a spiraling curriculum that enhances student knowledge through hands-on activities and reinforcement of previously learned concepts and content, Bruner became involved in the design and implementation of the Man: A Course of Study (MACOS) project. Bruner drew from current work in cultural anthropology to create MACOS. "Using contrast as a pedagogical technique (i.e., humans vs. higher primates [baboons], modern humans vs. aboriginal humans, and adults vs. children), [Symcox relates] Bruner hoped that sixth-grade students would come to appreciate how different societies come to understand their world and that one kind of
worldview is no more human than another." 39 While MACOS had an initial successful reception, giving Bruner recognition from both the American Education Research Association and the American Publishers Institute in 1969, by 1975 the course was under fire from conservative parents and politicians. MACOS infamously followed a native Inuit tribe and chronicled the practices of that tribe, including the leaving of the old and weak behind during winter travels to meet their deaths. In 1975, Representative John B. Conlan of Arizona,

singled it [MACOS] out for a stern rebuke during hearings before the House Committee on Science and Technology, which he chaired, and later in the full House discussion of appropriations for the National Science Foundation for 1976. According the Conlan, the MACOS curriculum challenged American values by exposing children to the customs of another culture at an early, receptive age. . . . The MACOS scandal brought the entire NSF sponsored reform movement to an abrupt end. 40

Another problem the “new social studies” encountered was who generated the materials. Although some of the “new social studies” projects included teacher participation in their development, other projects involved teachers only minimally. The units were presented as “idiot-proof” teaching materials with little room for exploration and discovery on the part of the teacher. It was hoped that this revolution would be accomplished through the new social studies materials. 41

However, it soon became apparent that in order for the teacher to effectively present new methods of attacking historical problems to the students, the teacher needed some ownership of the curricular materials. The teacher as puppet was and is not an effective model for promoting curriculum development and change. Only when the power shifts from the curriculum developer to the curriculum implementer, does the process of change begins to make sense in the classroom. Otherwise, the
new curricular materials are just another version of teaching the textbook, with little or no analysis taking place on the parts of either the teacher or the students.

While MACOS, the Amherst Project, and other projects of the "new social studies" did not survive the 1960s, some of the research started by Bruner and others grew into new ideas about the nature of learning. Bruner built on Vygotsky's theory regarding role of social and cultural aspects of learning.

It is surely the case that schooling is only one small part of how a culture inducts the young into its canonical ways [Bruner notes]. Indeed, schooling may even be at odds with a culture's other ways of inducting the young into the requirements of communal living. . . . What has become increasingly clear . . . is that education is not just about conventional school matters like curriculum or standards or testing. What we resolve to do in school only makes sense when considered in the broader context of what the society intends to accomplish through its educational investment in the young. How one conceives of education, we have finally come to recognize, is a function of how one conceives of culture and its aims, professed and otherwise. 42

As Bruner viewed it, the curriculum is a reflection of how society chooses to resolve the issues of what is taught, how it is taught and the background necessary to teach the issues.

Another enduring problem in curricular reform is that researchers to often appear unaware of previous reform efforts, and the results of those reform efforts. Most of the "new social studies" materials generated in the 1960s are now gathering dust in the back of classroom closets. Researchers also neglected or entirely overlooked social upheavals of the 1960s and most of the project developers had had only a highly selective exposure to the diversity and problems of the real world of the schools. Rarely was the teacher perceived as a creative force in the classroom or as someone from whom they might learn anything beyond reactions to the materials they
were testing. Finally, project directors had little time to reflect on what they were doing and how it worked or did not work. Clearly, at least for the critics, current reform was not going nearly far enough.

The 1960s critiques, like those of the 1950s, presented a severe indictment of the schools [Hertzberg concludes]. But while the 1950s had appealed to gradualism and reform in spite of talk of "revolution," the 1960s called for sweeping change, rejecting moderation as failure. . . . [What the critics] were calling for was a fundamental restructuring of the school system, not for tinkering with new curricular materials.

The turbulent sixties produced strains within the public school system, including confronting and explaining national events that shook students' confidence in public institutions and led them to challenge what they were being taught in schools. Events such as the Civil Rights movement and subsequent desegregation of public schools, protests against American participation in the Vietnam War, countercultural militancy, and the 1968 assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy and ensuing rioting across the nation—all caused students, their parents and their teachers to question the purpose of public education. Moreover, the faces of students were changing due to the migration of African-Americans north, and the opening of immigration due to the Immigration Act of 1965. In addition to the changing demographics of American students, the federal legislation of the Great Society years brought major changes to the schools and the programs they offered.

[As Nash reminds us], the Equal Educational Opportunities Program of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided money to desegregate school districts, instructed the commissioner of education to monitor inequality in educational opportunities and empowered the government to withhold money from programs in violation of antidiscrimination laws. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act furnished special assistance for schools heavily populated by the children of low-income families. In 1974, the Women's
Educational Equity Act . . . aimed at ending sex discrimination in educational opportunities and sex stereotyping in the curriculum. 46

In response to these new and often conflicting demands of students, teachers, parents, administrators, and federal regulations, social studies educators again focused on a refurbishment of citizenship education and the issue of relevancy in the classroom. “Some prominent social studies educators saw only a fragmented curriculum and a rush for relevance, if not a caving in to political agendas of particular ‘interest groups.’ . . . If these demands overpowered the schools’ quest for educational excellence that began in the post-Sputnik years, teachers were not to blame. Schools did not operate in a vacuum, immune from the social changes and upheavals sweeping American society.” 47

While social studies tried to connect with students and their demands for more relevancy in the classroom, ultimately this push led to harsh criticism from leaders within the field itself. James Shaver, a champion of citizenship education, in 1977 attacked “. . . the ‘mindlessness’ into which the field had fallen. Its uncritical acceptance of trendy areas of study, and its failure to question fundamental assumptions, had, he charged, left the field adrift. Four years later, Howard Mehlinger, president of NCSS, declared that the subject suffered from terminal illness, if it was not already dead. The field, he judged, was ‘goal-rich and content-poor.’” 48 Again the dilemma of content versus process reveals itself as a core question within the field.

Just as Arthur Bestor had attacked social studies in the 1950s, a new generation of reformers challenged the purpose of social studies in the 1980s. Led by
conservative historians Diane Ravitch, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Chester Finn, Jr., and others, they claimed that “... the social studies field was largely responsible of the presentism that characterized today’s students [Symcox says]. They argued, like Bestor, that the social studies, with its emphasis on the present had destroyed liberal education and a coherent vision of the past. The schools were failing because they had given up the goal of liberal education.” 49 Another critic, Kieran Egan, even argued that social studies be abolished and that students be taught history. This debate continues today.

In 1983, the publication of A Nation at Risk by President Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education provoked a national outcry about the deplorable state of public education. Once again, US students trailed their counterparts around the world in their knowledge of core subject areas, including history and social studies. Eventually this call for reform led to the formation of the Bradley Commission in 1987. Led by Chester Finn and Diane Ravitch, the commission modeled itself on the Committee of Ten, and concerned itself with the role of history in civic education. Mirroring results from the California History—Social Science Framework, the Bradley Report urged the extensive study of history. “... [T]he commissioners believed that historical knowledge would foster citizenship and contribute to nation-building. ... [T]he Bradley commission proposed several curricular patterns for each school level, emphasizing historical studies at most grade levels.” 50 This challenge to the social studies curricula led directly to the culture wars, that shape the discussion of the methodology war between history and social studies today.
The Culture Wars

“The People made their recollection fit in with their sufferings.”
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

From Thucydides’ version of the Peloponnesian War to the end of the Cold War, historians and students of history all have found different accounts as to why these events occurred. The facts remain constant—the USSR no longer exists as a national entity—but the reasons for these events change over time, according to our current political perspective. In a sense, there has always been a culture war—that is, a difference in opinions about which past and whose past to emphasize in the teaching of history. At times, such as during the 1960s, these arguments are more vehement than others. We are living through one of those times.

There are those, such as Lynne Cheney, Diane Ravitch, and E.D. Hirsch, Jr., who would argue that the traditional canon of U.S. history has been neglected in the pursuit of multiculturalism. There are others, such as Linda Symcox, Gary Nash, Charlotte Crabtree and Ross Dunn, who would argue that there really was no traditional canon in the teaching of American history until the beginning of World War II, and that the national standards movement represents the current state of scholarship in American history. As historians moved towards a more interdisciplinary explanation of the past, which incorporates multiple viewpoints, today’s conservatives have embraced a more traditional canon of history emphasizing American exceptionalism.
Contrary to the beliefs of today's conservatives, the Revolutionary generation had strong and opinionated leaders. John Adams believed that Benjamin Franklin was at times a vainglorious fool, who almost blew the negotiations with the French over the end of the revolutionary war.

"The history of our Revolution," [Adams] complained, "will be one continued lie from one end to the other. The essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin's electric rod smote the earth and out sprang George Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod, and henceforward these two conducted all the policy negotiations, legislatures and wars." 51

Thomas Jefferson was not above using rumor and innuendo to squash Adams' chance at re-election in 1800. 52 The Fourth of July was not celebrated as a national holiday until the 1820s because too many of the revolutionary generation could not agree on what they were supposed to be honoring. 53 During the course of the nineteenth century, the question of abolitionism, growing sectional differences, and the Civil War all lent themselves to more diversity of opinion regarding a national identity, let alone a tradition of who and what we were as Americans.

Shifting Paradigms: 1958-2003

During the early part of the twentieth century, the narrative of American history began to take shape as a traditional canon and, paradoxically, at the same time, to diverge from its roots. With the growth of the progressive movement, both historians and educators began to view our past in a different light. The publication of Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* in 1913 was hotly debated, as it continues to be today. In this work, Beard
examined the backgrounds of the fifty-five delegates to the Constitutional Convention and decided that they may have had their own personal interests in mind, as well as the political future of their country, when writing the Constitution.

... Beard was attacked in terms that made Benedict Arnold seem like a model American. A headline in the newspaper in Marion, Ohio, proclaimed: **SCAVENGERS, HYENA-LIKE, DESECRATE THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD PATRIOTS WE REVERE**

The ensuing story called Beard's book "libelous, vicious and damnable" or impugning the pure motives of the framers of the Constitution, and it urged all true Americans to "rise to condemn him and the purveyors of his filthy lies and rotten aspirations." 54

Shades of Rush Limbaugh! In the first quarter of the twentieth century, 1900-1925, the historical profession itself was undergoing a change. Universities began to revise their curricula, changing their emphasis from the classics to one encompassing the "modern history" of Western Civilization and the United States. Concurrently, the growth of secondary education brought about the birth of the social studies movement.

The social studies movement grew in fits and starts in the first half of the twentieth century. With the consensus viewpoints of Henry Steele Commager and Samuel Morrison dominating the historical profession in the 1930s and 1940s, and the disconnection of the academics from social studies education in the 1930s, the paths of secondary and university educators were bound to diverge. While teachers tried to implement the ideas of Dewey, Kilpatrick and Rugg, their colleagues at the university level began to think about their profession in an entirely different manner. Starting in the 1950s, the historical profession at the university level was undergoing dramatic change. Though the changes of the 1960s and 1970s did have their origins
in the work of Charles Beard and Carl Becker, among others, it was the advent of
the French Annales School and the social unrest of the 1950s and 1960s that made the
greatest contribution towards the diversification of the historical profession.

The Annales School emphasizes studying in great detail, over a long period of
time, the economic and social patterns of life in a relatively small sphere. This new
social history, as it was called, purported to give depth to history by examining the
course of events from the bottom up, rather than through the views of those in power.
It emphasized the lives of ordinary people. The civil rights movement in the United
States, along with protest against American involvement in the war in Vietnam,
contributed to this new history arising from the left.

New Left historians [and] neo-Marxists began issuing a drum beat of critiques
of our historiography from diplomatic to political and intellectual history. . . .
The civil rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s called attention
black history. Then one by one each ethnic group entered the fray as it found
a champion among the new ethnic and urban historians.55

The new social history, with its shift to the political left, was reflected in an emerging
secondary social studies curriculum. Inquiry-based learning and the spiral curriculum
of Jerome Bruner emphasized learning about other cultures in such curriculum units
as MACOS and the Amherst project; it also emphasized the value of oral history as a
methodology in studies of communities.

However, the impact of the new social history on the secondary curriculum
did not last for long. By the 1970s, there was a distinct difference between what was
taught at the secondary and the post-secondary levels. Whereas university scholars
continued down the road of social history, secondary schools rejected many of the
notions brought about by the 1960s curricular reform in favor of an emphasis on
“relevance” that fragmented the social studies curriculum. If a topic was not relevant
to the immediate everyday life of the learner, why should he or she bother learning it?
While the academics pursued new avenues of research, the emphasis of secondary
schools on current social studies topics contributed to a growing lack of basic
historical knowledge among the nation’s younger generation.

The ferment of the 1960s and 1970s [Nash writes] did indeed destabilize
history and social studies curricula across the nation. But it also produced an
unprecedented burst of creative research and writing in U.S. and world
history. The new scholarship not only opened panoramic new vistas on the
past but also helped to expose the fact that historical understanding among the
nation’s children was shockingly narrow, fragmentary, and distorted. By the
1980s, the loss of collective memory among the young was so apparent that
education leaders and other citizens cried out for something to be done. 56

In the meantime at the university level, debate arose over the issues of
historical objectivity versus the narrative. Historians questioned how objective any
interpretation of the past could be, and challenged the depth of the traditional
narrative. These two issues would provoke very different discussions.

The objectivity question, as Peter Novick (1988) so aptly put it, was like
“nailing jelly to the wall.” In testing the proposition of objectivity, questions of
historicism, relativism, and the failure of narrative to present enough viewpoints to be
a valid analysis all came into question. Part of this shifting paradigm was brought
about by the work of Thomas Kuhn. In his work, The Structure of Scientific
Revolutions (first published in 1962), Kuhn advanced a historical theory of scientific
development. His basic premise was that the paradigm of scientists had to shift
before they could test new propositions regarding scientific theory. From Galileo to
Einstein, a new vision towards the world around us preceded new explanations for the universe. Historians applied this idea of a shifting paradigm to how political climate influences our view of the past. During the 1980s, this paradigm included a rejection of past histories based on their political perspectives.

The epistemological objection is that knowledge is neither “objective” nor universal; rather it is contextual and relativistic. The political objection is that the canon incorporates the works of mostly white and male European and American authors and, by extension, is a tool of political oppression used by the dominant culture to deny voices in texts outside the European American tradition. 57

This idea of “political correctness” soon appeared to dominate academic culture across the nation. On the one hand, the rejection of the traditional canon did lead to a rich variety of studies enhancing the depth of historical scholarship. On the other hand, many outside the university community viewed this diversification as multiculturalism run amuck. Many in the general public saw diversification as divisive, pulling American society apart rather than enhancing the democratic ideal of pluralism. Added to the secondary emphasis on relevancy, many feared that this political correctness would further dilute the social studies curriculum.

The National Standards Movement

After the 1983 Reagan report, A Nation at Risk, secondary schools came under fire, and several commissions were formed to examine the state of education across the nation. One of these commissions was the National Council for History Standards
During the course of five years, led by Gary Nash, Ross Dunn, and Charlotte Crabtree of UCLA, this group worked to respond to the criticisms of E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and Diane Ravitch, whose works pointed to the lack of cultural literacy and historical knowledge among the nation’s young people. Hirsch’s 1987 book on cultural literacy included a very long list in the appendix that pointed to a traditional Western view of American history, much to the dismay of those who advocated more of a world view. Also in 1987, Ravitch and Chester Finn, Jr. published, *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature*, which sought to examine the performance of students’ basic knowledge of history and literature.

The history assessment was made up of questions designed to “plumb whether students do or do not know the basic facts of American history.” The authors had no problem with a test that emphasized factual recall, convinced that it is “fatuous to believe that students can think critically or conceptually when they are ignorant of the most basic facts of American history.” Among the eight thousand students who took the test the average score was 55 percent correct answers. Ravitch and Finn judged this performance to be “extremely weak,” and expressed astonishment that only 32 percent of the test takers were able to place the Civil War in the correct half century. 58

This study led to the formation of two major commissions, which both issued reports on the state of history and social studies education in the United States. In 1987, a coalition of the Organization of American Historians (OAH), the AHA and the NCSS formed the Bradley Commission. Its report stressed the need for a history orientation in kindergarten through grade six, and called for no fewer than four years of history in the grades seven through twelve curricula.

The National Commission on Social Studies, also formed in 1987, was a collaborative effort between the NCSS, OAH, AHA, and the Carnegie Foundation.
Its report also called for an increased emphasis on the study of history in the kindergarten through grade twelve curricula. However, the NCSS membership did not approve this report in 1989 as “... many in NCSS found unacceptable the focus on chronologically organized history at the expense of current issue analysis and ethnic studies.” 59

This disagreement points to the fundamental division between history and social studies educators. History teachers are accused of being content rich and process poor; they emphasize traditional narrative with little analysis. That is, history teachers are characterized as having students memorize names and dates with no thought given to the causes and effects of historical events. Social studies teachers are accused of being process rich and content poor; they focus on current events and demand little intellectual rigor. Thus, instead of emphasizing the historical background of current dilemmas, the social studies teacher is stereotyped as discussing the world today without the background necessary to understand the complexities of modern problems. This points out the dilemma of content versus process—should teachers emphasize content to the exclusion of thinking about the process, or should teachers emphasize process without content? Both of these caricatures still exist today, with the truth about the curricula probably lying somewhere in the middle.

In 1994, the National Council for History Standards (NCHS) issued its report, prompting another salvo in the culture wars. On October 20, 1994, Lynne Cheney, then the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, wrote in the Wall Street Journal criticizing the NCHS’s report.
Imagine an outline for the teaching of American history, in which George Washington makes only a fleeting appearance and is never described as our first president. Or in which the founding of the Sierra Club and the National Organization of Women are considered noteworthy, but the first gathering of the US Congress is not.  

Cheney went on to describe what she viewed as the pursuit of “revisionist history” unleashed by the forces of political correctness. In fact, Cheney was citing examples from the supporting teaching material and not the standards themselves. The standards and the supporting materials had been generated by a large group of professional historians, school and district administrators, and sixty-five kindergarten through grade twelve teachers. The teachers had been an integral part of this process, and they represented what has been called the centrist position of kindergarten through grade twelve education. That is, these teachers represented neither the political right or political left views towards education, but the compromise between conservative and radical viewpoints. However, most of the critics had not bothered to read the standards in their entirety and/or used only the teaching examples as points with which to disagree. (See Appendix A: Myths and Realities.)

The attack from the right was a reflection of the changing emphasis in American society. After the reform movements of the 1960s and 1970s, America began to concentrate on the economy and big business. The rise of the home-schooling movement and the religious right in the 1980s and 1990s contributed to this trend towards conservatism.

The 1994 Congressional elections, just weeks after the Wall Street Journal article, brought a Republican majority to the House of Representatives led by Newt Gingrich. Hoping to stem a tide of bad publicity, Gary Nash went to Washington,
D.C. to plead the case of the history standards inside the beltway. After meeting
with various interest groups, Nash sent a stripped down version of the standards
minus the teaching examples to every member of Congress, along with a letter stating
that the NCHS would invite its critics to meet with representatives of the standards
committee in Washington to discuss the issues.

Nash met with a variety of interested parties at the Brookings Institute on
January 12, 1995. Among those around the table were authors of the standards,
including Gary Nash, Ross Dunn, Joyce Appleby, and Donald Woodruff.
Representatives of the critics included Albert Shanker, president of the American
Federation of Teachers; Diane Ravitch; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, a member of the
NCHS who criticized the standards after their publication; observers from the
Education Department; Democratic and Republican staffers from the House and
Senate; reporters from various publications; and the education director from the Pew
Charitable Trusts. Lynne Cheney had been invited, but sent her assistant, John Fonte,
in her place.

After considerable discussion, where all points of view were aired, Nash

... summarized the criticisms and indicated how the project coordinators
intended to proceed. He stressed that the meeting had been convened because
those who developed the standards regarded the endeavor as a continuing
process and that it was important to be a responsive to criticism of the
published standards as the project had been to reviews of the five drafts that
had been widely circulated and critiqued before publication. ... Finally, he
reminded the critics that revisions would certainly be made on the basis of
responsible criticism, but that they would have to be consonant with the
general structure and governing criteria of the original standards and must not
compromise the creative consensus that underlay the books.” 61
At the press conference immediately following the meeting, Fonte read a prepared statement which, he admitted when pressed, had been prepared prior to the meeting. This statement asserted “... the history guidelines were fatally flawed and that no progress had been made at the Brookings Institution meeting.” 62

Within days, it became apparent why Fonte’s statement had been prepared. On January 18, Republican Senator Slade Gorton of Washington introduced an amendment to the Unfunded Mandates Bill currently being debated in the Senate. As Nash explains,

It would, if adopted, have prohibited both the National Education Goals Panel and the National Education Standards and Improvement Council from certifying the National History Standards; denied the award of any federal money to the NCHS; stipulated that any national standards in history established under Goals 2000 not be based on standards developed by the NCHS; and specified that the recipient of any federal money for the development of standards should “have a decent respect for United States history’s roots in western civilization.” 63

After some discussion and several protests against this amendment, Democrats proposed a compromise measure. The resolution omitted the original stipulation barring federal funds to the NCHS and passed the Senate in a ninety-nine to one vote. Two weeks later, the Senate passed a resolution stripping any extraneous measures from the Unfunded Mandates Bill, but the damage to the national history standards had already been done.

The reaction of the NCHS was one of reconciliation and compromise. The commission re-examined the standards and issued a revised list in 1996. However, the stigma of liberalism stuck. Meanwhile, the states began to issue standards of their
own. Some of the state standards were based on the national standards, and some were focused on content objectives, but many were not based on either.

**The State Standards Movement**

A recent study of state history standards, done by David Warren Saxe Education, Pennsylvania State University) in 1998, appraised history standards in thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia. Using a variety of criteria, Saxe, Herman Belz (History, University of Maryland), Jeffrey Fouts (Education, Seattle Pacific University), Walter McDougall (History, University of Pennsylvania) and Jerry Mirel (Education, Northern Illinois University) found that, “Of the thirty-eight jurisdictions with pertinent standards that Dr. Saxe was able to obtain and evaluate, only five give appropriate attention to history in the social studies curriculum, and just four earn ‘honors’ grades for their handling of history—while nineteen receive failing marks.” In an updated edition two years later, Saxe found, the number of passing grades changed impressively and, consequently, the number of failing grades dropped. Only four states had earned A's and B's in 1998, but ten now deserve honors grades. Twenty-five states earned D's and F's in 1998, compared with twenty-four now. Although a troubling fifteen states still get failing marks, the country's overall gains in this subject are noteworthy. They demonstrate not only that it is possible to write history standards that explain to teachers, students, and parents in clear and accountable terms just what is to be taught and learned, but also that it's possible to improve upon the formula. Moreover, a number of states have shown that it's possible to write history standards with state and local resources rather than relying on the dictates of national organizations and special interest groups.
Saxe’s report in 2000 showed promise of improvement in terms of history standards, but the problem is far from resolved. “In history, rising scores on the Fordham evaluation reflect mounting rejection of standards promulgated by the National Council of the Social Studies as well as the troubled national history standards of a few years back. (History seems to be making a modest comeback as a subject in its own right, emerging from the murky stew called social studies).”

The NCSS Responds

In the meantime, in response to the national debate over the history standards, the NCSS revised its mission statement in 1994.

Social studies educators teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy. The mission of the National Council for the Social Studies is to provide leadership, service, and support for all social studies educators. On the surface, this statement appears to revert back to the emphasis on citizenship education. However, NCSS went further in their disciplinary standards for teachers.

The disciplinary standards are in history, geography, civics and government, economics, and psychology and are summarized in table one. Interestingly, the NCSS standards appear to reflect an interdisciplinary approach akin to that first definition of social studies in the 1920s. In his 2002 address to the national convention of NCSS, President Stephen Johnson went so far as to say, “Social studies is the discipline that encompasses all other disciplines. We are the math teacher when teaching economics, the English teacher when discussing historical details in literary works, and the science teacher when exploring and investigating in the fields of archaeology. Social
studies is not the fourth discipline in education. We are the glue that holds all disciplines together!” 68

As Gary Nash, one of the more prominent authors of the national history standards, reflected on the successes and failures of the 1994 history standards culture wars, concluded:

... the history standards tempest, whatever damage it did, had a silver lining. At all levels, history educators have recognized more clearly their common goals and how much they need one another to protect the gains, however insufficient, that the field had made since World War II. In constructing the standards, historians came to appreciate the deep commitment of social studies professionals to giving young Americans the skills of critical investigation, analysis, and judgment. And the social studies community came to understand better than before that historians are not “fact chasers” and that for a long time they have drawn liberally on all of the social sciences to shape and reshape their own discipline. 69

Nash’s statement appears to reflect some compromise in terms of the divisions between social studies and history educators. In the construction of the national standards, historians and social studies educators grew to a better understanding of the goals of both groups. However, when NCSS standards are closely examined, it appears that there is a distinct lack of specific content, as shown in table one.

**Table 1: Disciplinary Standards for Social Studies Teachers**

1. **History Learner Expectations**

   The study of history allows learners to understand their place in time and location. The knowledge base of historical content drawn from United States and world history provides the basis from which learners develop historical understanding and competence in ways of historical thinking. Historical thinking skills enable learners to evaluate evidence, develop
comparative and causal analyses, interpret the historical record, and construct sound
historical arguments and perspectives on which informed decisions in contemporary life can
be based. Historical understandings define what learners should know about the history of
their nation and of the world. These understandings are drawn from the record of human
aspirations, strivings, accomplishments, and failures in at least five spheres of human activity:
the social, political, scientific/technological, economic, and cultural
(philosophical/religious/aesthetic). They also provide learners the historical perspectives
necessary to analyze contemporary issues and problems confronting citizens today.

2. Geography Learner Expectations

The study of geography allows learners to develop an understanding of the spatial contexts of
people, places, and environments. It provides knowledge of Earth’s physical and human
systems and the interdependency of living things and physical environments. Studying
geography stimulates curiosity about the world and the world’s diverse inhabitants and places,
as well as about local, regional, and global issues. Geography allows learners to understand
and make decisions about issues at the global as well as the local level.

3. Civics and Government Learner Expectations

The goal of education in civics and government is informed, responsible participation in
political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of
American constitutional democracy. This effective and responsible participation requires the
acquisition of a body of knowledge and of intellectual and participatory skills. Effective and
responsible participation also is furthered by the development of certain dispositions or traits
of character that enhance the individual’s capacity to participate in the political process and
contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and improvement of society.

4. Economics Learner Expectations

The study of economics provides learners with basic information about how people attempt to
satisfy their wants and helps them employ logical reasoning in thinking about economic
issues. It enables them to understand the economic issues that affect them every day, the roles they play as consumers and producers, and the costs and benefits associated with their personal decisions as well as governmental practice.

5. Psychology Learner Expectations

The study of psychology and human behavior allows learners to understand major theories that have been proposed to describe human thinking, learning, memory, development, personality, and behavior.


The NCSS social studies curricula continues to place an emphasis on citizenship education and tends to view the social science disciplines as distinct entities, whereas academic historians use history as the umbrella for their analysis, which incorporates social science disciplines. The standards movement has placed a renewed emphasis on history, but the controversy over content and process, the place of history in the curriculum, and the type of teacher training necessary to accomplish the goals of the curricula remain unresolved.

The Culture Wars Today

So, where does this leave the state of history and social studies education today? One positive aspect of the culture wars is that it has encouraged and opened discussion between kindergarten through grade twelve teachers and post-secondary scholars. The OAH and AHA have active teaching divisions, which not only push for
more innovative teaching strategies at the college and university levels, but also actively seek involvement with kindergarten through grade twelve teachers at national conferences and through their respective publications, *The Magazine of History* and *The History Teacher*.

An example of the continuing debate regarding content versus process is articulated in this e-mail exchange by an AP US history teacher to the AP US history list-serve group.

Facts mean nothing without the ability to understand and use them. The study of history deals with two basic questions. What happened? and Why? The "what" of history is the easy part. Our textbooks are full of all that. It is the "why" of history that becomes crucial for a literate and competent society. A student made this point unmistakably clear to me many years ago when she said right in the middle of class. "Mr. [name deleted], I know “what” happened. What I don't understand is “why?” That comment completely changed the way I looked at teaching history.

And that, colleagues, is why I believe we endure this entire madness. So we can bring students to the place where they understand “why” things are the way they are in this crazy loony bin we call a nation. The “what” is vital but the “why” is indispensable. It's the only way which we can ascribe any value to the former. 70

Just as John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin all had differing versions of how the American Revolution was won, historians today must grapple with differing accounts of why the Cold War ended. The “whys” of history continue to evolve. Just as historians have changed their perspectives about the people involved in history, are educators changing their perspective about the goals of the history and social studies curricula? Do teachers view themselves teaching history from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint, or do they see history as one of the federation of the social sciences? An examination of current curricular theory and
how this might be influencing the history and social studies curricula today may shed some light on these issues.

**From Theory to Practice**

“A curriculum is part of an ongoing dialogue between people with differing beliefs about and commitments to education, and, in particular, different beliefs about what people should learn to do in school.” In examining current curricular theory, it is important to understand that the purpose of curricula is constantly in a state of flux. Part of this variance is due to ideological shifts and part of is due to changing ideas about how we learn.

How do we learn? If there were a simple answer to that eternal question, teaching students would be straightforward. However, there is no simple answer to that query, and cognitive and educational researchers still are searching for answers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, American education began to expand. This expansion was initiated with the hopes of creating a more educated workforce, able to cope with the demands of the Industrial Revolution. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, American educators are facing new challenges in the form of increasing inclusion and the performance of all children (“leave no child behind”). Thus, the questions remain: how do children learn, and what can educators do to improve each child’s success in school?

During the course of the twentieth century, educational reformers have taken a multitude of ideological stances in their quest to resolve the problems of the
educational system. From the outset, there has been no agreement as to what should be done with the curriculum of public education, nor has there been any common ground as to what its purpose should be. The only real constant during this period was the fact that the number of students enrolled in public education grew (the decline during World War II notwithstanding).

It was only natural that the idealism behind the progressive movement, with its grass-roots initiatives, would spill over into the educational realm. The problem is, like life, the purpose of American education keeps changing and shifting to reflect changing times and societal values. What may have been worthy as an educational goal at the turn of the twentieth century (engaging more students in the public education system and Americanizing immigrants) was no longer applicable during the Great Depression (where the goals of the reformers ranged from scrapping capitalism to vocational training in the manual arts). If there is not any single unifying purpose for education, how can there be a single answer to resolve the problems?

Current researchers are examining the role of social interaction in education and how it supports learning. This includes viewing learning as a process of making and enculturation into social practices. Others are examining how we think about our thinking, and ultimately ourselves as human beings, in an effort to transcend the limitations of an information-processing paradigm. Probably the most familiar learning theory is that advanced by Howard Gardner.

Howard Gardner was a young researcher under Bruner in the MACOS project. Gardner is famous today for his development of his theory of multiple intelligences. He posits that people have seven natural intelligences and that of these intelligences,
only two (logical and verbal or linguistic) are traditionally taught in school. Gardner’s seven primary forms of intelligence are linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinesthetic, intrapersonal (e.g., insight, metacognition), and interpersonal (e.g., social skills). He claims that by understanding the other five intelligences, teachers can devise new teaching strategies. Gardner also explores what he calls the three levels of learning: intuitive or naïve understanding; rote, ritualistic or conventional performance (like that of the traditional student); and finally the disciplinary or genuine understanding that comes from an expert. To demonstrate genuine understanding, students should be able to sufficiently grasp concepts, principles or skills so that they can apply them to new problems and situations.74

However, multiple intelligences as a source of curriculum in any subject have not undergone rigorous study yet. Gardner’s ideas are thought-provoking and have influenced the way in which intelligence is viewed. Rather than an innate attribute, intelligence is becoming viewed as a set of competencies which are formed through knowledge and experience.75

Others test learning theory through a more critical perspective. The works of Michael Apple, Michel Foucault, and Linda Darling-Hammond all take a more global perspective about the process of teaching and learning. Michael Apple first proposed that social studies had a hidden curriculum—that is, a curriculum that was not obvious or acknowledged by educators. This hidden curriculum did not mention, analyze, recognize, or reflect on social conflict—thus, students were encouraged to adjust to social rules, cooperate to promote social stability and peaceful interaction.76
This idea has led to an examination of curriculum in terms of class conflict and power struggles.

In short, to fully understand the process that is schooling, we must look *inside* the curriculum . . . to identify the relationship between the social division of labor and the social division of knowledge . . . . [C]urriculum knowledge is not a "given," but is the result of the social struggle embedded in the unequal distribution of wealth and power. Curricula can be usefully seen as an ideological justification of class relations. Moreover, curricula can be conceptualized in a narrow sense (i.e., classroom knowledge) or in a broad sense (i.e., the sum total of a student's exposure to a school's ideology).77

In addition to the hidden curriculum, George Posner (1992) identifies four other concurrent curricula to consider: the official or written curricula; the operational curricula, or what is actually taught; the null curricula, or what is not taught and why those subjects are ignored; and the extra curricula, which are planned exercises taught outside of the school subjects. Apple and Michel Foucault would argue that regardless of the type of curricula (i.e., hidden or operational or overt or null), it all boils down to who is in control and how the power is distributed.

To Michel Foucault, power is invasive: it is the dominating factor in who we are and how we live. In schools, this is translated to administrative power over students and teachers, and in the classroom it is disciplinary power of teachers over students. It is far more insidious than merely classroom management, however. Foucault's power encompasses those aspects of the hidden curriculum that are being transmitted to students without their knowledge or consent.

Where are teachers located with respect to these forms of power? It is, according to Foucault, a tautology to say that teachers are situated in the web of disciplinary power; as members of a disciplinary society, that goes without saying. However, it is significant to note that the power that they consciously exercise is sovereign, not disciplinary, in form; the power they wield is more susceptible to effective resistance than the power to which they are subject.78
This distinction between sovereign power and absolute power is indeed important. Whereas teachers and the curriculum are subject to state and local requirements in terms of content and testing, once the classroom door is shut, the teacher can still ignore whichever aspects of those requirements he or she chooses. This is the operational curriculum, and it is a key to understanding the social studies versus history debate. How teachers define their own work may reveal where they stand on these issues.

Teachers complain about teaching to the "test," when in fact, they can teach their subject matter in whatever way pleases them (and hopefully the students) with the underlying knowledge that taking the test will be but one aspect of the course they are teaching. Thus, the power and curriculum are no longer hidden, but openly acknowledged for what they are.

An Advanced Placement course has a national test at the end of it, which many students take. This test informs colleges and universities whether or not that student has completed college level work in high school. Many colleges and universities grant credit hours to students who perform well on AP exams. If a teacher spends all of his or her time preparing for that test, then yes, the test drives the curricula. But there are other ways to conquer the material and the test. How teachers resolve this dilemma between the official curriculum and the operational curriculum is the crux of this study.

Adherents of Foucault have a point about the trend towards national standards and testing. In terms of history curricula, this would mean moving away from a
diverse knowledge of the people and events of American history back to a more patriotic look at the “martyrs and myths” or the grand narrative. The problem with this change is that the historical paradigm has already shifted into a broader base of historical understanding, and it would be nearly impossible for teachers to forget what they have already learned. Besides, to take Foucault seriously means to give up any hope of free will for either teachers or students. Better, in my opinion, to acknowledge the demons inherent in any institutional setting and move forward to developing strong young minds who can discern their own version of truth.

Linda Darling-Hammond takes a far more positive outlook towards the future. Through small classes and well trained teachers, Darling-Hammond views the curriculum of the future in a positive light.

What we are really going to see happening . . . is the transformation of the curriculum from the passive process of dumping information from one person’s head into another person’s head (which as we now know is promptly forgotten at the moment when the test is over or when the occasion to learn it that way has expired), to a process in which kids are engaged in actively looking for their own answers, cooperatively working through problems, accessing information, synthesizing and analyzing it, present their hypotheses, testing them and so on. We do know that that kind of learning experience leads to more sustained, powerful learning that generalizes to other situations. What we have to do is both enable teachers to work in that way with students, and to demonstrate what they have done with assessments that actually capture and look for that kind of powerful thinking.79

Darling-Hammond manages to take Dewey’s child-centered curriculum, Bruner’s constructivist spiral curriculum, and Gardner’s idea that there is more than one way to learn things and delivers it in one package. One of the keys to this transformation of American education, according to Darling-Hammond, is the training of teachers. With more rigorous training and consistent national
accreditation standards (along with a better pay scale), teachers would be ready and able to implement various strategies within their content fields. At this point in time, the qualifications of teachers is more or less a hit or miss proposition, with many teaching outside of their field of study. Should teachers be trained in pedagogy with an emphasis on the social sciences or should they be inculcated in history with an accent on pedagogy?

Even at the post-secondary level, where qualifications are more rigorous, Janet Donald points out,

Teachers need to be concerned with understanding what learners think and how they arrive at their understanding, than how to foster understanding through discussion and collaboration. The underlying principle is that knowledge is what is shared in discourse in a textual community. Bruner suggests that teachers need to make students more aware of their own thought processes and how they go about learning and thinking.80

Thus, as teachers help students learn how they learn, the material becomes embedded in their memories. In terms of the teacher education debate, this would appear to agree with Darling-Hammond’s accent on the equal roles of pedagogy and content.

During the 1970s many people, like Matthew Downey, were calling for more teacher training in content areas and more use of primary documents. Thinking critically, analyzing content, and evaluating documents, generalizing, synthesizing, and looking for causality and continuity as well as change, were aspects of the history curriculum that needed emphasis.81 So where does this leave us as educators?

The social studies and history curricula are on the verge of change. The national standards movement has initiated change about the specific content and
process of student learning. Through involving students in high-stakes testing in specific content areas, this could be the beginning of a dark episode in American education in a Foucaultian sense. On the other hand, if educators build upon the foundation of Dewey, Bruner, Foucault and Darling-Hammond, perhaps the future for students and teachers could be bright indeed. In *What Matters Most: A Competent Teacher for Every Child*, Darling-Hammond ends her report with an imaginary scenario where a teacher goes to college, where he or she is accepted in the highly selective teacher education program. After years of study, internship, mentoring and student teaching, this teacher is ready to face her own classroom and students, knowing that the process of education is never ending for either the teacher or the student. Unless we as educators have the will to try new ideas, require new standards, and learn from the past, the state of American education will never change.

The Research Questions

Many educators have devised strategies to promote higher thinking skills and integrated curriculum materials for students and teachers nationwide. Many departments of education are working on state performance and content standards. One of the many organizations working on these issues is the College Board, whose main emphasis in the past has been the Advanced Placement (AP) program.

The College Board developed the AP program during the 1950s in response to the Kenyon Plan and a study by three universities and three secondary schools that produced the report entitled, *General Education in the School and College* (1952).
"Both publications strongly encouraged offering college-level courses in high school."\textsuperscript{82} The first AP examinations were given in the spring of 1956 in mathematics, science, and English. The AP program has grown by leaps and bounds in the ensuing forty-six years. In 2002, a total of 1,585,516 exams were taken by 937,951 students from 13,680 secondary schools in thirty-three college-level courses in nineteen disciplines.\textsuperscript{83}

In addition to its AP program, the College Board is developing a pre-AP program, called vertical teams, in seven disciplines. The teams have teachers from grades six through twelve working together not only to define content curriculum goals but also to define strategies across the grade levels. These pedagogical concerns are centered on the development of critical thinking skills, writing skills, improving student comprehension of both primary and secondary sources, and synthesizing information. "Pre-AP is a set of content-specific strategies to: build rigorous curricula; promote access to AP for all students; introduce skills, concepts and assessment methods to prepare students for success when they take AP and other challenging courses; and strengthen curriculum and increase the academic challenge for all students."\textsuperscript{84}

The College Board began implementing pre-AP training with its Building Success program in the 1990s. Building Success explored teaching strategies designed to help students acquire analytical thinking and communication skills necessary for success in Advanced Placement courses in English and social studies.\textsuperscript{1} With the advent of vertical team training in mathematics and English, emphasizing specific curricular development in these disciplines, it was only a matter of time and
development before the vertical teams social studies was created. Although the terms social studies is used in prefacing vertical teams, the program does encompass history as well as other disciplines which are offered at the AP level.

The group who worked on the development of vertical teams social studies (VTSS) included many AP US history teachers and readers of the AP US history exam which occurs every June. After the students take the national exam in May, college and secondary educators from around the country gather to set rubrics by which the essays are scored and read the essays. Over the course of a week, hundreds of teachers read thousands of essays. I have participated in these readings of the AP US history exam since 1987, and am currently serving as a table leader, which means that I help the readers lock into the rubrics over the span of the reading.

During the course of the readings from 2000 through 2002, I discussed the purpose of VTSS with three of the developers of the program (George Henry, Eric Rothschild, and Tracey Wilson) and what that curricula hoped to accomplish. They and other developers of VTSS believe that more students could reap the benefits of participation in AP courses if they were introduced earlier to the essential academic skills and habits of mind necessary for success in the AP program. Vertical teams social studies responds to this belief through the use of content-specific strategies. Through the use of these strategies, VTSS teachers would raise the bar intellectually for all of their students, promoting higher level analytical and communication skills. By promoting frequent communication between teachers of students in different grade levels about the content, standards and strategies employed in their study of social studies, VTSS seeks to develop a continuum of learning between classes and
across grade levels. This provides a new version of Bruner’s spiral curriculum, where essential strategies and skills are developed in increasingly sophisticated ways as the students mature.

As I discussed VTSS with my AP US history reading colleagues, it occurred to me that the content specific strategies that they were promoting in VTSS might be another way of answering my research questions. VTSS could be the vehicle by which I could discover the extent to which teachers of social studies are teaching history or social studies or some combination of the two.

I took the VTSS training in August of 2000 and found it to be a reinforcement of what I did in my AP US history course, which I have taught since 1980. It has been my experience that AP US history and the subsequent national exam encourage teachers to become masters of the content of US history. In the course of mastering this material, teachers devise strategies to teach content to their students, including how to analyze primary documents and synthesize various viewpoints regarding interpretations of history.

This connection between strategies and content led me to the hypothesis that the VTSS training might influence the operational curriculum in the classroom. If teachers were receiving specific strategies based on content in history, they might incorporate that content straight into their day-to-day curricula. My purpose in focusing on Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) was to deconstruct the strategies being practiced by the VTSS nation-wide to discern the extent to which history or social studies curricula or a combination of the two are evolving at the secondary level.
The sample of teachers who attended VTSS workshops will provide the vehicle by which the following questions can be raised. How do the teachers perceive themselves: as history or social studies professionals? What are they teaching in their classrooms? Have the content wars resulted in a more history-centered curriculum? Has social studies changed to encompass a new focus on history? Or are both curricula still in flux? Did the content presented in the workshop find its way into individual classrooms? Did this affect the manner in which the teachers viewed their emphasis on content in the classroom? To what extent did communication increase between grade levels and how did these affect curricular decisions?

As vertical teams in social studies are a recent phenomenon, their effectiveness cannot be measured at this time. However, the tools that the teachers implement in their classrooms can be used to help define where the teachers view themselves in the history and social studies continuum at this moment in time. Questions were asked regarding the types of pedagogical tools that the teachers used, and how the teachers viewed their own professional growth over the course of their careers. The teachers were also asked to comment on how the standards movement has affected their curricular decisions and how they have responded to these new challenges. Finally, the teachers were asked to define their views of history and social studies curricula and where they viewed themselves in terms of those definitions. The answers to these questions may suggest the way to whether or not the paradigms of history and social studies curricula are changing or merely repeating past trends as teachers meet the challenges of history and social studies in the twenty-first century.
CHAPTER 3:

METHODS

Chapter two demonstrates that the evolution of history and social studies curricula in the twentieth century has led to some interesting questions for educators in the twenty-first century. History teachers must address the questions brought out by the culture wars in terms of whose history is being taught. Social studies teachers are still grappling with a solid definition of their field and its central purpose. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the participating teachers’ operational curriculum reflected both history or social studies curricula; and the pedagogy they utilized to implement their curricula. In other words, what is going on in classrooms in terms of history and social studies curricula and to what extent does this reflect recent scholarship? The vehicle for this study was the participation of teachers in vertical teams social studies.

This study utilized primarily qualitative methodologies. My goal was to survey as many teachers who were participating in Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) as possible. I hypothesized that because the VTSS emphasizes communication between grade levels and offers concrete, content-oriented examples of how to teach in various subject areas, that the teachers, through their use of this vehicle of vertical teams, would naturally come to define their curricular goals and objectives in terms of either history or social studies curricula.
The manner in which teachers were initially contacted was through a survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather data about the types of schools the teachers represented, the educational attainment of the teachers, their teaching load, their participation in VTSS and its influence on them, their pedagogy, and their own definitions of history and social studies and where they placed themselves on that continuum. The first few questions dealt with quantitative data about the teachers and their schools. The other questions were more open-ended and are summarized in table two. (A complete survey is in Appendix B.)

Table 2

Summary of Survey Questions

1. Is your department implementing the VTSS approach? If so, how long has your department been doing this?

2. What do you like about the VTSS approach? What are its strengths? What did you find most useful and why? What do you dislike about the VTSS approach? What are its limitations?

3. Please identify which national organizations (NCSS, AHA, etc.) you belong to.

4. How would you describe your teaching style? Please list some of the strategies you employ in your teaching.

5. If your school/district employs standards-based testing, how has this affected your teaching?

6. Do you view yourself as a history or social studies teacher? Please explain.
The purpose of the quantitative questions was to determine whether or not the teachers responding to the survey had any characteristics in common. Were they public school teachers from large urban schools or private school teachers from small suburban schools? If any comparisons were to be made, it would be prudent to see if these teachers had anything in common in terms of their schools, their experience, their educational attainment and the types of classes they taught.

The open-ended questions were meant to delve into the teachers' opinions about what they are doing in their own classrooms (their pedagogy and how they implement it), how state standards movements are affecting them in terms of their day-to-day curricula, and how they view the fields of history and social studies and where they place themselves within those opinions. Many states now routinely require certain standards-based content objectives to be mastered prior to graduation from high school. I wanted to gauge the extent to which the standards requirements affected the teachers' perception of their position in the history versus social studies debate.

The survey was distributed in November of 2002, and responses were received from November of 2002 through January of 2003. The survey generated a great deal of rich data from which I was able to generate a few conclusions regarding this sample's view of the history and social studies debate. Additionally, I asked the teachers if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, either on the phone or via e-mail.
The follow-up interviews took place in February of 2003. The questions were of an open-ended nature, trying to elicit honest opinions from the teachers interviewed. Half of the interview sample was contacted by e-mail and the rest were interviewed by telephone. The telephone interviews were taped with the knowledge and consent of the teachers involved. The questions centered on how the teachers had changed their pedagogy over the course of their careers, how this evolution had influenced how they viewed the history and social studies debate, the extent to which the standards movement had influenced their teaching, the influence of the VTSS training on their teaching, how they defined history and social studies curricula today, and the curricula of their department in terms of courses offered (see Appendix C: Interview Transcripts). Further explication of these questions are explored in chapter four.

Methodological Framework

According to Denzin and Lincoln, there are two major approaches to setting up an educational study: the qualitative method and the quantitative method.

Qualitative research, as a set of interpretive practices, privileges no single methodology over any other. As a site of discussion, or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory, or paradigm, that is distinctly its own. . . . Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival, and phonemic analysis, even statistics. They also draw upon and utilize the approaches, methods, techniques of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research, and participant observation, among others.¹
In terms of using qualitative analysis to examine learning, teaching and the quality of curriculum, a strong point is its flexibility and the use of these methods over a period of time. Quantitative methods usually only provide one look at the factors influencing types of behavior, and use mathematical and statistical models to predict future outcomes. Because qualitative methods tend to examine behavior and performance over a longer period of time through a number of strategies, its outcome can be said to be more accurate for the people involved in the study. Qualitative methodology makes no claims about the predictive power of case studies, but rather emphasizes the things that can be observed in particular situations over time.

Just as there are strengths and limitations to the qualitative model of assessment, there are strengths and limitations to quantitative models as well.

Formal measurement models allow one to draw meaning from quantities of data far more vast than a person can grasp at once and to express the degree of uncertainty associated with one’s conclusions. In other words, a measurement model is a framework for communicating with others how the evidence in observations can be used to inform the inferences one wants to draw about learner characteristics that are embodied in the construct variables. 2

Initially, I had thought that this study would generate both qualitative and quantitative data, if a large number of teachers throughout the nation responded to the survey and follow-up questions. However, as the sample remained very small, the qualitative aspects of it were emphasized as a means by which questions for further research could eventually be explored.
Overview of the Study

Since the inception of VTSS in 1999, numerous workshops have been held throughout the United States to train teachers in the techniques of VTSS. The College Board sponsors these workshops, and many teachers have gone to these workshops as part of their school district’s promotion of professional development. Besides the goal of better communication between various grade levels, a primary purpose of VTSS is to promote greater participation by students in the Advanced Placement program, which offers national exams in United States history, world history, modern European history, geography, US government and comparative politics, and micro and macroeconomics.

VTSS is grounded in the belief that if students are trained in critical thinking skills—how to read and interpret primary sources, how to ask interpretive and global questions, and how to write analytical essays—more students will rise to the challenge of AP courses their junior or senior year, thus promoting greater equity in the AP program. The College Board promotes VTSS as a voluntary cooperative effort of teachers across grade levels; none of the teachers who responded to my survey said that their school or district had mandated their participation in VTSS.

The national debate about history and social studies cannot be simply quantified, nor can it be completely understood through one research study. My sample provides a glimpse of what a selected group of teachers say that they are doing in their classrooms, which is quite different from the quantifiable aspects of
student performance on multiple choice exams, or the issuance of state content standards in various areas. In order to construct what is going on in individual classrooms, I set up the study to be as non-threatening as possible for the teachers involved. In addition to securing informed consent, based on standards set up by the University of Hawai‘i’s Committee on Human Studies, I also made sure that the teachers could not be identified by name, school, or district. The only identifying characteristics I have on the individuals who participated in this study is the city and state from which they responded, and the level and type of school they are teaching in (e.g., public urban high school in Santa Ana, California). In my follow up e-mail and telephone interviews, I did not ask for individual names. Under these conditions of anonymity, the teachers were free to express their opinions without fear of identification by their school or their peers. This study does not reflect the opinions or position of the College Board and is my own work.

Sampling and Participant Selection

Through an agreement with the College Board, the survey was mailed to 378 teachers who had taken the VTSS workshop in 2000–2002. I sent the College Board in New York the survey along with a cover letter and letter of release for participants in a human subjects study. The College Board also added a cover letter of its own explaining that I would not see individual names and addresses as the College Board generated this information and I did not have access to it. From this mailing, I
received forty responses. The general characteristics of the teachers who responded to the survey and their schools are shown in tables three and four.

Table 3
School Characteristics

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Note: a. CORE: Social Studies and Language Arts

Table 4
Teacher Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>State Represented</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 or less</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B.A.+36, M.A., M.Ed.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M.A.+36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do these numbers tell us about this sample? The majority of the teachers came from public schools. They were almost evenly divided between middle/junior high and high school teachers. Most of the teachers were from California (forty-two percent), and there is fairly good geographic diversity in the West, Midwestern and New England states. There were no responses from states included in the Middle States, Southern, and Southwestern Regional Offices. The vast majority of teachers surveyed teach in public schools, with a fairly even division between urban and suburban areas, as well as middle/junior high schools and high schools. A strong majority of the teachers have more than ten years of experience, with the largest number (sixteen, or forty percent) coming from those with more than twenty years of experience in the classroom. This is also reflected in their level of education, with all but four teachers holding a higher degree, or working towards one. Most of the teachers (sixty percent) say that they are teaching social studies.

Interestingly, although many of the teachers surveyed claim they are social studies teachers, they are teaching more history (fifty-nine percent) than social studies (thirty-two percent), according to the names of the courses they are teaching, as shown in tables five and six. While the teachers are teaching history courses, less than half of them have a formal background in the academic study of history. However, forty percent of the teachers do either have a straight history major, or a combination of history and education majors as their academic training, which is higher than the national percentage. "In 1998, only thirty-eight percent of public school teachers had majored in any academic field of study when they were undergraduates or graduate
students. . .”3 One of the major criticisms of teacher training programs across the country is that teachers lack formal training in their content areas. This sample of teachers does have content area background in addition to teacher education training. One reason for this may be the number of Advanced Placement courses taught (fifteen of fifty-nine or twenty-five percent). This group of teachers is unusual in that there are so many who teach AP courses, and so many who have additional training in the subject areas that they teach. This may not be typical of the nation as a whole, as demonstrated by previous studies by Ravitch and the Bradley Commission.4 Teachers who have students taking a national exam in a content area soon find themselves working to increase their own knowledge in that content area. This was my experience as an AP US history teacher. In a recent discussion about teaching AP on the AP US history list-serve, a teacher commented, “Great students (mostly) and high expectations (self-imposed!) have made me become a better teacher.”5
### Table 5

Teacher College Majors and Classes Taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher College Major</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Classes Taught</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History/Educationb</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>US historyc</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>World historyc</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Governmentc</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Economicsc</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Human History Since 1945</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science/Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6th Grade Social Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>American Indian History and Culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GT Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AP European History</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 40 | 59

**Notes:** a. Some teachers have more than one preparation, so N>40. b. These teachers have a B.A. in history with their M.A. in education, or vice-versa. c. Including AP classes.
Table 6

Summary: Table 5 Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Educational Background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Type of Courses Taught</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: a. Some teachers have more than one preparation, so N>40.*

The smaller sample of fourteen teachers who responded to my request for either an e-mail or telephone interview had the following general characteristics. The interview group shared many similarities with the whole survey sample. They are well educated with all but one teacher having credits beyond the BA. They are diverse in terms of their experience in the classroom, with the largest number of teachers representing twenty-one to thirty-five years of experience, and they are evenly divided between high school and middle/junior high school. It was important to make sure both sides of the vertical teams were represented (high school and middle school), so that any philosophical differences would emerge. Interestingly, the middle/junior high school teachers did not differ significantly in their opinions from
their high school counterparts. Most of the teachers come from California, and most have a college major in the field that they are teaching. Their teaching load represents a diversity of subject areas, and while most teachers identify themselves as belonging to a social studies department, many of them do teach history courses. The above is shown in tables seven through ten.

Table 7
School Characteristics in Interview Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Level of School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Department Name</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
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<td>Middle School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Junior High</td>
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<td>Social Science</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CORE\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note:} a. CORE: Social Studies and History.
### Table 8

Teacher Characteristics in Interview Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>State Represented</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B.A.+36, M.A., M.Ed.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M.A.+36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9

Teacher Major and Classes Taught in Interview Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Major</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Classes Taught&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education/History&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>US history&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Psychology&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>World History&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>AP Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Some teachers have more than one preparation, so N>14. <sup>b</sup> These teachers have a B.A. in history with their M.A. in education, or vice-versa. <sup>c</sup> Including AP classes.
Table 10

Summary: Table 9 Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Educational Background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Type of Course Taught&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Some teachers have more than one preparation, so N>14.

Historically, the history and social studies curricular divide centers around the study of citizenship education, current events, and the traditional canon of history. However, since the culture wars of the 1990s, these definitions have become much more tenuous. Do teachers actually recognize where they stand on the culture wars? Are they following the state content standards? Where do those standards place them? As the evolution of history and social studies curricula continues, can classroom teachers influence where this development goes? Once the door to any classroom is shut, the teacher is free to develop lessons that fit with his or her personality. Some teachers follow state guidelines religiously, others do not. What happens in classrooms when change is theoretically taking place?
The Interviews: Case Studies

One of the interesting characteristics of the teachers who were interviewed is that they do not fit the stereotype of the teacher who lacks experience or is ill-prepared for his or her work in the content areas (see table 8). A further examination of the interviews, in a case-by-case manner may reveal how this group of teachers came to define their views on history and social studies curricula. The teachers were ultimately self-selected, and thus their willingness to do these follow-up interviews separates them from the rest of the survey group. Perhaps they felt as competent professionals that they could help with this research. However, as they are experienced teachers, they may have a different perspective on the curricular debate than this study addressed.

I am organizing the interviews by middle/junior high school teachers first, then the high school teachers to see if there is any substantial difference between teachers of the two different school-age students. I will compare first the teachers within each group, and then compare the two groups to see if there are any differences in perspectives towards the history and social studies curricula.

Middle/Junior High School Teachers

The first middle school teacher responded to the follow-up interview questions via e-mail on December 14, 2002 from Oakland, California. “Mary” (all
names are pseudonyms) has been teaching for twelve years and has thirty-six hours past her B.A. Her degree is in home economics and English and she teaches US history and language arts to eighth grade students. Mary teaches in a suburban public middle school that has approximately 900 students.

Mary attended the VTSS training last spring through an invitation from the high school into which her school’s students matriculate. Mary does not belong to any professional organizations but did attend the NCSS conference two years ago. She utilizes a number of different techniques to guide her students, including small group focused discussion, lecture with guided notes, computer simulations, and role-playing. Mary’s school does not have any standards-based testing but she has to show in her lesson plans how she has covered each standard, and she is not happy about the extra time it takes her to accomplish this as it reduces the time she can spend planning simulation and debate activities. Mary views herself as a social studies teacher in that she includes many disciplines (economics, culture, sociology, political science, geography and history) in her teaching.

Mary believes that her teaching style has evolved to encompass a greater variety of strategies. She uses reverse lesson planning to keep her focus on the lesson goal. For example, she will focus on a standard and plan her lesson around the accomplishment of that standard. She uses the textbook as a reference rather than reading or assigning each chapter. She uses these strategies to focus on the specifics of history. She comments,
nothing happens in isolation; everything builds on the foundation of the past (so it’s best to know your roots) and affects far more than the immediate present (so think before you act). It’s sometimes (!) difficult to get 13 & 14 year olds to thing beyond memorizing facts for a test, but I feel like I’m taking some successful steps in that direction.” While she initially was frightened by the state standards, she is now more annoyed than frightened while acknowledging the standards as, “giving me more confidence that I am covering truly essential concepts . . . and allowed me a sense of freedom. Mary was the only one from her school to attend the VTSS training. She thinks that the middle school will meet with the high school in the spring to discuss what they want to do regarding implementation of vertical teams. Mary liked the VTSS workshop but cannot remember any specific strategies that she is using from the workshop. However, she says that she is probably using some techniques from her VTSS training in her teaching.

While Mary is teaching out of her field to some extent—US history is not exactly part of a home economics and English background—she does use terms which identify her as squarely as a social studies teacher in terms of the history and social studies curricular debate. Mary teaches history, but likes to connect the past to the present. She gave the example of teaching the Declaration of Independence and Constitution and relating the “impact these documents have had on succeeding generations and other countries, [connecting] that with the ripple effect of current personal and world decisions.” This fits in well with the NCSS emphasis on current events, and the idea that history is a single discipline in the federation of social sciences.
The next middle school teacher responded via e-mail on December 17, 2002 from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. “Jane” has been teaching for fifteen years in an urban public middle school with an enrollment of 335 students. She has a MEd in social science and sociology. She teaches US history and attended the VTSS training in 2001. Jane’s school is implementing the VTSS team approach and she likes the strategies. She comments that, “Ironically, our high school teachers found it to be a waste of their time! They really are non-team players.” Jane belongs to four different national organizations. She employs numerous pedagogical techniques in her classroom, including hands-on activities, simulations, political cartoons, primary source documents, and research-based assignments. While Jane’s state has had standards-based testing for six years or so, she has not found that this has had any great effect on her teaching.

Jane views herself as a social studies teacher because she sees the disciplines as distinct, “I teach geography, history, economics, political science and culture of the US.” Jane’s teaching has evolved to encompass big concept understanding more than simple memorization of the facts. The standards movement has influenced her teaching significantly as she breaks up her lessons into “historical, geographic, economic, cultural and political implications of a historical event.” Jane was the only one in her school to receive VTSS training and it has not been discussed any further in terms of implementation. She does say that she strives to build rigor (using primary sources and discussion techniques) into her daily lesson’s objectives.
While Jane has a social science background, she does teach history. Jane defines herself as a social studies teacher, but uses the multi-disciplinary approach to teaching history. Both Mary and Jane teach history, but from different points of view. Mary approaches history from a social studies point of view; she tries to relate everything to the present and views history as a distinct discipline. Conversely, Jane uses a multi-disciplinary approach to the teaching of history. Jane has more course work in history, and her university training may be reflected in this approach; Mary appears to have had few, if any, history courses as part of her academic preparation for teaching. Thus, the reason for their different perspectives regarding history and social studies curricula may be a reflection of their academic training.

The next junior high school teacher is from Santa Ana, California and was interviewed by telephone on February 17, 2003. “Amy” has been teaching for ten years in a suburban public school that enrolls 1700 students. She has thirty-six credits beyond her MA in behavior science and history. Amy teaches US history, world history (ancient civilizations) and a leadership course. She was invited by her principal to attend the VTSS training in June of 2002, and as department head, Amy has implemented the team approach in her department this year. The rest of the department went to the training in November of 2002. Amy enjoys the VTSS approach because the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade teachers are all working together, and sharing ideas is great. She finds the VTSS strategies useful in that these strategies help her “teach to the standards of my grade level as well as high school needs.”12
Amy belongs to three national organizations, and uses a variety of pedagogical techniques in her classroom, including lecture/discussion, small group projects, and "anything that keeps my students interested."\textsuperscript{13} She is affected by the standards, and finds them to be a "bear." However, she says she does cover them all.

Amy views herself as a social studies teacher, as "I teach all areas of history—social concepts, morals, ideas and the reasons behind events then and how they related now."\textsuperscript{14} In our interview, she reiterated how important the standards are, and how focused her school is about implementing them. Amy thinks that critical thinking skills are the key component for her students, and responded to the question about her evolution in teaching completely around what she has been doing since implementing the vertical teams approach this year. Amy is meeting with other US history teachers in grades five and eleven once a month to make sure that they can support each other's students and make them ready for the next level. All of these teachers are incorporating geography, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills at each grade level as part of their teaching. Amy thinks that a history base is paramount to the curriculum, and that history has been "like the ugly step-sister, always on the outside looking in."\textsuperscript{15} Amy's school offers history for grades six (origins of the world through the decline of Rome), grade seven (Middle Ages through New World exploration), and grade eight (American history from exploration through Reconstruction).

Amy defines herself as a social studies teacher, but defines her courses from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint that emphasizes history. She thinks that history needs to
be more important in the curriculum, and is working hard to make sure that the
coordination that VTSS emphasizes is happening with her counterparts in grades five
and eleven in US history. Amy's training is in history and behavioral science, so she
could define herself in terms of the federation of social science disciplines, but I see
her definition of her work as largely inter-disciplinary with a focus on history. Thus
far, it appears, as with Mary and Jane, that the more academic preparation one has in
history, the more likely one is to incorporate a multi-disciplinary view towards the
teaching of history, rather than viewing it as one more subject in the federation of
social science disciplines.

The next middle school teacher also hails from Santa Ana, California and
responded by e-mail on February 23, 2003. “Sue” teaches in an urban public school
with an unknown number of students (she left this blank). Sue has been teaching for
five years, and has a BA plus thirty-six hours in social science. Sue teaches US
history and US history honors courses and took the VTSS training in June, 2002. Her
school is not implementing the vertical teams concept. Sue does not belong to any
professional organizations. Sue emphasizes “group/cooperative work, pair and share,
and experiential teaching because of the low language skills of many of my
students.”16 She says that the social studies standards test is to be implemented in her
school this year, and that she will review the sixth and seventh grade curriculum with
her eighth graders for a week or two prior to the testing. Sue defines herself as a
social studies teacher because, “I teach from a basis of cultural universals to include
history as one component.”17
Although Sue has only been teaching for five years, she thinks that she spends less time planning her lessons than she did formerly. She thinks that this has affected her views towards social studies and history in that she has “really moved from a single topic teacher, to concentrating on overall themes of history and seeing how a themes like independence and freedom [are woven] through [the] standards.”18 The standards are affecting her tremendously as she feels “great pressure” to identify the specific standard she is addressing in each lesson plan, as well as English as a second language standard, to make the state standards more accessible to the English learners in her school. Sue thinks that VTSS has had little effect on her curriculum and that,

VTSS has grand intention, but I think is will be another movement that dies a timely death. Our district has devoted much time and effort to it, but it requires much more of a vision, and buy in, to get it to go anywhere. . . . I think teachers are not willing to have parameters of what they teach placed around them and this sets another set of boundaries they are not willing to address until required (such as with standards).19

Sue was not sure what I meant by definitions of history and social studies and commented that the content for her school’s courses has not changed in the five years she has been there, and that they only teach social studies at each grade level.

Sue has the least amount of teaching experience of the teachers interviewed thus far, but does share a social science background with Amy and Jane. Sue teaches history, but she sees this as a separate discipline like Mary does, rather than as a multi-disciplinary subject as Amy and Jane do. Perhaps because of her limited experience, her social science background, and the nomenclature used by her school
(social studies is the target for each grade level), Sue appears to be squarely on the social studies side of the curricular debate regarding what she is teaching.

The next middle school teacher is also from Santa Ana, California and was interviewed on February 23, 2003 via the telephone. "Liz" has been teaching for twenty-four years and is currently working in an urban public school that has 1600 students. Liz has a BA plus thirty-six hours in linguistics and teaches sixth grade social studies and AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination), which is designed to help middle level students achieve more in school by working on their reading, writing, and study skills.

Liz took the VTSS training in June of 2002, and her school is implementing the vertical teams approach to the extent that teachers are willing to participate in it. She meets with the high school teachers once a month, and reports what has been discussed back to her department. Some, but not all, of the people in her department are participating, and the school has made participation voluntary. Liz likes the vertical teams approach because it "helps keep the teachers focused on standards and expectations of high grades. It also creates an awareness of the difficulties faced at all grade levels."20

Liz belongs to three state and national professional organizations and views her teaching style as eclectic. She uses a variety of teaching strategies, including structured note-taking, directed teaching, and project-based learning. Her school is implementing state standards, and she fine-tunes her lessons to align them more
closely to the standards. Liz views herself as a social studies teacher as she defines
social studies as interdisciplinary.

Liz began her teaching career as an English teacher, and she emphasizes
writing in all of her classes. She holds a supplemental certification to teach social
studies. She thinks that the curriculum she teaches is a “vehicle for teaching kids the
necessary critical thinking skills and writing skills that they need for further academic
success. And success in their careers later on.”21 When asked about how the
definitions of history and social studies are changing, Liz responded,

I’ve never really thought too much about it. But, you know, history is more
about what has happened, social studies is more the integration of what’s
happened and how it’s been affected by other factors, such as culture, not just
events—culture, geography, and these other factors that affect history, but
aren’t necessarily the story itself.22

Liz’s school offers world history in sixth and seventh grades and US history in
eighth grade; she teaches early man to the rise of Rome to her sixth graders. Although
Liz does not have an academic background in history, she is teaching it. She views
herself as a social studies teacher, but her definition of social studies is very
interesting. She has taken the idea of social studies as a federation of disciplines and
has made this definition interdisciplinary. She views history as a distinct subject, and
also uses other disciplines to get her point across.

Liz seems to demonstrate, like Mary and Sue do, that the less academic
preparation a teacher has in the subject area she or he is teaching, the more likely the
teacher will define the teaching of history in terms of social studies and the federation
of the social sciences. Although all of these teachers are teaching history, their view of what they are teaching is quite varied.

The next middle school teacher comes from Indianapolis, Indiana, where she has been teaching for seventeen years. “Lynn” was interviewed on February 17, 2003, via telephone. Lynn teaches in a suburban public middle school that has an enrollment of approximately 1400 students. Lynn has a MA in social studies and teaches American history and a historical novels course, which is an elective. Lynn took the vertical teams training in November of 2001 at the invitation of the high school department chair, who was interested in finding middle school teachers to work with in implementing the vertical teams approach. Thus far, her school is not participating in VTSS with the high school. However, meetings are scheduled with some of the high school teachers this coming summer (2003) to explore the possibility of implementing the vertical teams approach.

Lynn belongs to one national professional organization (NCSS) and describes her teaching style as eclectic. Her strategies include direction instruction, group work, case studies, simulations, problem-based learning, and research-based projects. Lynn’s school is implementing state standards and this has greatly influenced her teaching.

We have . . . seven standards with about fifty-six benchmarks. So, it makes it a little bit more focused, and we just can’t teach things that are not on the standards any longer. So it has—on the one hand, it has focus us on a particular set of things, so we can’t do just something that we think we want to do just for fun. But on the other hand, with fifty-six benchmarks and seven standards, when do [you] have the time to do all of that? So, it’s posed some other problems. 23
Lynn views herself as a history teacher, explaining, "[e]ven though I teach geography, economics, civics, sociology, etc., it is within the context of American history." Lynn says that her teaching style has become more attuned to using inquiry strategies in the last year or so, and she has had some research-based inquiry activities recently published by an educational company. Lynn has examined the middle school social studies standards in terms of the high school standards on her own, and has conveyed to other teachers in her department where there is alignment between the two sets of standards, and what needs to be emphasized.

Lynn thinks that the goal of social studies is to make students good citizens, but she does not think that it has been successful in doing that. In her school the curriculum centers on geography and world history in the sixth and seventh grades, and US history in the eighth grade. Although Lynn describes herself as a history teacher, and defines history as a multi-disciplinary approach, she sees civics as a major goal of social studies education. However, it is difficult to ascertain how important she views civics to be in the curriculum, because her comments were limited to explaining that students are not becoming good citizens because the voter turnout is lower and lower every election year. Lynn could well define herself as a social studies teacher, given her academic background, but I view her statements as coming more from the multi-disciplinary approach to history rather than the federation of social sciences in social studies, even given her comments about citizenship education.
Lynn fits in well with Jane and Amy, in that her background in social studies (which would have to include some history courses beyond her BA) has given her a slightly different perspective than Sue, Mary or Liz. Although all of these teachers are teaching history courses, their perspectives towards what they are teaching varies widely.

The final middle school teacher hails from Industry, California where he has been teaching for thirty-five years. “Joe” teaches in an urban public junior high school which has an enrollment of 1350 students. I interviewed Joe by telephone on February 23, 2003. Joe possesses a MA plus thirty-six hours, but he did not wish to share what his major was. He teaches US history to eighth graders and attended a VTSS workshop in 2001. His school has been implementing vertical teams each year since then, and he enjoys the contacts that he has made with the high school teachers.

Joe does not belong to any national or state professional organizations, and he describes his teaching style as “authentic assessment and writing in the content area.” His school will be tested using the state standards for the first time this year and he does not like this, explaining, “It has impeded my teaching style!” He describes himself as a “social science teacher. I take advantage of teachable moments as they come up.”

In our interview, Joe was reluctant to answer questions, but was kind enough to listen to my questions. He says that his style has not changed over the course of his long career, and that the standards-based testing being implemented in his school are horrible, as the wrong things are emphasized and the younger teachers are only
learning how to “drill and kill.” He has used the writing exercises and the analysis of primary documents techniques he learned in his VTSS training, but says that his collaboration with the high school has not directly affected his work in the classroom. Joe defined history as using the past to explain the present, and did not directly address a definition of social studies. Instead, he espoused about the virtues of using "authentic assessment," meaning in this instance writing to learn content, in his classroom.

As Joe would not share his academic background with me, even when pressed, it is difficult to see where he fits into the emerging pattern. He is teaching US history, and views himself as a social science teacher, and it could probably be speculated that he views the disciplines as distinct entities. He was the only male to respond in this group. Joe really did not go on at length in response to any of my questions, except when he decided to share his opinions about the state standards movement and authentic assessment.

Many of the middle school teachers were from California, near Los Angeles, where many of the Western region’s AP consultants are based. Although it appears on the surface that the respondents from Santa Ana are overrepresented in this study, it is probable that the size of Los Angeles and its proximity to College Board workshop planners resulted in a number of respondents from this area.
High School Teachers

The first high school teacher to respond to the follow-up interview teaches in a rural public school in Flint, Michigan. "Pam" has been teaching for seven years and corresponded by e-mail on December 11, 2002. She teaches applied science, a senior seminar, psychology/sociology, and AP US history in her small (400 students) school. Pam has a BA plus thirty-six hours in history and biology, which explains her diversity of preparation. She took the VTSS training in the spring of 2002, but her school has not implemented it yet.

Pam belongs to two national professional organizations in science, and employs a variety of teaching styles. In her classroom, she uses hands-on pedagogy, utilizing primary sources, archeology projects, and research projects in addition to conventional notes and tests. Pam's school is involved in standards-based testing, and she notes that this has changed which subjects are taught, de-emphasized AP and honors classes, requires more paperwork, and brings more accountability to the teachers. Pam describes herself as a social studies teacher because "the majority of [my] classes taught are Psychology, Sociology and Economics."27

Pam describes her teaching career as having evolved mostly due to the pressures of the standards-based testing in her state.

My teaching style [has] changed because of the difference in student abilities, parental expectations, and administrative directives. I am not out to change and influence every student like I thought I could do when I first started teaching. I know now that there are a few students that can truly be reached and the rest are there to be taught the information. My teaching has become
less hands-on. This is not my choice, because I truly love this style, but because of state mandates and the amount of material that is now required of us to teach in any given semester. I also see students come to high school less prepared for the subject area than they did in the past. It seems that there is less motivation in students now to study outside of class and a bigger push from parents to make their students work after-school jobs which, in turn, require less study time.28

Pam believes these changes are not helping students learn social studies. "I think they are producing young adults who can work at McDonalds and write an essay response to almost anything, but have little understanding of our world, culture, society, or history. . . . It is little wonder to me that students could write forever about the terrorists in the Middle East, but couldn't show you where Afghanistan is on a map!"29 She blames her state's testing emphasis on these changes, explaining, "The word 'MEAP' (Michigan Evaluation and Assessment Program) is almost a swear word in most teaching lounges around the state. It has really tied the hands of really good teaching in favor of 'all students must perform and learn the same information as all the rest.'"30

Pam's school is trying to implement vertical teams, and she thinks it would help students perform better on the social studies section of MEAP, saying that only twenty percent of the juniors pass that test, with the state average being about the same. Unfortunately, the middle school teachers in her district have resisted this idea, saying that they are not a feeder school for the high school.

Pam's background in history could have given her a more multi-disciplinary view towards her work, but she sees the social sciences that she teaches as distinct entities. Given that she is teaching psychology, sociology, economics, and history,
this is easy to understand. Perhaps with the specialization of courses at the high school level, this will be a significant distinction in the curricular debate from the views held about history courses offered at the middle school level.

The next high school teacher responded via e-mail on December 11, 2002. "John" wrote from San Bernardino, California, where he teaches in an urban public school, that has an enrollment of 2400 students. John has been teaching for nineteen years, and teaches two US history courses, one at the AP level and one at a college prep level. He has an MA plus thirty-six hours in history (including US, European, and Latin American history). He took the VTSS training in the fall of 2001, when his district sponsored the workshop, but his school has yet to implement vertical teams.

John belongs to NCSS and the California State Council for the Social Studies. He describes his teaching style as, "eclectic, but mostly storyteller."

His district has standards-based testing, and he sees more of an emphasis being placed on the test scores as the years have gone by. John defines himself as a social studies teacher, as he can "teach all the courses offered -- geography, world history, US history, government, economics -- but mostly I teach US history."

John says that over the years he has utilized less lecture and more hands-on activities in his teaching style. He says this has not affected his view of history and social studies other than recognizing different styles of learning. The standards movement has not really affected his teaching, as he believes he has pretty much covered the standards all along.
What I resent is the belief of administrators to accept broad statements as fact. I'm told that for some magical reason, that if I write the standard on the board that I'm teaching that my students will learn more and that research backs this up. I've asked, could you tell me please the article in an education journal where this was shown so I could see what research shows how this works... and guess what, no one knows of the article or the researcher... hmmm, could they be making this up? Yet forcing me to comply.33

John has an advanced degree in history but sees history as one of many separate disciplines, as did Pam. At least for these two teachers, the diversity of courses offered at the high school level has apparently contributed to their view of the social sciences as distinct entities.

The next teacher was interviewed by telephone on February 17, 2003. "Joan" teaches in an urban public school with an enrollment of 3700 students in Santa Clarita, California. She has been teaching for two years, and has a BA plus thirty-six hours in social science and English. Joan teaches economics, psychology, and AP psychology. She took the VTSS training in the 2001-2002 school year, and her school has been implementing the vertical teams in the 2002-2003 year. She likes the vertical team approach in that she believes that building college-appropriate skills, starting with the freshmen, will help her students. Joan sees the limitations of the VTSS approach in the lack of participation by all of her department colleagues.

Joan belongs to four professional organizations, and describes her teaching style as "group-oriented usually, hands-on when possible, lots of explaining when needed. [I lecture] probably one-third of the time."34 The standards testing do not affect her directly, as there are not tests given in her subjects currently. The VTSS training exposed her to some new ideas, and she has incorporated some of them into
her teaching. She did not really answer the question about how the training affected her thinking about history and social studies, saying, "I currently teach economics and psychology and civics. On the civics and economics side, it's easier for me to collaborate with other teachers to make the material more [relevant] to what the students are learning. Them learning numbers and dates does nothing for them."35

When asked about whether or not she thought the definitions of history and social studies are changing, Joan replied,

I definitely like the movement away from calling it strictly history and more of a social science. . . . You are not looking at just the rote historians; you are looking at people and all aspects of history, different sciences related to different peoples, different populations, different countries. . . . When I was growing up, it was social studies, it's never call directly history for me. . . . In college there's a history degree, and it's pretty much worthless. You'd never want to get a degree in that, so you know, social science is pretty much where everyone is moving, so I suppose I just kind of follow the crowd.36

While Joan teaches social science disciplines and has a rather poor opinion of the usefulness of a degree in history, her definition of history appears on the surface to incorporate the multi-disciplinary approach of modern academics. However, I think it would be prudent to group her with John and Pam in viewing history as one of a federation of disciplines in social studies.

The next high school teacher comes from Middlesex-Essex, Massachusetts, where "Bob" has been teaching for twenty-seven years. Bob teaches at a suburban public high school and was interviewed via e-mail on February 18, 2003. Bob holds an MA plus 36 hours in teaching and curriculum and history. He teaches three different versions of world history: an honors course, a college preparatory course,
and an AP section of world history. His high school has an enrollment of 900 students and Bob took the VTSS training in the summer of 2001.

Bob enjoyed the strategies he learned from the training and thinks that "they really develop thinking skills."37 Bob belongs to three professional associations and characterizes his teaching style as interactive, using research for better teaching strategies and “teaching by design” as one of his methods. He thinks that the standards-based testing has taken some of his creativity away as it is more difficult for him to employ student-directed learning. Bob defines himself as a history teacher as he only teaches history at the present time. While his school has not implemented vertical teams formally, he is informally implementing the training with other teachers who share students at the same grade level.

Bob’s teaching style has changed a great deal in the twenty-seven years he has been teaching.

I have challenged the students to find answers to my questions on history rather than simply dictate to them. . . . They answer [these questions] with papers, display projects, and class discussion. . . . I guess you could say that my style takes on those qualities of a director; I ask intriguing (hopefully) questions and point the way to the answers and then turn the learning over to the student (where it should be). There is a lot of reading, writing, researching, discussion, and, with any luck, a little enlightenment.38

This attitude towards his work, has, in turn, influenced how Bob views history and social studies curricula. He believes that a democratic society is dependent on an educated populace, and that this implies a need for a strong social studies and history background. Bob does not believe that the definitions of history and social studies are changing at this point in time.
I'm worried about how history is being used [by] various groups today. Revisionist history has me alarmed, but that fad seems to be dying out a bit. I am also concerned that history and social studies in general are being put on the "back burner" in favor of business and studies involving technology and finance. It seems as though history is defined as one of those requirements that one must get out of the way in order to on to more important studies.39

Bob's remarks are fascinating from a couple of points of view. He defines himself as a history teacher because he teaches history, but he uses terms that fit into the NCSS definition of social studies education because of his emphasis on citizenship education. He also appears to be knowledgeable about some of the controversies surrounding history curricula today, especially in terms of whose history is being taught and from what point of view.

Bob seems to be a bit different in his view of history and social studies curricula than Pam, John and Joan. He could be placed in the history as multi-disciplinary camp, but he does not quite fit in there as he defines history as a separate discipline and uses citizenship education as an important component of what he does in his history classroom.

The next high school teacher teaches in a private high school in Burlington, Vermont. "George" has been teaching for twenty-four years and teaches US history and AP US history in his school, which has an enrollment of 500 students. I interviewed George by telephone on February 17, 2003. George has a BA plus thirty-six hours in economics with a history minor. He attended VTSS training in the summer of 2002 and his school is not implementing the concept of vertical teams. George belongs to NCSS and describes his pedagogy as lecture and discussion based.
He defines himself as a social studies teacher because his background is in history, economics and English.

George says that he depends much less on the book now than he did when he first began teaching and uses his textbook more as a tool from which his students can gain background to the problems in history he teaches. The standards movement does not affect him directly as his private school does not need to follow them, but he is aware of the Vermont state standards and feels that they reaffirm what he has already done. Although his school is not implementing VTSS, George says that he is using more primary documents and evaluation tools he learned from the VTSS workshop in his classes this year.

Although George's undergraduate degree is in economics, he has some strong opinions about history and social studies curricula and how the definitions of these curricula are changing.

I've seen the whole continuum. I think what happened is that we kind of threw out the baby with the bathwater. Where we went away from teaching history and tried to teach them social studies without them having the basics of history. I think they need a good solid factual basis with the history so they can understand the implications of . . . whatever we like to call social studies -- economics, sociology, or whatever else it might be.40

George teaches history, but again, like his colleagues Pam, John, Joan, and Bob, he views history as a distinct discipline from the other social sciences. This could be a reflection of his training in economics, or it could be that as high schools tend to specialize more in specific subject areas, high school teachers tend to make this distinction more than middle school teachers.
The next high school teacher works in an urban public school in Chicago, Illinois. "Ann" has been teaching for two years in this high school, which enrolls approximately 1000 students. Ann has a BA in education and history and teaches contemporary American history and US history. Ann was interviewed via e-mail on February 18, 2003. She took the VTSS training in the winter of 2002 and her school is beginning to implement vertical teams in a limited manner. Ann thought that the training made a lot of sense as it emphasizes continuity throughout the high school social studies curricula.

Ann belongs to NCSS and employs a hands-on, cooperative approach to her teaching. She does have standards-based testing and finds it very limiting in terms of what she can include in her curriculum, as the standards begin at the revolutionary war. Ann defines herself as a social studies teacher, as she thinks that her urban setting "leads its way to studying human interaction more thoroughly."41 Ann believes that both history and social studies need to be taught more from a hands-on approach, as "a teacher is successful if his/her students are able to remember the story and key themes of history rather than the dates and names that are often memorized."42 Ann is using the vertical teams strategies that employ higher order thinking skills with her students and she thinks that this will allow her students to successfully enroll in honors and AP courses later in their high school career.

Ann thinks that the definitions of history and social studies are changing constantly with the events of the world.
History is no longer something we teach as just the past and that is set in stone. History is always occurring with a variety of interpretations. The whole notion of interpretation has brought about a change in history. . . . In the past, history has been seen as single answers rather than a story with multiple perspectives. The interpretations will continue to change as the future unfolds.43

Ann differs from her colleagues Pam, John, Joan, Bob and George. She teaches history and defines it from a multi-disciplinary point of view, even though she defines herself as a social studies teacher.

The final high school teacher was interviewed by telephone on February 17, 2003. "Ray" has been teaching for twenty-six years and teaches in an urban public high school in Industry, California. Ray teaches modern world history, government, and economics in his school, which has an enrollment of 2,100 students. Ray has an MA plus thirty-six hours in history, English and curriculum and instruction. He took the VTSS training three years ago and his school has not implemented the program.

Ray belongs to three state and national professional organizations and describes his pedagogy as interactive. He uses lecture, discussion, internet research, role-playing, newspaper construction, Supreme Court simulations, and other hands-on activities in his classroom. The standards-based testing has been implemented in his school for three years and Ray has shifted his instructional emphasis to align with the standards. Ray describes himself as a social studies teacher as he uses an interdisciplinary approach to his work in the classroom.

Over the course of his career, Ray has moved from being primarily a lecturer in his classes to a teacher who has his students actively involved in their learning
process. This change in perspective has lead Ray to believe that his interpretation of history and social studies is much more open-ended than it used to be. "Teaching kids to think for themselves . . . whether [it's from] primary or secondary sources." The standards movement has focused his thinking about his curricula and he targets everything he does in the classroom towards fulfilling the standards. Although his school is not implementing vertical teams, Ray uses OPTIC (Overview, Parts, Title, Interrelationships, Conclusion), a VTSS strategy, to analyze primary documents with his students on a regular basis.

Ray thinks that the definitions of history and social studies curricula have been changing over the last decade. "I think it's going more toward open-ended thinking, more towards discovery learning, . . . integrated [themes] . . . a humanities approach to the social sciences." Ray tries to bring in aspects of art, music, and architecture into his approach to world history.

Ray fits in somewhat with the majority of high school teachers in that he does tend to define his work in terms of a federation of social sciences. This makes sense in that he teaches one-semester courses in government and economics. On the other hand, he also teaches a world history class from a multi-disciplinary approach.

Analytic Interpretations

The middle school and high school teachers do appear to have some differences regarding their approach to defining history and social studies curricula.
For the middle school teachers, the less academic preparation a teacher has in the subject area she or he is teaching, the more likely the teacher will define the teaching of history in terms of social studies and the federation of the social sciences. Although all of these teachers are teaching history, their view of what they are teaching is quite varied. The more academic background the middle school teachers have in history, the more likely they are to approach what they do from a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching history and the less likely they are to view history a part of the federation of social sciences that the traditional social studies curricula emphasizes. This reflects the issue about teacher training first discussed in the Bradley report. “Although 40 percent of the nation’s history teachers have a bachelor’s degree in the subject, just as many have had no formal study in history at all.”46 Two of the middle school teachers are teaching out of field, whereas none of the high school teachers lack a background in the study of history.

The high school teachers seem to have a much more varied approach to what they teach. Most of the high school teachers specialize in their teaching lines, and as many high schools offer social science classes as a part of their curriculum, those teachers see what they do as more of the federation of social sciences rather than a multi-disciplinary approach to the teaching of history. This specialization is a natural course of the progression of the curriculum and would seem to account for the differences in approach to the curriculum between the high school and middle school teachers.
Most of the teachers in the middle school were female, and four of the seven high school teachers were male. This probably is the case across the country in terms of female presence in middle school and male presence in high school. The teachers from the state of California were overrepresented, and it is probable that the teachers’ proximity to College Board workshop planners resulted in a number of respondents from this area. The most significant comparison between the two groups is that the middle school teachers, if they have a strong academic background in history, tend to view their curricula through the lens of the multi-disciplinary approach to history. Conversely, the high school teachers, even if they do have a strong academic background in history, tend to view it as a part of the social science federation. This is probably due to the differentiation of social science courses offered at the high school level, whereas in middle school, only general history courses are offered.

**Limitations and Strengths**

The survey and interviews did not generate enough data for a quantitative analysis of any national trends. The response to the survey was not as large as I had hoped. Some regions did not distribute the survey or teachers from those regions (Middle States, Southern, and Southwest) chose not to respond to the survey. The teachers who agreed to the follow-up interview were self-selected, as they agreed to answer further questions on the initial survey. However, I was unable to contact half of those teachers who agreed to further questions due to faulty e-mail addresses or
phone numbers that were not valid, further limiting the size of the sample. However, the survey and the follow-up interview questions did ask a number of open-ended questions, which became the basis for my qualitative analysis of the teachers' responses. Allowing the teachers to respond freely to open-ended questions regarding their approach to teaching history or social studies, utilizing self-definations of history, and encouraging the teachers to explain where they think their school is heading in terms of either history or social studies curricula generated the rich data of a qualitative analysis. Though this analysis is but a snapshot of the present, the geographic diversity and comparison between middle/junior high schools with their high school counterparts in similar settings (either public urban schools or public suburban schools) will allow some connection to be made between the theoretical definition of the social studies and history curricula at present and the practice of that curricula in a few classrooms around the country.

Thus, my study is triangulated by data from three distinct sources. First, the historical and theoretical background of the history and social studies debate has been outlined in chapter two. This provides a theoretical basis with which the respondents' opinions can be compared. Secondly, the data from the survey sets the boundaries of the characteristics of the various school districts and individual teachers. This then can serve as another source of comparison to the smaller sample of teachers who were interviewed. The third source of data is the interviews with fourteen different teachers in different schools and geographical areas of the country. There was enough variety within this sample of fourteen to show how this group of teachers is
responding to both the VTSS training and the influence of state standards in their classrooms.

The teachers interviewed may not all be cognizant of current curriculum theory, but they are practicing it. From the thirty-five-year-veteran in California who discussed his use of authentic assessment with eighth graders, to the two-year teacher in California who practiced what she has recently learned in the classroom, all of the teachers interviewed did have a strong sense of their purpose in the classroom.

However, this sample of teachers, with their many years of training and experience and participation in a large number of Advanced Placement courses may not be typical of those at the average American secondary school. The findings of this study merely points to the path of more intensive analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

The initial survey asked a number of questions focusing in on teachers’ experience, their background, their pedagogy, and their definitions of the operational curriculum in terms of history and social studies.

A condensed version of the questions follows in the next section. A complete survey appears in Appendix B.

The Survey Questions

Question 1.

*Is your department implementing the VTSS approach? If so, how long has your department been doing this?* For the sample of forty teachers, fourteen schools had implemented the vertical teams approach for social studies, with eleven schools in their first year of implementation. As these teachers had attended workshops in the last two years, this was not an unexpected result.

Question 2.

*What do you like about the VTSS approach? What are its strengths? What did you find most useful and why? What do you dislike about the VTSS approach?*
What are its limitations? The teachers had largely positive comments about their VTSS training. Tangible aspects of VTSS training that these teachers liked were as follows:

- strategies for document analysis;
- discussion tools, and higher order thinking skills strategies;
- the continuity that VTSS provided within their department and between grade levels;
- the communication that VTSS requires, which is often lacking within and between departments;
- the connection between the middle school and high school levels.

As VTSS was just in its initial phases of implementation, many of the teachers had procedural hesitations about the training, rather than content criticisms. For the teachers who were initiating the vertical team concept, the limitations of VTSS were:

- communication (something the teachers enjoyed) was very difficult;
- some schools and principals limited how well VTSS could be implemented;
- there was difficulty having the time necessary to implement VTSS;
- the lack of willingness of some teachers to “buy into” the process of VTSS;
- that VTSS did not match up with the state content standards;
- VTSS may not be age appropriate for younger students;
- the thought that VTSS brought about “just meetings, and no action.”
Please identify which national organizations (NCSS, AHA, etc.) you belong to.

The question about membership in professional associations was asked to ascertain how committed the teachers were to professional development. Most districts have professional development days built into the school calendar, but if a teacher belongs to state or national associations, they also receive regular publications to stay abreast of new developments within their field, as well as opportunities to attend larger and more diverse gatherings within their profession. Of the forty teachers who responded, sixteen (forty percent) belonged to no professional organization. This may indicate a lack of interest in pursuing new content and/or pedagogy. But this dearth of participation in professional organizations may also indicate a reluctance by the school districts to support teacher development, as substitutes would need to be hired for days missed from the classroom, and an unwillingness of districts to pay professional dues.

My supposition was that involvement in VTSS would put these teachers at the forefront of change within their school, and that this would mean a greater commitment to professional development. Unfortunately, this was not necessarily the case. The hypothesis I posited was that VTSS workshop attendance would lead to implementation of the ideas contained within the training. However, this was not borne out in that only fourteen of the forty teachers who responded to the survey were
actually involved in pursuing VTSS in their schools. It appears that attendance at VTSS workshops does not necessarily correspond to reform leadership.

The professional organization with the highest membership was the National Council for the Social Studies with thirteen members (thirty-two percent). Many teachers (over fifty percent) belong to state councils for the social studies, with some belonging also to organizations such as Phi Delta Kappa and Phi Beta Kappa (both honor societies), the National Council for History Educators, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers.

Question 4.

*How would you describe your teaching style? Please list some of the strategies you employ in your teaching.* The question about teaching style was included to ascertain how well acquainted the teachers were with current curricular theory. If many of the teachers were stuck in the lecture, discussion, and test mode, I would postulate that they were not about to change their pedagogy or their approach to thinking about their content area. Interestingly, only a few teachers mentioned lecture/discussion as their major method of teaching (five or twelve percent), and of the five, three said that they did other student-centered activities as well. Most (thirty-five or eighty-eight percent) described their teaching style as “eclectic,” or employing numerous student-centered activities (such as cooperative activities, simulations, critical thinking exercises, authentic assessment, using learning centers,
promoting multiple intelligences, using right and left brain techniques, research-based projects, and writing exercises) to promote student learning. One teacher described his or her style as constructivist. The responses may indicate that most of the teachers are aware of the pedagogical developments of the past decade and are working to implement them in their classrooms. This, in turn, might imply that these teachers are aware of the history and social studies debate and that they have an opinion as to where they stand on these issues.

**Question 5.**

*If your school/district employs standards-based testing, how has this affected your teaching?* The impact of state standards on teaching has been pervasive. All of the surveyed teachers had an opinion, though not all teachers yet were under the sway of standards-based testing. California has standards-based testing in some content areas, mostly US history, but not in other social science fields. Teachers from other states also reflected this trend. The opinions about standards and their influence on the curriculum ranged from very negative to quite positive. Negative remarks included:

- they take my creativity away;
- standards overwhelm the curriculum;
- standards defy common sense;
- teachers end up teaching to the test;
• standards change the curriculum;
• standards impede my teaching style;
• fitting everything in is a bear;
• standards are a pain in the butt—they limit what you can teach;
• creativity is out, covering material is in;
• they limit the time spent on creative projects as they take 2-3 hours per week to document;
• increased paperwork, devoured class time, plummeted morale;
• increased staff resentment—unquestionably the biggest waste of money and resources in my state’s education.¹

On the other hand, many teachers saw the standards as a method of increasing accountability and unifying the curriculum. They wrote,

• I have shifted my emphasis to align with the standards;
• teaching standards/benchmarks that support expectations is our primary goal;
• we emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary for success on the test in our lessons and assignments;
• I try to stick to the standards as closely as possible;
• the standards have made me [stick] more specifically to the curriculum, [given me] more concern [about] aligning with other teachers, and [I write] tests reflective of district-wide testing;
• the standards haven’t really influenced my teaching [as] I’ve always addressed elements in the curriculum guide and since they’ve been implemented, the state standards. ²

The opinions expressed by these teachers seems to be fairly evenly divided between positive and negative opinions, though all who wrote indicated that they were following state guidelines to implement those standards. It appears that all teachers had one thread in common: if they had state standards that had been implemented, the standards did affect their day-to-day curriculum.

The teachers, while divided in their definitions about history and social studies curricula, did point towards the use of history in state-mandated curricula and their operational approach appears to be fairly evenly divided between a social studies and history pedagogy in their classrooms, as demonstrated in their responses to the next question.

Question 6.

_Do you view yourself as a history or social studies teacher? Please explain._

The last question from the survey, about how the teachers defined themselves—as either history or social studies teachers—provided some very interesting results. Sixty percent of the teachers (twenty-four of forty) described themselves as social studies teachers. However, when examining their explanations of what they thought social studies entails, their definitions varied widely.
• "I am educated in a variety of subjects and styles—I teach more than just history. I toss in little bit of everything," writes one teacher.

• Another teacher writes, "I teach students about society and life using history as examples. My goal is NOT for them to remember names and dates and places. I want them to be responsible citizens who actively participate in our society!" \(^3\)

The contrasting explanations these teachers use puts them into two very different camps. The teacher who does a bit of everything is closer to where academic historians are in their thinking today in that he or she uses a multi-disciplinary approach to a history curriculum. This teacher is also close to the 1930s definition of social studies minus the commitment to citizenship education. The second teacher's explanation reflects a strong similarity with how the NCSS defines social studies today, and incorporates the tradition of citizenship education.

Some teachers said that they taught social studies because they did not teach history—"I only teach economics and psychology. Most teachers of history would never consider themselves historians." \(^4\) Of the twenty-four teachers who called themselves social studies teachers, half of them used phrases which would identify their definition of social studies with that of a focus on building citizenship skills, current events, and specific social science skills for their students. A teacher explained, "No matter what history I am teaching, I always relate [the content] to major social [developments] of the present." \(^5\) The other half of the social studies teachers used phrases that indicated that they wove the social science disciplines and
the study of history into their teaching, as per the definition of social studies by the NCSS. One teacher wrote, "I cover a broad spectrum—economics, sociology, geography, anthropology, history, and psychology—all in one big lump!" 6

The social studies curricula places an emphasis on citizenship education and tends to view the social science disciplines as distinct entities, whereas academic historians use history as the umbrella for their analysis which may incorporate social science disciplines. Thus, there are two perspectives at work. Social studies educators tend to view the social science disciplines as individual frameworks for the examination of contemporary problems. Academic historians utilize history as the framework for their analysis of the present in terms of the past, which incorporates a multitude of social science disciplines. The standards movement has placed a renewed emphasis on history, but the controversy over whose history and from which perspective remains.

From my conversations with these teachers, the most disturbing aspect of the standards movement appears to be the compartmentalization of certain periods of history. If you teach eighth graders US history to reconstruction and pick up there with juniors, chances are that the students will have forgotten most of what they learned about US history to 1877. This arrangement is not unusual as most semester US history courses use this periodization, but not reinforcing previously learned material does seem to contravene current thinking about how students learn. Educational research on memory has demonstrated time and again that reinforcement with varying degrees of depth is necessary to help students learn material. 7 Assuming
that students will actually remember everything that they were exposed to in the
eighth grade is dangerous and will not fulfill the goal of students’ mastering a body of
knowledge.

The Interviews

In terms of their responses to the general survey questions, six of the
interviewed teachers were in the beginning stages of developing vertical teams, and
all but three teachers belonged to either national or state professional organizations.
The entire sample of fourteen had the same sort of comments regarding the pros and
cons of vertical teams. They enjoyed:

• continuity,

• communication,

• and various VTSS strategies, including document analysis, higher-order
  thinking skills and classroom discussion techniques.

What the teachers did not esteem about the VTSS were:

• the limitations of time,

• the unwillingness of all teachers to participate,

• and a lack of support from their school as a whole.

In these comments, the smaller sample was similar to the larger sample of forty
teachers.
The teachers in the interview sample described themselves as very eclectic in their teaching styles, with all doing a number of different student-centered learning activities in their classrooms. The teachers were evenly divided in their remarks about standards and their effects on their curricula, with the positive (accountability, alignment with other teachers) and negative (impeding teaching style and creativity, more paperwork) comments reflecting those held by the survey sample as a whole. When asked to identify themselves as either a social studies teacher or a history teacher, eleven of the interviewed teachers said they were social studies teachers, one said that he/she was both, and one teacher identified him/herself as a history teacher. Among the eleven who said they were social studies teachers, some explanations ranged from the content of their courses (e.g., economics, sociology) to others saying that they taught everything.

The fourteen teachers who agreed to follow-up interviews were mostly female (nine of fourteen), and evenly divided with seven middle/junior high school teachers and seven high school teachers. Their schools were of fairly uniform sizes—for the middle/junior high school teachers, the schools ranged from a low of 335 (for the Wisconsin public urban middle school) to a high of 1700, with most schools ranging from 1300–1700 students. The high schools ranged from a low of 400 (rural public school in Michigan) to a high of 3700, with most schools ranging from 1000–3700 students. School size was important in that comparisons between very small and very large schools can be problematic.
Participant Responses to Interview Questions

Question 1.

*How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?*

Many of the teachers found that they had become more student-centered in their pedagogy and relied less on the textbook over the course of their careers. Typical responses include:

- “I depend much less on the book. The book was gospel, but now, the book is merely a tool.”
- “I put more responsibility of learning on the students themselves. I challenge students to find answers to my questions on history rather than simply dictate to them.”
- A relatively new teacher commented, “I am able to communicate better with my department. My teaching style has incorporated many different ideas presented by both the conference (VTSS) and teachers getting together and talking.”
- One teacher said he had not changed at all over the course of his career, but said, “My emphasis is on writing and authentic assessment.” Since the idea of authentic assessment is relatively recent, he has changed with the times, or perhaps this term captures what he has done all along.
Question 2.

How has this change affected your thinking about history and social studies?

Many teachers commented that incorporating multiple strategies helps their students learn and makes the subject area more interesting.

- One teacher said, “I have moved from being a single topic teacher to concentrating on overall themes of history and seeing how a theme is woven through the standards.”

- Another commented, “It has given me a lot of self-satisfaction seeing students interested in history again. I think they get tired of looking at facts and keeping things at a knowledge level.”

- Another views his/her teaching strategies as instrumental: “I think of it more as a vehicle for teaching kids the necessary critical thinking skills and writing skills they need for further academic success.”

- One teacher disagreed, saying, “Overall, I do not think these changes are helping the study of social studies. I think they are producing young adults who can work at McDonalds and who can write an essay about almost anything, but who have little understanding of our world, culture, society, or history. There has to be a balance between the basic information and the critical thinking skills that can be applied to that knowledge.”

My supposition is that this last comment was referring to that teacher’s opinion about the state standards and how their emphasis on process had impacted
social studies education. I do not think she was referring to a distinction between
the definitions of history and social studies curricula.

Question 3.

To what extent has the standards movement affected your teaching?

State standards have had a large impact on teachers. Most of these teachers
interviewed view the standards as an affirmation of what they have done all along,
and/or a manner in which they can focus their thinking about the content they are
covering in their courses.

• One said, “I fully agree with the idea of adopting standards. It gives me
more confidence that I am covering truly essential concepts, and has
allowed me a sense of freedom.”

• Another commented, “The standards have not influenced me very much. I
have pretty much covered the standards’ content all along.”

• One teacher agreed, “It’s been interesting—but it has not altered what I do.
It reaffirms what I’ve already done, and I don’t feel that the standards are an
impediment.”

Not all of the teachers were so positive. One explained,

• “It has really tied the hands of really good teaching in favor of an ‘all
students must perform and learn the same information as all the rest.’ In
some areas this is true, but in others it is not the case. . . . It has forced
schools to relegate important areas of social studies to lower elementary 
grades, never to be visited again. This, in turn, forces high school teachers 
to re-teach old information on top of new information the state expects to be 
covered.”

A few teachers were all for the standards, but believed that,

+ “with fifty-six benchmarks and seven standards, when do we have the time 
to do all of that? So, it has posed some problems.”

+ One teacher was vehement, “The standards are horrible—they are ‘drill and 
kill.’ The wrong things are emphasized, and younger teachers are learning the 
wrong way to teach things.”

Despite the last opinion, the majority of the teachers interviewed were 
incorporating the standards into their lesson plans with few problems other than 
bureaucratic paperwork.

*Question 4.*

*To what extent is your school implementing vertical teams? If they are not 
implementing it, what elements of VTSS have you found useful?* Of the fourteen 
teachers interviewed, half were implementing vertical teams in their schools. These 
seven teachers were composed of four middle/junior high school teachers and three 
high school teachers. They all had positive comments about their involvement on 
VTSS.
• "I like the strategies."

• "... building life-long college appropriate skills [is great]."

• "... students really develop [their] thinking skills."

• "The approach allows continuity along the years [of schooling]."

• "Contact with the high school [is helpful]."

• "Talking and sharing ideas is great."

• "It also creates an awareness of the difficulties faced at all grade levels."

Many teachers are using strategies from their VTSS training even if their school has not implemented vertical teams. Only two of the fourteen teachers had not used any VTSS strategies in their classrooms.

• One teacher commented, "As a teacher of the 'regular' classes, I tend to incorporate many of the higher order thinking skills needed to be successful in the upper level courses. VTSS provides a structure that would build on the successes of students and continue to have students strive for success in challenges rather than give up because it's too hard."

• Another explained, "VTSS has allowed us to collaborate in terms of our expectations of students, our methods and our subject matter. It has opened up dialogue between other teachers and me, and has made me a better teacher."

• Another teacher disagreed, "VTSS has had little effect, if any—it has grand intention, but I think it will be another movement that dies a timely death. I think that teachers are not willing to have parameters of what they teach
placed around them and this sets another set of boundaries they are not
willing to address until required (such as with the standards).” 11

While several teachers commented that communication and cooperation were
difficult obstacles to overcome, most shared the sentiments of this teacher, who said,

- "We're trying to be on the same page. We're an onion—in elementary
  school you peel the one or two layers, junior high, you're peeling down, and
  high school's the core. We're all trying to assure that every child is ready
  for the next level."

To the extent that teachers have embraced the ideas of the VTSS training, they
are implementing them. Schools with no "buy in" are not, as this teacher commented,

- "Generally, the high school staff wants to see this implemented, and the middle
  school's philosophy is 'we are not a feeder program for the high school.'” 12

This last response points to a problem that is not uncommon in school districts. Many
middle/junior high schools view their curricula as separate from that of the high
schools and resent what they view as interference in their curricular organization.

This division of responsibility for students' curricular direction is not
unusual, and is one of the major points of vertical teams. If vertical teams are to work
towards the goal of having more students participate in AP courses, then middle
school and high school departments need to work together to strengthen the curricula
of their departments. Of the seven middle school teachers I interviewed, two are not
implementing VTSS, one is skeptical that this is useful at all, and four are
communicating to varying degrees with high schools and have found the training
useful in their classrooms. As for the high school teachers, one is not implementing the training, three are in an organizational phase to implement VTSS next year, and three are currently implementing VTSS in their schools.

**Question 5.**

*To what extent do you think the definitions of history and social studies are changing at this moment in time?* This question had a wide variety of responses. One teacher believed that there have not been any changes in the definitions of history and social studies, explaining,

- "I don’t think the definitions are changing. I’m worried about how various groups are using history today. Revisionist history has me alarmed, but that fad seems to be dying out a bit. I am also concerned that history and social studies in general are being put on a ‘back burner’ in favor of business studies involving technology and finance."

At the other end of the spectrum, a teacher stated,

- "I’ve seen the whole continuum. I think that what happened is that we kind of threw out the baby with the bathwater. Where we went away from teaching history and tried to teach them social studies without them having the basics of history. I think they need a good solid factual basis with the
history so they can understand the implications of whatever we like to call social studies—economics, sociology, or whatever else it might be.”

• Another teacher explained, “I do think the definitions are changing constantly with the events of the world. History is no longer something we teach as just about the past and that is set in stone. History is always occurring with a variety of interpretations. The whole notion of interpretation has brought about a change in history—[it is] a story with multiple perspectives.”

• One teacher thought that the goals of social studies had not been met, “I’ve always been told that the goal of social studies was to create citizenship among our students . . . and I’m not sure that social studies has done that (given voting records and citizen participation in government). And I’d say it’s more, it’s not just the job of American history, it’s the job of all of the social studies subjects to feed into that, and I don’t think we’ve done a real good job with that.”

The majority of the teachers believed that there had been some change in the definitions of history and social studies, stating that history had more elements of social science.

• “It’s [history] been changing for the past decade. It’s going more toward open ended thinking, more towards discovery learning, integrated themes— more of a humanities approach to the social sciences.” 13
**Question 6.**

*Please describe the curriculum of your department.* This question about their department’s curriculum was included to try to determine the extent to which history courses are being taught within social studies departments. Most of the teachers (eleven of fourteen) belong to social studies or social science departments, but many of them teach straight history courses (see tables seven and eight above). The middle schools and junior high school teachers all taught a variation of world history in the sixth grade (from ancient civilizations to either the rise or fall of Rome), the Middle Ages to New World exploration in seventh grade, and US history (to Reconstruction) in the eighth grade. The high schools all followed a general curriculum of world history in ninth or tenth grade (or both), US history in eleventh grade, and economics, government, and other electives in twelfth grade. While the majority of the departments describe themselves as social studies departments, they all spend a great deal of time teaching history to their students.

**Interview Case Studies Findings**

When I compared the middle/junior high school group of teachers with the high school teachers (see chapter three), some interesting characteristics emerged. The middle school teachers had two of the seven who were teaching out-of-field. That is, these teachers had no formal preparation in either social studies or history. Of the
five that had an academic background in either social studies or history, they all viewed their work in the classroom through the lens of a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching history. They are practicing the academic approach to the study of history, and they all call themselves social studies teachers.

The high school teachers all had an academic background in history or social studies, but took a more federated approach to their view of the social studies and history curricula. As they teach more specialized social science subjects (e.g., economics, government, sociology, psychology) along with history courses, this makes sense. Whereas all of the middle school teachers were teaching at least one preparation of a history course, the high school teachers had a variety of subjects that they taught and this was reflected in their thinking about the debate over history and social studies curricula.

Implications

This study has opened my eyes to some remarkable shared characteristics of the teachers who participated. Many of the teachers are involved in continuing professional growth, and learning new ways to connect to their students in the classroom. They are dedicated to expanding their professional horizons and to dealing as best as they can with new state mandates that they have been handed in the high-stakes testing on state content standards. They largely recognize that history and social studies curricula have been in a state of flux, and their definitions appear to be
somewhere in between what the NCSS and academic historians have recently proclaimed.

The operational curriculum, or what is taught in the classroom, is dependent on a number of factors. First, what is the official curriculum? When the teachers I surveyed and interviewed listed their classes, the title alone made it apparent that many of them were teaching history classes (see table six). When asked to define themselves as history or social studies teachers, sixty percent of them said that they were social studies teachers, but half of them defined their work more in terms of relating social sciences to their work in history. “I teach all areas of history—social concepts, morals, ideas and the reasons behind the events then and how they relate now.” Then there were those who defined themselves primarily as history teachers. “I teach US history, including an AP class. In both courses several aspects of the social sciences are introduced, but the emphasis is on history.” One teacher went on to explain, “My school district hires people who are history majors, not education majors.” Then, there were those who viewed themselves as both history and social studies teachers. “I usually identify myself as a history teacher but I don’t put any value on the differentiation between the two.”

As the VTSS training used a number of strategies to improve student performance in specific courses, including US history, my thought was that these examples might be incorporated by the teachers into their curricula, and through the use of primary sources and other historical techniques, the teachers would find themselves coming closer to the study of history. To a certain extent, the teachers did
enjoy the new techniques, but all in all, as half of the interview samples are in their first year of implementing vertical teaming, it is too soon to tell if VTSS is swaying teachers one way or another. The standards have a much greater impact on their professional lives, and the teachers (regardless of their opinions about the standards) and their students face high-stakes testing, which make compliance with the content standards compulsory. On a positive note, many teachers found the standards to be refreshing and affirming of the work they have always done. In the interview sample of teachers, the question of their definition of history and social studies proved to be the most interesting. While some teachers did not see any change in the definitions of the two disciplines, most did see change as an ongoing process. “I do think the definitions of history and social studies are changing constantly. . . . The whole notion of interpretation has brought about a change in history. . . . The interpretations will continue to change as the future unfolds.” 15

Some interesting characteristics emerged from the study. The definition of social studies remains fairly nebulous. Teachers identify themselves as social studies teachers because their department bears that name or their credential says that this is what they are. When pressed for further explanation, half of those teachers really define themselves as modern historians without the label, describing the type of integration of social sciences into history that has been promulgated by academic historians since the end of World War II. VTSS appears to have little or no influence as to how these teachers view themselves, but those who are implementing the program find it useful in terms of coordinating curricula and communicating across
grade levels and within departments (especially where vertical teams are supported by the school district). It is too soon to tell the extent to which the goal of having more students participate in AP courses has been reached.

Many of the states have content standards in place, and those standards are moving towards a history-based curriculum.\textsuperscript{16} All of the teachers contacted are implementing their state's standards. Some of the subject areas do not have standards yet, and there are certainly varying opinions as to their effectiveness, but all recognize the inevitability of accountability in the educational system.

Finally, with the interview sample, there was no consensus as to where the field stands today. Many of them described the ongoing debate in terms of the history paradigm, but still view themselves as social studies teachers, just as Stephen Johnson (current president of NCSS) views himself as multi-disciplinary in his own teaching. This leads me to conclude that indeed the paradigm is changing, but has not exactly been labeled as such. NCSS is hanging onto its vague definition of social studies, just as states are grappling with content-based standards that reflect a renewed emphasis on history. However, each state is dealing with this problem in a slightly different way, which is perhaps for the best. As a teacher from Michigan told me, students in Florida will want to spend more time on Spanish colonization of the New World as it affected them more in that area, whereas her students will connect more with French colonization because of where they live. The culture wars are far from over, but each state appears to be dealing with this question in slightly different ways.
The most encouraging trend of the study is the willingness of the majority of the teachers to learn new ways to teach their students. They are dedicated to trying new strategies in their classrooms to make learning a truly meaningful experience. They may be frustrated with the paperwork that standards are generating, but in the end, the most important thing to them is that their students are learning—not just facts and dates and places, but learning how to think and reason and be productive and articulate members of our society.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

So where does all of this leave us? The paradigm regarding history and social studies curricula is indeed changing, but I believe that transformation is incomplete as of this moment. My purpose in focusing on Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) was to deconstruct the strategies being practiced by VTSS teachers to discern the extent to which history or social studies curricula or a combination of the two are evolving at the secondary level. How do the teachers perceive themselves: as history or social studies professionals? What are they teaching in their classrooms? Have the content wars resulted in a more history-centered curriculum? Or has social studies changed to encompass a new focus? Or are both still in flux?

The Research Study

During the course of investigating the viewpoints of teachers involved in VTSS and the direction of history and social studies curricular development in the twentieth century, several themes emerged. The first theme is one that remains potent today: the content versus process challenge. The stereotype for teachers has been that social studies educators have tended to emphasize process over content, whereas history educators have been inclined to emphasize content over process. The former can lend itself to an anti-intellectual process where few facts are learned; the latter can promote rote memorization of facts with little understanding of the complexities
of cause and effect. The extremes in this debate can be found in the development
of history and social studies curricula in the course of the twentieth century, and have
prompted questions I posed to teachers in terms of their pedagogy in the classroom
today. The questions focused on the types of activities the teachers use to promote
learning in their classrooms. As one teacher put it, “drill and kill” tactics are not
favored by most teachers today. Instead they focus more on how students can
understand and learn the content in their classes to develop a more complete
knowledge of the subject matter. Fortunately, the teachers surveyed indicated that
neither stereotype is alive in the classroom today, though some of them still perceive
the study of history as inherently boring and dull.

A second theme which emerged during the course of this study was that of the
curriculum itself. The course of the twentieth century demonstrates how educators
continue to re-invent the purpose of their curricula. Besides the content of history
and social studies, educators continue to debate whether or not subject matter can be
considered completely learned at one grade level. Teachers voiced their concerns
over US history classes that divided the story of American history between the eighth
grade and eleventh grade levels. The eighth grade classes covered material from
exploration through Reconstruction, while the eleventh grade classes reviewed
Reconstruction and continued the story on to the present. How much do the students
actually remember from what they learned in eighth grade? Could the increased level
of intellectual sophistication of the eleventh grader be compared to the analytical
abilities of the eighth grader? These questions contribute to the growing controversy
connected to standards-based testing and the role of the curriculum and how it is structured.

The final theme that emerged in this study is that of how teachers are trained for their professional careers. Many states require social studies professionals to have a background in many disciplines. These typically include economics, sociology, anthropology, geography, history, political science, and psychology. Unless the teacher goes on to complete a master’s degree in one of the above disciplines, the teacher tends to have a little knowledge in many different areas. The question that continues to come up regarding this interdisciplinary background arises from the greater emphasis on history in the modern curriculum. How well can any discipline be taught by someone who has only two or three classes of training in that subject? One of the questions teachers were asked was to describe their educational background to determine the extent to which they had supplemented their initial training by specializing in the discipline which they were teaching.

Interestingly, of the middle/junior high school teachers interviewed, who had more academic training in history, tended to align themselves with the modern academic definition of history curricula. The middle/junior high schools all offered general world and US history courses. The high school teachers interviewed, all of whom had some academic training in history, tended to view themselves more as social scientists, with history being one component of the federation. This finding possibly reflects the more diverse course offerings in social science courses in high school, where history is but one of many subjects offered in a social studies department.
The Vertical Teams Approach

The scope of this study is small and of course cannot be considered indicative of what is going on in every classroom across the country. The vertical teams training, with its emphasis on content-based strategies in history, economics and geography, was the vehicle by which the teachers were contacted.

Many of the teachers surveyed and interviewed were not implementing vertical teams in their schools—only thirty-five percent of this sample was starting to organize vertical teams in social studies. However, as a vehicle to ascertain how teachers defined their operational curricula, the training of VTSS did appear to have an impact on nearly every teacher who participated in the VTSS training’s curricula. Many of them commented positively on the strategies presented and a number of teachers were implementing these approaches in their classrooms even if their school was not undertaking VTSS at this point in time.

History versus Social Studies Curricula

The teachers tended to define themselves as social studies professionals, with sixty percent claiming this label. However, when the teachers’ explanations as to why they called themselves social studies teachers are examined, other trends emerge. About half of the sample who labeled themselves as social studies teachers emphasizes citizenship education, which places them squarely into the current definition of social studies education as advocated by the NCSS. They also tend to
view the social sciences as distinct disciplines. The other half of the self-defined social studies teachers views their work as more integrative, weaving the various disciplines together. This would place them closer to the academic viewpoint of historians, which centers the interpretation of history through the lens of various disciplines. Some merely viewed themselves as social studies professionals because that was either the label of their department or the type of teaching certificate they held. This trend was also reflected in those who labeled themselves as history professionals ("per my credential").

Of the forty percent of the teachers who identified themselves as primarily history professionals, most did employ terms which reflect the current state of thinking about history by academics. One teacher commented, "Even though I teach geography, economics, civics, sociology, etc., it is within the context of American history." Notwithstanding this last statement, at least two of the self-described history teachers did not see any difference between social studies and history, although social studies is multi-disciplinary and history can be viewed as a distinct discipline. "[I] don’t put any value on the differentiation between the two... I do not see a reasonable distinction—history is social studies—and vice-versa."1

Thus, in terms of the theoretical divide between history and social studies curricula, the jury is still out. There is just enough vagueness in these teachers’ classrooms that neither camp can claim a clear victory. The historic uncertainty regarding precise definitions of these curricula remains constant today. The paradigm appears to have shifted somewhat towards the academic definition of history, but few of the teachers recognize what they are doing as such.
Content versus Process

Through questions regarding their classroom strategies, the teachers revealed that they largely pursue a variety of strategies in their quest to help their students learn. The initiation of content-based standards and high-stakes testing in some states has pushed teachers to focus more on the content than some had in the past. On the other hand, as a large number of the teachers in this sample were already teaching AP courses (twenty-five percent), the content emphasis was already present due to the national exam. The teachers do demonstrate an awareness of the content versus process debate, and some do criticize their state standards for a lack of content. Again, it would seem that this issue is bound to continue as a focus for the history and social studies curricula, as it has since the 1920s.

The Spiral Curriculum

The teachers in this sample indicated in a number of ways that they were quite familiar with Bruner’s spiral curriculum and its importance in promoting student learning. While this is also an emphasis with the vertical teams approach, it was the lack of reinforcement in particular content areas that caught the attention of many teachers. The most oft-cited example was the divide between eighth grade and eleventh grade US history and the fact that this division did not allow for significant review and reinforcement of content in the eleventh grade. Others noted that the
vertical teams approach allowed and encouraged them to align their curricula to other grades, and to the state content-based standards, and they viewed this phenomenon as a positive change from past practice.

**Teacher Training**

The final theme this study revealed was perhaps atypical from the nation as a whole, especially in terms of past studies. Whereas critics of the educational system point out that many teachers are not well-grounded in their content area, this sample of teachers was quite well trained in their subject area. Perhaps this can be explained by the number of very experienced teachers who answered the initial survey (forty percent with more than twenty years of teaching experience) and the large number (twenty-five percent) of AP teachers present in the sample. Teachers soon realize that their pay scale is tied to their educational attainment as well as their years of experience, and the large number of teachers in this sample with a masters’ degree or beyond bears this out. The other interesting trend which emerged was the number of teachers who had majored in education for their bachelors’ degree and then went on to specialize in history for their masters’ degree (twenty-seven percent). Most of these teachers taught at least one section of AP, and perhaps this explains the extra training they pursued.

Regardless, this sample may demonstrate that the findings of the critics in the 1980s have reversed themselves by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Perhaps teachers are better grounded in their content areas than in the past. Or, more likely, it
may be that this sample was too heavily weighted with experienced teachers and AP teachers and is not indicative of the country as a whole.

Many state teacher-training programs continue to emphasize a broad range of social science background as a pre-requisite for certification in social studies. This certainly would indicate that the NCSS definition of social studies continues to hold priority for teacher training programs. However, as with the operational curriculum, what advanced degrees teachers pursue beyond their basic certification could point to a more history-centered background as teachers specialize in their teaching content areas. As many states are basing their content-based standards testing in history, this would appear to point towards more teachers pursuing advanced degrees in history. With a sample this small, this generalization is impossible to make. However, it would make for an interesting question for future studies.

**Shifting Paradigms?**

One of the enduring characteristics of history and social studies curricula in the past century has been their continuous recycling of previous trends. From the progressive educators at the turn of the century to the life-centered movement in the 1940s and 1950s to the “new social studies” movement in the 1960s and 1970s, the social studies curricula continued to demonstrate a lack of awareness of its own history. It appears that the social studies curricula has been reinvented every few decades or so with little awareness of what had been attempted in the past. This trend continues today, but with a new twist. The culture wars have brought about an
awareness of content that is different from past curricula. The notion that students do not demonstrate an adequate awareness of their country’s history is certainly not new, but the debate over whose history to promulgate is a different aspect of the argument.

History has evolved over the course of the twentieth century from the grand narrative to consensus history to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the past. Historians are aware of the changes that their profession has undertaken, and this is reflected in the study of history today. This has migrated into secondary classrooms as teachers’ help students grapple with various interpretations of historical events. While the teachers may not be entirely aware that they are reflecting a current trend in their approach to history curricula, it does appear that they do represent current historical thinking in their operational curriculum.

This case study is too small to demonstrate any generalizations for the study of history and social studies curricula as a whole, but it does point the way for future studies on these issues. The culture wars do not appear to be over, and how these ideas are manifested in classrooms around the country could provide fertile ground for further research.
**APPENDIX A:**

**Myth vs. Reality**

*Education Week, November 15, 1995*

*After Lynne V. Cheney wrote a blistering op-ed piece for The Wall Street Journal in October 1994, other editorials and columns began appearing nationwide that were also highly critical of the U.S. history standards.*

*Many of the rebukes, which have attained near-mythical status, echoed examples given in Cheney’s piece. In his speech to persuade the U.S. Senate to censure the standards, Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., also sounded similar chords.*

*While many of the criticisms are technically correct, they mischaracterize the scope, content, and tenor of the document. Here are a few examples.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MYTH:</th>
<th>REALITY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. Constitution merits no mention in the 31 standards, although it does appear in the supporting materials.</td>
<td>This is one of the few times when Cheney distinguishes between the standards and the teaching materials. The word “Constitution” does not appear in the 31 sentences that constitute the first part of each standard. One of the 31 sentences, however, alludes directly to the document: Students should understand “the institutions and practices of government created during the revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system.” Under each of the 31 sentences are subsections that specifically address the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. All told, the Constitution is mentioned 177 times throughout the document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sen. Joseph McCarthy, the Cold Warrior whose ruthless pursuit of real and imagined Communist agents and sympathizers in the 1950s has been largely repudiated, and McCarthyism are mentioned 19 times—a telling example of how the standards set a negative tone about the United States.</td>
<td>McCarthy and McCarthyism are indeed mentioned 19 times—all in a two page section on the Cold War. Seventeen of the citations are in teaching examples, which are divided into different activities for grades 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12. Writers do not use pronouns for the senator or the campaign that bears his name. Consequently, in one teaching example alone, McCarthy’s name or its derivative comes up five times, and in another, the words appear four times. Moreover, the emphasis is not so much on McCarthyism as it is on students’ ability to understand the climate that allowed it to develop and thrive and the reasons for its repudiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington makes only a fleeting teaching appearance and is never described first president of the United States.</td>
<td>Washington’s name appears only a few times in the as the examples in the era covering the American Revolution and the forging of the new nation. One example asks the students about the major issues confronting the “Washington administration,” and an engraving of Washington’s inauguration is included. But teachers would have a hard time addressing some of the standards themselves unless they talked about the</td>
</tr>
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first president. For example, one standard says that students should be able to analyze the “character and roles of the military, political and diplomatic leaders who helped forge the American victory.” Meanwhile, Thomas Jefferson, arguably the most important founding father, is cited time and again. Besides, Washington is a staple of the K-4 volume that students are expected to have completed before they reach the US document for 5th to 12th graders.

Albert Einstein makes no appearance at all.

While Einstein, a native of Germany, is not in the US standards, he appears in the world-history volume in the standard on changes in science and the arts in the first half of the 20th century and in the accompanying teaching examples.

APPENDIX B:

The survey

SURVEY: History and Social Studies Education in the 21st Century

1. In what type of school do you teach?
   - public, urban
   - public, suburban
   - public, rural
   - private
   - parochial

2. What is your level of education? Major/Minor
   - BA, BEd
   - BA + 36 credits; MA, MEd
   - MA + 36 credits
   - PhD, EdD

3. How long have you been teaching? ________________

4. Please list the course(s) you are presently teaching.
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.

5. How long have you been teaching at your present school? ________________

6. How does your department identify itself?
   - History
   - Social Science
   - Social Studies
   - Other: ____________________
7. What level of school do you teach? Approximately how many students are enrolled?

☐ Middle School
☐ Junior High School
☐ High School
☐ Other

8. How many students are in each of your classes? 

How many total students do you teach?

9. How did you learn about Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS)?

10. When did you take the VTSS workshop?

11. Is your department implementing the VTSS approach? If so, how long has your department been doing this? (if no, skip to # 15)

12. What do you like about the VTSS approach? What are its strengths?

13. What do you dislike about the VTSS approach? What are its limitations?
14. Of the specific approaches presented in the VTSS workshop, which do you find most useful and why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

15. Please identify which national organizations (NCSS, AHA, etc.) you belong to. Do you have the opportunity to attend conferences? If so, please list the conferences you have attended in the last two years.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16. How would you describe your teaching style? Please list some of the strategies you employ in your teaching.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

17. Does your school and/or district employ any standards-based testing? If so, how long has your school/district been doing this?

________________________________________________________________________

18. If your school/district employs standards-based testing, how has this affected your teaching?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
19. Do you view yourself as a social studies teacher or a history teacher? Please explain.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

20. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up telephone, email or personal interview? If so, please indicate how I might contact you, and what time zone you live in so I don’t wake you up!

☐ Yes! my phone number is: ________________
   the best time to reach me is: ________________
   my email address is: ______________________

☐ No thank you.
APPENDIX C:

Interview Transcripts

DH= Deborah Hall, R= Respondent

Interview #1: Monday, February 17, 2003

Burlington, Vermont 24 yrs. Exp. male
Private high school

DH: How has your teaching style changed over your career in education?

R: Good question... I depend much less on the book. The book is—when I was a beginning teacher the book was the gospel—but now, as it should be, the book is merely a tool. I think the biggest change has been less reliance on textbooks.

DH: How has this change affected how you think about history and social studies?

R: It makes it much more—it’s easier to make connections into the kids’ lives and what is going on in the world today. Once you get out of the mindset of the textbook. Especially, since I teach US history, survey, and you know, I’ve been teaching a long time now, so I find it less important to teach all the details, and actually teach more of the important [things].

DH: To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: Well, it’s been interesting—I’ve been in private Catholic schools and standards are only now starting to become an issue in Catholic school education. I’m aware of them and Vermont has very developed standards in its basic education, but we are aware of them, but it has not altered what I’ve changed. What I find with the standards is that almost reaffirms what I’ve already done, and I don’t feel that the standards are really an impediment.

DH: Did you go through the VTSS workshop? Is your school doing anything with that?

R: We did go to it—there was myself and another teacher who teaches at the freshman level who went. But it was really was kind of last minute and really did not have a commitment ahead of time. This was a case where they had grant money available, and they said, oh, by the way, why don’t you go to this. And I haven’t seen a lot of forethought or afterthought put into it, quite frankly. And its something, being a private school, we don’t have the continuum from the elementary school on which is, for this thing to work, really needs to be there.
DH: So, you’re grades 9 – 12?

R: Yeah, we’re 9 through 12.

DH: Do you think that anything that you learned at that workshop has found its way into your classroom?

R: A little has found its way into my classroom. The freshman teacher has actually incorporated quite a bit. And, because I teach I teach juniors, I teach the AP US section, I’m really looking forward to that coming to fruition. Again, I teach only juniors. I’ve used it a little bit. You know, quite honestly, I find in my survey US history—I want to give the kids credit, but, you know, they have to be there and I’m sure you come across the same thing, you have to overcome this bias against history to begin with. As I’m entering twentieth century history, I may use it more often; use more primary documents and other evaluation things at that point. So I haven’t used it as much. Being an AP teacher, I’ve used a lot of the things we talked about in that program already.

DH: So, some of it was useful to you.

R: Yeah, some of it was.

DH: I’m trying to figure out how we define history and how we define social studies. How are they changing?

R: That’s a good question. Well, it’s interesting. My background is—I actually ended up graduating with a degree in Economics from college. Not that I really wanted to, but that’s another really long story for another time. I think, again, I think, I’m 52 and I’ve seen the whole continuum. I think what happened is that we kind of threw out the baby with the bathwater. Where we went away from teaching history and tried to teach them social studies without them having the basics of history. I think you need, I think they need a good solid factual basis with the history so they can understand the implications of, you know, whatever we like to call social studies—economics, sociology, or whatever else it might be. I really do think, I find that, especially at the elementary and junior high level not teaching basic history has really become a problem.

DH: Could you tell me please what your curriculum is at your school?

R: Our first two years (ninth and tenth grade) we have world studies. And again, the reason why we try to do it over two years is that we try to get out of the Eurocentric and really do teach world studies. The first year is probably up to the age of
Napoleon. So even at that level, we're not really doing enough at the world studies. The junior year we have US history, and just AP and regular. And then in senior year we have an economics course, Modern European History at the AP level, and a contemporary history, which is kind of current events, but also with some background.

Interview #2: Monday, February 17, 2003

Indianapolis, Public Suburban Middle School 17 yrs. Exp. female

DH: How has your teaching style changed over your career in education?

R: Well my teaching style, in the past year or so, has changed in that I use a lot of inquiry methods of teaching. I created some inquiries that have been published by Teacher's Discovery, where students are doing research I have found those to be very successful. I have begun to use a lot more of reading strategies, but our textbooks tend to be written at a higher level. I teach 8th grade and typically our textbooks might be on a 10th or 11th grade reading level. And if our students are two or three grade levels behind in their reading, then they'll fail. So we've begun to do a lot more of reading strategies for our content and I think that would be the biggest changes I've made.

DH: How has this change affected how you think about history and social studies?

R: Well, personally I think that it has enabled me to get a lot of self-satisfaction of seeing students interested in history again. I think they get tired of looking at facts and keeping things just on a knowledge level. Using these strategies, then especially the inquiries, I can keep moving them up on Bloom's a little bit, and that's more rewarding for me personally.

DH: To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: It has influenced my teaching greatly because the standards have been raised in the state of Indiana. We have, let's see, I think it is about seven standards with about fifty-six benchmarks. So, it makes it a little bit more focused, we just can't teach things that are not on the standards any longer. So it has—on the one hand, it has focused us on a particular set of things, so we can't do just something that we think that we just want to do for fun. But on the other hand, it has, with fifty-six benchmarks and seven standards, when do have the time to do all that? So, it's posed some other problems.
DH: You took the VTSS workshop a couple of years ago, and you said that your department is not implementing it. Have you used any of those things in your classroom?

R: The department chair at the high school that we feed into was sort of spearheading this, and because of other obstacles that have sort of gotten in the way, he is now going to delegate that to some other teachers. And he's hoping to get a grant that would give a stipend to some teachers, at least in the middle school (six, seven, and eight), to do some work this summer in trying to align the curriculum. So, to answer your question, we haven't used any of that yet. But I still have the materials, and when we have that meeting, that's when I'll begin to use some of it.

DH: I just wanted to know if it had any influence on you.

R: I would have to say this. On my own, before Christmas, I took a look at the kinds of skills that our standards ask us to teach our students. And then I compared it to the skills that are in the high school standards for social studies. And so that information I have begun to talk to our teachers about to let them know that that needs to be emphasized.

DH: Do you think the definition of what history is and what social studies is changing? And if so, why, and if not, why not?

R: That's a tough one. The definition changing—gosh, I'm going to say that I've always been told that the goal of social studies was to create citizenship among our students, to make them good citizens. And I'm not sure that social studies have done that. If you use say, our voting records, as evidence or partial evidence of citizens' participation in their government, I'd say it is pretty slim, or you looked at the prime rate or any of the other things that are going on in the country, I don't think you'd say that we had done a good job at that. And I'd say that it's more, it's not just the job of American history, it's the job of all the social studies subjects to feed into that, and I don't think we've done a real good job with that.

DH: Could you tell me what the curriculum is in your school?

R: In our school, sixth grade is Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Australia. In seventh grade it's Eastern Hemisphere, then in eighth grade it's American history.

DH: A whole year of American history?

R: In our school the American history only goes from, with our new state standards, the French and Indian War to Reconstruction. One little benchmark says to review colonial life, and their trying to focus more on colonial life in 5th grade.
DH: Does the high school pick up from Reconstruction, or do they review the whole thing?

R: No, they pick up from Reconstruction. If they review anything, they just review Reconstruction, and then they go up to present day.

Interview #3, February 17, 2003

Santa Ana, California
Public Suburban Junior High School 10 yrs. Exp. female

DH: How has your teaching style changed over your career?

R: With or without the vertical teams? I mean that’s—where are we going with this? Over the past year, since I’ve been in it, or since I’ve been working with the team?

DH: Whatever way you want to define it.

R: Let’s do it this way—since the change with the team—let me go with that. Since I’ve been working with the vertical team, I try to teach more for what I know the high school wants. To make sure my kids are right on track.

DH: Has this changed the way you think about history and social studies?

R: Yes and no. I still feel critical thinking is the key component for the kids, but I’m more follow up to verify the fact that they are getting everything to the best of my ability.

DH: To what extent has the standards movement affected your teaching?

R: We teach to the standards.

DH: Well, I’d imagine most people do.

R: No. I don’t think they are. When I talk to people throughout the United States, I don’t know if they are quite as focused as we are. I know, in my district, we teach to those standards. It’s pretty hard, other than bringing in the news, some FYI, we go right to the standards and our textbooks do too. We try to stay right on the mark.

DH: How would you describe the vertical teams approach?
R: We are trying to be on the same page, so that what the elementary teacher teaches or doing vocabulary, structure wise, backwards planning is the same as what I’m doing. I guess the best way to describe it is as an onion. And this is what I tell my kids—we’re an onion and in elementary school you peel the one or two layers, junior high you’re peeling down, and high school’s the core.

DH: What elements of the vertical teams are most useful for you?

R: Knowing we are all on the same page, we’re a support system.

DH: How would you describe your team? To what extent is there collaboration going on?

R: Quite a lot. We meet once a month; we have a representative from all levels. My group, within the team is doing the US history portion of it, and that’s what we’re concentrating on. But we’ve also incorporated geography, vocabulary, critical thinking. So we’re all trying to assure that every child is ready for the next level.

DH: To what extent do you think definitions of history and social studies are changing right now?

R: I think to the public, as well as educators, are becoming more aware of how important history is. If you read President Bush’s comments on no child left behind, he feels that too many kids are being left out of history. That we have no knowledge of a history base, and that it is paramount that we start incorporating it into our curriculum. We’ve kind of been like the ugly step-sister, always on the outside looking in.

DH: Could you describe your curriculum in your school?

R: Sixth grade is ancient civilizations. We start at with the development of the world and we go through anthropology, with Lucy, you know, the original, all the way to the decline of Rome. Seventh grade is the middle ages, Islam, Crusades, New World exploration. Eighth grade takes on a review of the New World exploration, hopefully, God willing, up to Reconstruction after the Civil War. I like to also introduce the women’s movement.

DH: Does the high school pick up at Reconstruction or do they review?

R: They review it, and then they continue on. And they go all the way through, I think, through Korea.
Santa Clarita, California  
Public urban high school 2 yrs. Exp. female

DH: How has your teaching style changed over your career?

R: As I put on the survey, I’m a relatively new teacher, so—I was able to communicate with our department a lot better. In our department we were able to share a lot of ideas, so my teaching style has incorporated many different ideas presented by both the conference and teachers getting together and talking.

DH: How has this changed your thinking about history and social studies?

R: Well, I currently teach economics and psychology and civics. On the civics and economics side, it’s easier for me to collaborate with other teachers to make the material more relative [relevant] to what the students are learning. Them learning numbers and dates does nothing for them. I’m able to find different ways to present the same information so that it’s relevant to their lives.

DH: To what extent has the standards movement affected your teaching?

R: For me, it hasn’t at all, because I don’t have the standards at this point installed in the two curriculum areas I teach. But I can answer for my husband. For my husband, the vertical teaming and the departments coming together and talking about the standards is definitely a step in the right direction.

DH: In what way?

R: Because the teachers are now collaborating about what ways to teach certain standards that may be difficult or finding directions to attack different standards.

DH: To what extent has the vertical teams influenced your school’s curriculum?

R: School-wide? We have about 250 teachers with a student population of about 4000, so I know for the social studies department we have about twenty teachers, twenty-five teachers, and half of them are working very closely together in different areas—looking at the tests, talking with each other. English department is incorporating it, math is incorporating it, I don’t know if science is. But with that many teachers, it is difficult to get everyone on the same playing field, very difficult. It’s difficult with a small school, so when you take that many different ideas—old versus young, as far as though goes, it’s hard to change people.
DH: What elements of the training did you find most useful for you?

R: There was a book that came with it, and we were able to pull out all those different lessons in there, figure out good ways to teach them, and that's what came the most. Just knowing that people—who in your department is with you, and who isn't with you was kind of nice, and the conference definitely did that because some people said, I'm not going, I could care less if I learn about anything. That's what has kind of brought us together, anyway.

DH: How do you think the definitions of what history is and social studies are have changed? Where do you think they are going?

R: Again, I'm a relatively young teacher, so I'm not like some of the other people who have been around for thirty years and they change every ten years, but I definitely like the movement away from calling it strictly history and more of a social science. Incorporating, I don't know, you are not looking at just the rote historians, you are looking at people and all aspects of history, different sciences related to different peoples, different populations, different countries. So I like the movement towards social science.

When I was growing up, it was social studies, it's never called directly history for me, so I can't really address it in high school. In college there's a history degree, and it's pretty much worthless. You'd never want to get a degree in that, so you know, social science is pretty much where everyone is moving, so I suppose I just kind of follow the crowd.

DH: Could you tell me what your curriculum is at your school?

R: Meaning, what we teach? We have quite a variety—we have world history, US history. Sophomores are required to take world history, and then junior year you must take US history, and the option for AP US. Seniors must all take econ and civics, which are both semester courses.

DH: Do you have other electives?

R: We do. We have psychology, which right now is torn between two different areas; some people want to call it a health or behavioral science, and some people want to call it a social studies field. We have some medical magnet classes, which are covered by history. It's a whole field at our school, so you kind of get the medical end of history. We're trying to bring in an environmental science history kind of deal, I'm not sure what that's going to entail. AP—both World and US.

DH: Do you have any questions for me?
R: No, you know the AP vertical teaming did their job, they showed us what to do quite clearly, and we understood it, and I don’t have any questions.

Interview #5: February 17, 2003

Industry, CA
Public Urban High School 26 years experience. male

DH: How would you say your teaching style has changed over your career?

R: Oh, I think I was trained in the didactic, you know, most teachers at that time were originally. I was a very good lecturer, and pretty much was, like the information giver. I think over the course of the career, I have changed now where I do a lot more cooperative learning activities; I do a lot more Socratic seminars with the students. I have the students much more actively involved in things like quick writes. First I teach them, model it for them, how to evaluate them, etc. Then I have them take over so that they learn [dog barking], they learn how to look for super sentences or power phrases or . . . .

DH: I think that gives me an idea. How has this change over time affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: Well, it’s made me come to the recognition that history, multiple interpretations and social sciences—again I go back to my training. We were pretty much taught that there was a right answer, and now I think the way, the process by which I teach this is much more open ended. Teaching kids to think for themselves, and some would be able to justify it from the information that is available. Whether that’s primary sources or secondary resources.

DH: To what extent has the standards movement affected your thinking?

R: Well, it channels it. There’s no doubt about it. It’s—before, everything was just content coverage, and now instead of just a broad survey, now you are much more focused and everything I do tends to target one way or the other towards the standards. In fact, I give my kids a copy of the standards, and we go over them, so that they understand what they are, what we’re doing, and again, starting off for the first few weeks, I show them how everything we’re doing relates to it, but after I teach them that, they have to tell me how what we’re doing relates to the standards.

DH: I see from your survey that you are not implementing vertical teams at your school. I see that you did attend the workshop about three years ago. Did you bring anything from the workshop that’s found its way into your classroom?
R: Oh absolutely. A lot of the techniques of the vertical team will work just as well on your own. Plus some of the specific methodologies, like OPTIC [Overview, Parts, Title, Interrelationships, Conclusion: a strategy to deconstruct primary documents] some of those things that I use.

DH: How many people went to that workshop from your school?

R: I think, I'm trying to remember, I think it was, like seven.

DH: Was there resistance to the idea?

R: Oh, you know, pretty traditional—oh yeah, OK, this is pretty good stuff, but I've been doing it this way for this long, and I don't feel comfortable doing it this new way. I'm not the stereotype of the old bald guy, I've always tended to be an eclectic in my ed career, and I try to go for the best regardless of where I find it. Also, one of the first things that I mastered when I was first teaching was the inquiry method or the scientific methodology applied to social studies, and it's always made me much more willing to observe and watch the effect of things, and at the end of every unit, I put all my papers in a manila folder. What I do at the end of each unit, I write up a critique on what went well, what I thought went well, and what I should include next time. Just a diverse number of things like that. To try to keep me more focused on the learning end of it as well as the teaching.

DH: Do you think that the definition of the history and social studies curricula are changing?

R: Well I think it's been changing for the past decade. I think that at this particular time and juncture that there's much more of an impetus to move it into a certain direction. I go back to what I first said, and you know that's been changing for the last decade.

DH: What direction do you think it's changing?

R: I think it's going more toward open ended thinking, more towards discovery learning, I think it's going to integrated thematical [themes], almost what we would call at least a few years ago, a humanities approach to the social sciences instead of letting it sit in abeyance of all the other things around it, now I believe, what I see and certainly what I try to do in the classroom, is to bring in art and architecture, and music and things of that nature, because it helps define the times for the kids.

DH: Could you tell me your curriculum in your school in social studies?

R: Freshman year they take no history whatsoever. The sophomore year they take world history and geography, or western civ and geography, whatever you want to
call it. The junior year is straight American history, starting with the Reconstruction period.

DH: Do you review prior to reconstruction or do you just pick up there?

R: It’s a review, but it’s like, maybe, ten, twelve days – it’s not very much.

DH: That’s fast.

R: In my opinion, too fast. Because of the supposition that they’ve learned the rest of it in eighth grade, and I think it’s too big of a gap there. And of course the senior year is one semester of government and one semester of economics.

**Interview #6: Sunday, February 23**

Santa Ana, CA  
Public urban, middle school (24 years experience) female

DH: How has your teaching style evolved over your career?

R: Well, I’ve changed content areas, so it’s changed dramatically.

DH: Where did you start?

R: I started out as a language arts teacher. So, I would say that I teach social studies with a strong … at one point I was teaching a core class, combined language arts and history,

DH: And long did you do that?

R: I did that for about twelve years.

DH: Are those kinds of courses still offered in your district?

R: Yes, but not at my site. Since I been just teaching social studies and with the big push towards writing across the curriculum, and writing in the content areas and reading expository, I’ve been applying much more of my skills as a language arts teacher within the content of social studies.

DH: I teach AP, and that is one of my major focus with the students—we begin the year with writing and we end the year with writing.
R: See, I’m working with teachers in vertical teaming with the AP challenge grant and I also teach AVID, if you know what that is.

DH: No, could you explain that to me please?

R: AVID is a program, an elective course—it represents Advancement via Individual Determination. It takes mid-level achieving students who have the drive to achieve more in school and work with them on study skills, you work with them on reading and writing skills, you work with them on— you take their motivation, and you go with it. You work with them on confidence building, you go on fieldtrips to colleges and universities, we go over courses they need to be in middle school to qualify for taking AP courses at the high school so that they can qualify for Cal State and UC admissions here in California.

DH: How long have you been doing this?

R: This is my second year with this program. I teach two sections of that and four sections of social studies.

DH: How long has AVID been in place in California?

R: Oh, over twenty years. It’s growing by leaps and bounds right now because it lines up so well with the goals of the AP challenge grant; you know the direction we’re trained to go by raising the bar for all students.

DH: How has the change that you’ve gone through affected how you think about history and social studies?

R: I think of it more as a vehicle for teaching kids the necessary critical thinking skills and writing skills that they need for further academic success. And success in their careers later on.

DH: To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: I fine tune lesson plans. I fine tune them so they’re more aligned with the standards; I’ve thrown out things that weren’t as closely aligned with the standards.

DH: To what extent has your participation in vertical teams influenced you or your school’s curriculum?

R: So far, we’re sort of in our infancy in terms of working within the vertical team. You know, for me personally, dialoging with the high school has been a big help because it makes me realize that I think I’m on the right track. In doing what I’m doing and I’m just trying to share that wealth around with other people on my staff.
DH: What elements of the vertical team have you found particularly useful?

R: Just the sessions where we get together with the fifth grade through the twelfth grade teachers within our content areas, just the dialoging that goes on.

DH: I'll bet that's really helpful.

R: It is! Just knowing what it is that the kids need to be doing. At our level, in order to be successful at that higher level.

DH: Would you say that this collaboration is working for the people who are participating in this program?

R: I think that for the people who are participating, yes. And unfortunately, we can't have everybody participate.

DH: Is this a mandated or voluntary thing?

R: It was voluntary.

DH: So you report back to your department about what happens and do they give you ideas to take to the next meeting?

R: Yes.

DH: Would you try to define what you think history and social studies are today?

R: [laughter] You mean what it is as a subject in school?

DH: No, as a definition.

R: As a definition?

DH: Well, I guess what I'm getting at is that I perceive the definitions as being in flux, and I just want to know what people perceive them as.

R: I've never really thought too much about it. But, you know, history is more about what has happened, social studies is more the integration of what's happened and how it's been affected by other factors, such as culture, not just events—culture, geography, all these other factors that affect history, but aren't necessarily the story itself.

DH: You identify yourself as a social studies teacher, is that correct?
R: Yeah, I have a supplementary authorization to teach social studies in the state of California.

DH: The reason I ask is that I see what the university history people are doing, how the College of Education trains teachers, and what secondary teachers are doing as something that has changed over time.

R: Boy, I would say. I think a lot of teachers are reluctant to change and are resistant—to them it’s all about the curriculum itself and you know, maybe I’m wrong, but to me it’s a vehicle. A basic understanding of what’s happened in the past and different factors that has affected those events. We can look at events today and see how those factors are affecting us today, and again, help our decision making.

DH: Could you please tell me what courses are offered at your school?

R: In social studies? Sixth grade is world history—early man to the rise of Rome. Seventh grade is the fall of Rome and they go through the age of exploration, and eighth grade is US history.

DH: And how far do they go up in US history?

R: I believe they go to reconstruction.

DH: At the high school do they pick up at reconstruction? Do you know?

R: As far as I know, that’s what they do.

DH: With my juniors, I assume they know nothing.

R: That’s a problem. And their level of thinking as changed too.

DH: Do you have any questions for me?

R: Questions about the dissertation.

Interview #7: Sunday, February 27

Public urban junior high school (35 years experience) Industry, CA Male

Tape recorder was not on!
1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: Says he hasn’t changed, but … does have an emphasis on writing and authentic assessment.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: Says he has not changed his thinking.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

Standards are horrible – “drill and kill.” Wrong things are emphasized, and younger teachers are learning the wrong way to do things.

4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school’s) curriculum? Comment.

He does communicate with the high school, but VTSS has not affected the grades seven and eight curriculum. Some of the elements of VTSS are useful—for example, some of the history examples (analyzing primary documents, how to write). There has been some collaboration with the high school, but this does not directly affect his classroom.

5. To what extent do you think the definitions of history and social studies are changing at this moment in time?

R: History is using the past to explain the present. He does not really define social studies.

6. Please describe the curriculum of your department.

R: Does not address issue of curriculum, other than the standards are bad (because of multiple choice testing) and authentic assessment is good.
Interview #8: E-mail response February 23, 2003

Public urban middle school
Santa Ana, California
Female, 5 years experience

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: I seemed to have taken more time to prepare lessons earlier in my career. I wish we were given more "planning days" just to come up with creative lessons that match our state standards.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: I have really moved from a single topic teacher, to concentrating on overall themes of history and seeing how a theme like independence and freedom is weaved through my standards.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: Tremendously. In my district there is great pressure to identify the specific standard addressed by the day's lesson, as well as the EL [English Language] standards used to make it more accessible to the English learners in my school population.

4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school's) curriculum? Comment.

R: VTSS has had little effect, if any, on my curriculum.

5. How do you identify the ideology behind VTSS?

R: VTSS has grand intention but I think it will be another movement that dies a timely death. Our district has devoted much time and effort to it, but it requires much more of a vision, and buy in, to get it to go anywhere.

6. In implementing VTSS, have you been successful in collaborating with other grades?

R: No, not at all. Other than idea sharing sessions, there has been little effort to implement them. I think teachers are not willing to have parameters of what they teach placed around them and this sets another set of boundaries they are not willing to address until required (such as with standards)
7. To what extent do you think the definitions of history and social studies are changing at this moment in time?

R: I'm not sure what you mean by "definitions". The content for History and Social Studies on my campus has not changed in the five years I have been there. Some teachers have perhaps changed the way they deliver the information, but the information really has not changed.

8. Please describe the curriculum of your department.

R: I teach at a 6-8 campus. We have only social studies at each grade level, and we all are required to teach what the California State Standards have defined for us.

Interview #9: E-mail response, February 18, 2003

Public suburban high school
Middlesex-Essex, Massachusetts
Male, 27 years experience

I apologize for taking so long to answer your letters. I have been so busy with the end of the semester (grades, exams, transition into the next semester, etc.) that I have not been able to do much of anything other than school related work. I'm sure you know what I mean.

In any case, I'll do the best that I can to answer your questions. I should say up front that my school has no vertical teaming plan at all at my high school. The only vertical teaming that I've done has been on an independent basis with other teachers who share my level of student. It is a very informal and unofficial collaboration.

I will answer each of your questions in order.

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: My style has changed a great deal over the 27 years that I have been teaching. As I look back I feel badly for any student who found themselves in my classroom for the first five years of my career. Since then, however, I like to think that I've become a good teacher. I've put more of the responsibility of learning on the student themselves. I have challenged the students to find answers to my questions on history rather than simply dictate to them. For example, when studying World War I the question they must answer is "Did we join the right side in WWI, Should we have sided with Germany?" They answer this question with papers, display projects, and class
discussion. Trips to the library are done on a regular basis. The exercise culminates in a formal class debate where a vote is taken to decide what our country should have done. I guess you could say that my style takes on those qualities of a director; I ask intriguing (hopefully) questions and point the way to the answers and then turn the learning over to the student (where it should be). There is a lot of reading, writing, researching, discussion, and, with any luck, a little enlightenment.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: It has confirmed my belief that a democratic society is dependent upon an educated populace, and that a strong social studies and history background is essential for every individual. Without a national memory we flounder as a people, and will be victimized by the forces (economical, political, religious, corporate, or whatever) that act on our lives.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: The standards movement has had no influence on my teaching except to give me the satisfaction that I have been on the correct track. This has given me some personal satisfaction in that my Department Chair and I have had words over standards. When my state issued a list of standards that high schools should be using, we found that I was on target. It was, I'm ashamed to say, somewhat satisfying to watch him swallow such a large and bitter pill when he had to announce that the US history curriculum would have to be adjusted.

4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school's) curriculum? Comment.

R: As I have said VTSS (as I understand it) has had no official place in our school. But the informal teaming of myself and two other teachers has allowed us to collaborate with each other in terms of our expectations of students, our methods, and our subject matter. It has opened up dialogue between other teachers and me, and has made me a better teacher.

5. How do you identify the ideology behind VTSS?

R: My version of VTSS is a teaming of teachers from different grade levels within the same discipline who have the same level of student and therefore pass the same students on to each other from year to year through high school or even from Middle school to High School. For example, I teach Honors U.S. History to high school juniors. These students are passed to me
from their sophomore World history teacher, who inherits them from their Freshman Ancient History teacher. I confer with them on a regular basis in the areas already mentioned, and we work on common themes, writing and reading expectations, and content. By the time these students arrive in my class I have a very good idea of what they have studied, what their skill levels are, how they have progressed, and where I want to take them. It has been invaluable, but as I have said unofficial. I am concerned because one of the teachers on the team has recently retired, and I'm not sure that the person who replaces him will be as willing or as talented to continue on with the collaboration.

6. In implementing VTSS, have you been successful in collaborating with other grades?

R: I think that I just answered this question. I guess my ideas on VTSS are off base.

7. To what extent do you think the definitions of history and social studies are changing at this moment in time?

R: I don't think the definitions are changing, if I correctly understand what you mean by "definition." I'm worried about how history is being used various groups today. Revisionist history has me alarmed, but that fad seems to be dying out a bit. I am also concerned that History and Social Studies in general are being put on the "back burner" in favor of business and studies involving technology and finance. It seems as though History is defined as one of those requirements that one must get out of the way in order to go on to more important studies. I don't know if this is what you mean by "definition," but it is what I thought of when I read the question.

8. Please describe the curriculum of your department.

R: Twelfth grade has only one required Social Studies course; it is a course entitled "Local History and Government." It concentrates on the history and government of our Town and our State. It is a semester course. Some honor students go on to some AP courses such as AP US History or the recently formed AP European History. There are also several elective courses that can be taken such as Economics, Sociology, and Psychology. Students at Billerica are required to take three and a half years of Social Studies.
Interview #10: E-mail response: February 18, 2003

Public urban high school
Chicago, Illinois, female, 2 years experience

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: This is only my second year of teaching however, I've found that I have become more comfortable in giving my students a say in the classroom. I tend to incorporate more hands-on learning activities to help my students learn.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: That both these areas of study should be taught through a hands-on approach that is challenging yet rewarding. There is no need to lecture everyday in order to get the information across. Further a teacher is successful if his/her students are able to remember the story and key themes of history rather than the dates and names that are often memorized.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: Standards in general influence a lot of my teaching. As teachers we are always measured by how well our students achieve these standards. However, the standards are written in such a general form that there is much leeway and interpretation involved.

4. To what extent has VTSS influenced your (or your school's) curriculum?

R: VTSS has influenced school curriculum to an extent. It seems as though the teacher that teaches the Honors U.S. History is the same teacher that teaches the AP Course which allows for very little team building. However, as a teacher of so-called regular classes, I tend to incorporate many of the High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) needed to be successful in the upper level/college courses.

5. How would you describe VTSS?

R: VTSS, I believe, if implemented correctly and effectively would allow for all students to be introduced and successful in achieving some of the HOTS skills that are used in History and other subject areas. The idea of analysis runs rampant in all courses—political cartoons, interpreting data, etc—VTSS provides a structure that would successfully build on the successes of students and continue to have students strive for success in challenges rather than give up because it's too hard.
6. In implementing VTSS, have you been successful in collaborating with other grades? Please comment.

R: I don't think this pertains to the school I'm teaching at because it has yet developed a curriculum that supports the ideas and concepts of VTSS through out grade levels.

7. Do you think that the definitions of history and social studies are changing? Why or why not?

R: I do think that the definitions of history and social studies are changing constantly with the events of the world. History is no longer something we teach as just the past and that is set in stone. History is always occurring with a variety of interpretations. The whole notion of interpretation has brought about a change in history. The same event for one person will not necessarily be the same event for another person. In the past, history has been seen as single answers rather than a story with multiple perspectives. The interpretations will continue to change as the future unfolds.

Interview #11: E-mail response: February 17, 2003

Public urban middle school, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Female, 15 years experience

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: I have been able to bring questions to deeper level for checking true understanding.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: I strive for big concept understanding vs. memorization of facts.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: significantly - Now that we are required to report out by Standards, my lessons are broken up by historical, geographical, economic, cultural and political implications of a historical event.

4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school’s) curriculum? Comment.

R: none—I was the only one who bought into this concept and who has had the formal training.
5. How do you identify the ideology behind VTSS?

R: not sure—I guess I do not know exactly what you are looking for with this question. I will say this, ideally, I strive to build rigor into the lesson’s objectives.

Interview #12: E-mail response: February 14, 2003

Public suburban middle school, Oakland, California
Female, 12 years experience

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: Greater variety of strategies and learning modalities within each lesson; reverse lesson planning so I keep the focus on the lesson goal and adapt the techniques to meet the goal; use of rubrics for evaluation; publish the rubrics at the beginning of the lesson; more small group discussion/research, followed by reporting out to class; use of textbook as a reference instead of reading or assigning each chapter.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: I'm able to focus on general concepts and transference to contemporary social science/current events using the specifics of history to bring the students to conclusions about concepts. For example (we are just finishing up with this) the many foundation documents and thinkers who laid the groundwork for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as well as the impact these documents have had on succeeding generations and other countries—connect that with the ripple effect of current personal and world decisions. Concept: nothing happens in isolation; everything builds on the foundation of the past (so it's best to know your roots) and affects far more than the immediate present (so think before you act). It's sometimes (!) difficult to get 13 & 14 year olds to think beyond memorizing facts for a test, but I feel like I'm taking some successful steps in that direction.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: (a) I fully agree with the idea of adopting standards. It gives me more confidence that I am covering truly essential concepts, not just the topics that are my personal favorites. So it has given me more confidence in my teaching and allowed me a sense of freedom. Let me use an analogy to explain. Put a child in a vast open field or an endless beach and the child may run around like crazy and possibly get seriously injured, or she may freeze in fear of the unknown. Let her know what the limits or boundaries are and she will explore all the space within those boundaries thoroughly, confident that she is reasonably safe from fatal dangers. Or, consider the standards to be the framework of a house. Now that I know it has a sturdy
foundation and framework, I can fill in the sheetrock, window glass, etc. to establish an attractive, livable home.

(b) The paperwork and restrictions that have come with them were at first frightening and now a pain in the neck. “Make sure they're posted in the room in ‘kid friendly’ language (then why weren't they written in “kid friendly” language in the first place). “Make sure the students know exactly which standard you are working on during each lesson.” (just a bit unrealistic—these are 13 & 14 year olds who sometimes aren't even sure what day it is, let alone which class they are in). “Record in your lesson plans which days you taught which standards, because when the students fail the High School Exit Exam, the parents are going to go to court and make you prove the child had the material presented to them.”

4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school's) curriculum? Comment.

R: Very little. I was the only person to attend the training from our school. I got some good ideas from it. I've merged those ideas into my teaching and don't recall very clearly which strategies came from that training. I've not met again with the high school where it is more thoroughly implemented. As I recall, the plan was for hs/ms to meet only once a year, in the spring.

5. How do you identify the ideology behind VTSS?

R: Do you mean how would I describe it? A program designed to establish consistent educational vocabulary, building from basic concepts to complex concepts. Also a program striving to develop Higher Order Thinking Skills with all students and independent responsibility for learning.

Interview #13: E-mail response: February 11, 2003

Public rural high school, Flint, Michigan
Female, 7 years experience

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: My teaching styles have changed quite a bit. A lot of it is maturity and experience, but there are other reasons. First, I have taught in both the private and public sectors. My teaching style changed in this aspect because of the difference in student abilities, parental expectations, and administrative directives. Class sizes change which require a different method of teaching, and the types of classes I have taught change from year to year. All of these require flexibility in teaching. For example, last year I taught a Psychology class to a very energetic class of 30 seniors. This year that same
psychology class has 5 students all of which are very introverted and quiet. Over all, I feel that I am more realistic in the goals I set for myself and my students. I am not out to change and influence every student like I thought I could do when I first started teaching. I know now that there are a few students that can truly be reached and influenced and the rest are there to be taught the information. My teaching has become less hands-on. This is not of my choice, because I truly love this style, but because of state mandates and the amount of material that is now required of us to teach in any given semester. Next, there is a very real and definite push to meet state standards and prepare students for the MEAP test. This has permeated all aspects of teaching and has limited the amount of extras I can do with students. It has also forced me to focus on writing skills more heavily than on the subject areas of social studies. Sometimes I feel like I am more of an English teacher than anything else. I also see that students come to high school less prepared for the subject areas of social studies than they did in the past. This forces me to spend more time in review and less on new topics. For example, the last time our students were taught the Civil War was 8th grade, but we are expected to pick up with Reconstruction without teaching Civil War in the 11th grade. That is impossible to hope for true understanding with out review. Finally, I spend more time in review before tests and exams than I did in the past. It seems that there is less motivation in students now to study out side of class and a bigger push from parents to make their students work after school jobs which in turn requires less study time.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: Overall, I do not think that these changes are helping the study of social studies. I think they are producing young adults who can work at McDonalds and can write an essay response to almost anything, but have little understanding of our world, culture, society, or history. Don't get me wrong. I make my students write essays just like everybody, but the push right now is to ignore the subject area and concentrate on writing. It is little wonder to me that students could write forever about the terrorists in the Middle East, but couldn't show you where Afghanistan is on a map! There has to be a balance between the basic information and the critical thinking skills that can than be applied to that knowledge. I think that this push for covering a mountain of information has cost us the ability to teach the extras. It was these extras that I believe brought about true understanding and for a few students developed a love for the subject area. I also think it has done an inservice to the students who do have a genuine interest in the upper level classes and subjects in social studies. Here, at Marlette, it has all but killed the Advanced Placement programs in social studies. Finally, it has made it difficult to use some of the teaching techniques I was able to use in the past with great success. For example, when teaching my junior level US history class I always taught a unit on archeology and historiography. The unit culminated in an actual "dig" and was great for teaching not only history, but math, science, and English. I am not able to do this anymore because of time constraints.
3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: Most of the changes mentioned above are in one way or the other to the Michigan Standards and Objectives. There is such a huge push on to meet these objectives by getting our students to pass the MEAP test. Funding for schools in this state is almost entirely tied to student performance on the MEAP. The word "MEAP" is almost a swear word in most teaching lounges around the state. It has really tied the hands of really good teaching in favor of an "all students must perform and learn the same information as all the rest." In some areas this is true, but in other it is not necessarily the case. Last summer, I argued extensively with a state representative about how, especially in social studies, there are subject areas that are more or less important depending on the community setting. The Spanish colonization would be more relevant for students in Florida, and here in Michigan, the French colonization is much more important than the Spanish. The standards have also dictated the grade that subjects are taught. The question asked now is when is this material tested in the MEAP, not when are the students mature enough to best digest and understand the content area being taught. It has forced schools to relegate important areas of social studies to the lower elementary grades never to be visited again. This, in turn, forces high school teachers to re-teach old information on top of the new information the state expects to be covered.

4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school's) curriculum? Comment.

R: We are trying to implement the VTSS in our district with limited success. However, we are only one year into this. We are trying to make changes to meet this program. We have had several in-services with the rest of the social studies teachers across grade levels. The problem we are having here is that communication between buildings, and therefore between grade levels, is very limited. Generally, the high school staff wants to see this implemented, but the elementary teachers are too worried about reading and writing scores to be bothered by social studies, and the middle school's philosophy is "we are not a feeder program for the high school." With these attitudes prevailing it has been a slow process. I did attend the conference last spring to get strategies for this implementation, and then we had 2 days of work with the social studies staff across the district this summer. Since then, I think the concept has been pushed aside for the time being.

5. How do you identify the ideology behind VTSS?

R: I understand it as a program of implementing social studies objectives across the curriculum, but more importantly a plan or map for teaching across grade levels.
Something desperately needed here. I think that this concept is needed and important especially with the state standards and testing being what it is. The MEAP test is not an easy test for even the best students to pass. This year our Juniors had less than 20% pass the social studies part of the test with the state average close to that number. In addition, the state objectives continue to change from one year to the next. All of these make a vertical team program a must for success in these levels. We only need to convince the lower levels that what they do in 2nd grade or 8th grade DOES influence the student’s success in High School.

Interview #14: E-mail response: February 11, 2003

Public, urban high school, San Bernadino, California
Male, 19 years experience

1. How has your teaching style evolved over your career in education?

R: Over the years, less lecture, more group things and hands on things.

2. How has this evolution affected your thinking about history and social studies?

R: Not very much except in the area of recognizing different styles of learning.

3. To what extent has the standards movement influenced your teaching?

R: Not very much—have pretty much covered the standards content all along. What I resent is the belief of administrators to accept broad statements as fact. (Example: I'm told that for some magical reason, that if I write the standard on the board that I'm teaching that my students will learn more and that research backs this up. I've asked, could you tell me please the article in an education journal where this was shown so I could see what research shows how this works—and guess what, know one knows of the article or the researcher—hmmm could they be making it up???? yet forcing me to comply).
4. To what extent has Vertical Teams Social Studies (VTSS) influenced your (or your school’s) curriculum? Comment.

R: None—because there has been no follow-up or support from the district since the Saturday meetings to do this.

5. How do you identify the ideology behind VTSS?

R: Not sure I understand this question—but would expect more connections between knowledge with teachers acting as a team.
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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION


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