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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the way students' beliefs and actions toward social studies interacted and the impact of this interaction upon their social studies student teaching in elementary and middle schools. Two separate and distinctive samples were used. Sample A consisted of 12 randomly chosen students from the teacher education program at a large southeastern state university. Sample B were four students selected on the basis of specific criteria from the teacher education program at a large midwestern state university. The two main methods of data collection were observations and interviews. Six major perspectives were expressed through the students' beliefs and actions. These were: social studies as a non-subject; as a means of teaching human relations or citizenship; as "school knowledge; as the "great connection," or core of the curriculum; and as a stimulus to social action. These findings showed that the official conceptions of social studies have little to do with students' beliefs and actions in the classroom. While it is important to have clear conceptions of and goals for social studies education, it is also necessary to focus on how these goals and ideals can be manifested. (RM)

WHAT IS SOCIAL STUDIES?
STUDENT TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

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Throughout the 20th century, educators have sought to create an overarching statement of the definition and purposes of social studies education. Such statements, abstracted from classroom practice, comprise the conceptions of social studies held by scholars. Despite differences among educators in their views of what social studies is or ought to be, several conceptions persist. The most dominant one is social studies as citizenship education. The 1916 report of the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission of Secondary Education of the National Education Association described social studies as the subject which serves the function of developing in young people the skills and attitudes necessary to good citizenship (Clements et al., 1966, p. 6). Citizenship, in this definition, meant active participation in community and national decision-making. This conception of social studies has remained important. In the 1981 statement on the "Essentials of the Social Studies," the National Council for the Social Studies wrote:

> Citizenship participation in public life is essential to the health of our democratic system. Effective social studies programs help prepare young people who can identify, understand, and work to solve the problems that face our increasingly diverse nation and interdependent world (p. 2).

Other conceptions of social studies are often portrayed as supporting this overall goal. An example of such a conception is social studies as reflective inquiry or decision-making (see for example: Engle, 1960; Massialas and Cox, 1966; Clements, Fielder and Tabachnick, 1966; Kaltsounis, 1966; Pagano, 1978; Hennings, Hennings and Banich, 1980). Here the emphasis is on the processes of inquiry to formulate and solve social problems. Another conception is

having students learn the facts, concepts and processes of the social science disciplines (Barr et al., 1977, p. 62). Pupils would for example, learn the "structure" of anthropology by participating in anthropological inquiry to "discover" anthropological concepts. Still another conception places emphasis "on how most people participate in ... society" (Superka and Hawkes, 1980, p. 574). In this view, the content of social studies should deal with the major roles people will play in their lives and with learning to understand, value, and function creatively in these roles.

But how are these conceptions of social studies played out (or not played out) in classroom practice? There seems to be much evidence that, although teachers may use the terminology found in the literature, these conceptions have little bearing on actual practice (e.g., Shaver, et al., 1977). How then do practitioners, rather than scholars, give meaning and purpose to social studies? But meanings, in the context of classroom teaching, are not abstract conceptions removed from the act of teaching. Rather, meaning is what Beard (1934) referred to as the "frame of reference" upon which thought and action are consciously or unconsciously based. The concept of teacher perspectives is a useful one for capturing this notion of meaning.

Teacher Perspectives

A concept of teacher perspectives as it has come to be used in the literature, captures the ideas, behaviors, and contexts of particular teaching acts (Becker, 1961; Cornbleth, 1982; Grace, 1978; Hammersley, 1977; Janesick, 1978; Sharp and Green, 1975). Perspectives are the meanings and interpretations which teachers give to their work and their work situation. Unlike more abstract statements, perspectives are set in the concrete world of actual situations and have reference to particular behaviors. Teacher perspectives take into

account how the situation of the school and classroom is experienced, how this situation is interpreted given the teacher's background of experiences, beliefs, and assumptions and how this interpretation is manifested in behaviors.

This concept of perspectives allows the complexity of the teaching act to reveal itself. As an interrelated set of ideas and action, the concept takes into account how teachers interpret and create their situations, and how they act and react in their social environment. By studying the perspectives of teachers, we can begin to get at the contradictions and problematic nature of classroom teaching. Teaching is a dynamic event in which the teacher strives to make sense of and make decisions about classroom situations. We ask, then, what assumptions, commitments, and understandings guide those interpretations and decisions. We argue that to ask such questions helps us to better understand what it means to be a social studies teacher.

Since perspectives are dynamic and complex, it is important to avoid easy theoretical categorization. Such categorization generally assumes perspectives to be dichotomous. One might view perspectives as traditional vs. progressive or conservative vs. liberal or reconstructionist vs. transformative. Rather than use standard labels, this research sought to capture the live quality of perspectives through the use of students'[1] own intellectual and behavioral constructs. It was these constructs, rather than dichotomous categories, which served as the basis of analysis. As will be demonstrated, what emerged are "grounded" categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), or categories based upon the language and action of students themselves.

The Pre-service Teacher

Several studies (e.g. Becker, 1961; Lortie, 1975) found that perspectives

[illegible] ormed early in one's career. It follows then, that a crucial period for examining the development of teacher perspectives is during the teacher's pre-service education. Accordingly, the study reported here inquired into the perspectives of student teachers toward social studies education. In general, literature on field experiences and student teaching has not been very illuminating. It tells us little about how students incorporate, or fail to incorporate their thinking about social studies into actual practice. We know little about how students interpret and define their teaching situations vis-a-vis their student teaching.

Our purpose was to gain insight into the way students' beliefs and actions toward social studies interacted, and the impact of this interaction upon social studies teaching in elementary and/or middle schools. After a discussion of the methodology used, we will describe the perspectives which emerged from our observations and interviews. This section will not include an attempt to quantify the numbers or percentages of student teachers who held each perspective. Rather, it serves to provide a beginning base for understanding the kinds of perspectives students hold. Furthermore, while each of our informants would fit in one of the categories developed, many did not remain exclusively in one category; that is, they sometimes showed evidence of holding a perspective other than their dominant one. Hence the next section will be a portrayal of one individual, thus representing the complexity of students' perspectives. Finally, this paper will conclude with a discussion of the implication of this research for educators.

Methodology

The rationale behind choosing one methodology over another is connected to the nature of the subject being studied, and the underlying goal(s) of the research. Weber's (1977) notion of "Verstehen" was particularly helpful in

outlining our purpose. Through empathic understanding and direct experience of the social world, one is able to gain insight into a given social phenomenon. Since this study explored the complex interconnection between people's beliefs and actions, and the effect of this connection on the social studies education found in classrooms, we felt it was necessary to use a methodology that incorporated the existential experience of the participants, themselves (i.e., their actions, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions), as a major focus for investigation and interpretation. Therefore, the methods used were those associated with ethnographic field studies (e.g., Glaser and Strauss, 1975; Bruyn, 1966). As Blumer (1969) points out, this methodology permits the researcher to meet all of the basic requirements of an empirical science: to directly confront the social world being studied; to raise abstract questions regarding this world; to discover relations between categories of data; to formulate propositions regarding these relations; to organize these propositions into an analytical scheme that others can understand; and then to test the questions, data, relations, propositions, and analysis through renewed examination of the social world.

Methods and Sample Selection

This study is perhaps somewhat unique in that it contains two separate and distinctive samples. While the methods used to collect data were similar, they were not identical. In both cases, observations and interviews (both formal and informal) were the two main methods of data collection. Other sources of data collection such as questionnaires, student logs, completed student assignments, course syllabi, and official program literature were used as part of our final analysis. Data were recorded in field notes during two university quarters for Sample A and one full semester for Sample B.[2]

Sample A was located in an elementary teacher education program at a large,

southeastern state university. Twelve randomly chosen students were observed as they participated in university courses, seminar meetings, and practicum experiences. Ten students were placed in early field experiences while they attended university classes, and two were student teaching full time. Field placements ranged from first through sixth grades. All of these students attended the same weekly seminar meetings. Each student was observed in his/her practicum site one to four times, and each observation lasted between two hours and the entire school day. Approximately 40% of their university class sessions were observed during the fall and spring quarters, and each of their seminar meetings were observed during this time.

Sample B was located in a large midwestern state university. During the semester before the field work began, the researcher informally observed the university social studies methods courses. Out of these classes, four representative students were chosen as the focal point of study. The selection of these four students was based upon: 1) their student teaching placement in upper elementary grades, 2) their scores on the "Conceptions of Social Studies Inventory" test given to all students prior to their student teaching, and 3) recommendations by their social studies methods professors.[3] Each of these students was extensively observed at least five times during their student teaching semester.

The purpose of these observations was to discover what actually happened in the field placements, university courses, and/or seminar meetings. Rather than predetermining specific items to look for, a number of general questions were used to initially guide these observations: How is each setting organized? What type of interpersonal dynamics exist? How do the students, cooperating teachers, faculty members, and/or pupils act? What activities occur in each setting? What topics are discussed, and what information, opinions, and/or

beliefs are exchanged between the participants? More specific observation questions, particularly concerning the teaching of social studies, were developed from reviewing notes as the field work continued. These observations not only illuminated what happened in each setting, but they also were used as the focus for in-depth interviews concerning the nature and meaning of the participants' actions.

Systematically scheduled interviews were conducted with each student from both samples on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Each social studies methods faculty member and each cooperating teacher was also interviewed. In addition, other students not in the sample group were informally interviewed. Students were interviewed before and after each field placement observation, and students and/or faculty members were often interviewed immediately following a given class session.

Much of this interviewing was conducted using Glaser and Strauss (1975) notions of "theoretical sampling" and "constant comparative method" of analysis. Interviews were not organized into specific predetermined questions. Instead, interviews were structured around various areas of concern such as: the purpose of teaching a given lesson; perceptions of what happens in a given situation; individual responses to the organization, people, activities, and topics addressed in a given situation; and perceptions of the relationship between beliefs and actions. After reviewing field notes, more specific questions emerged and were then asked during interviews to gain deeper insight into situations and to clarify misconceptions and ambiguities. Responses from students within the sample groups were cross checked with additional students enrolled in these programs. The purpose of interviewing was not just to listen to the words, but also to derive meanings, motivations, and conflicts (often hidden by surface conversation) that lay behind behavior. Interviews were designed to discover

the ways in which individuals interpreted the social world around them, and the way these interpretations were used as the basis for their actions.

Analysis

As a result of these observations and interviews, the analysis examined the students' perspectives of social studies education. Throughout the fieldwork, interview and observation notes were reviewed daily. Incidents and bits of information were at first coded into tentative conceptual categories. As these categories emerged, questions arose that were used to guide further investigation into the field. The findings from these investigations were then compared to the initial categories. Special attention was given to data that seemed to challenge original conceptualizations. Through this constant comparison of data, theoretical categories crystalized. For example, initially it seemed that there were five major perspectives that students had toward social studies education. However, upon further investigation, it became clear that some data did not easily fit into these existing categories. Although there wasn't an abundance of data to support the development of an additional category, we felt that the data that did exist was of significant importance, and thus a sixth category emerged. This return to the data source, followed by modification and/or new generation of ideas, continued until the findings could be presented in some detail. As suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1975), the analysis presented in this paper takes a narrative form, using examples from the data to clarify concepts and to demonstrate the interrelationship between analysis and social reality. From this perspective, analysis is not a static product. Instead, it is viewed as "...an ever-developing entity" (Glaser and Strauss, 1975, p. 32). One's analysis should be open to modification by the originator as well as other scholars. The data presented in this paper is not designed to "prove" the infallibility of the analysis generated. Rather, the

goal is to illuminate concepts and thus provide a basis for further discussion and debate. Presenting the analysis in narrative form reflects its "ever-developing" nature. Finally, the participants were given the opportunity to respond to the study's findings before a report of the study was written.

Perspectives of Social Studies Education

As described in the introduction of this paper, this study examined student perspectives toward social studies education. The findings suggested that six major perspectives were expressed through these students' beliefs and actions. It is important to note that these perspectives were not static or mutually exclusive. Although individual students held a dominant perspective, upon careful observation it was noted that each student also expressed qualities of other perspectives as they student taught. In addition, a number of individual students altered their perspectives during their field experiences. In describing these six perspectives, we have temporarily frozen life, and the reader should not forget the dynamic character of peoples' beliefs and actions.

Social Studies as a Non-Subject

Unlike the other perspectives described in this paper, this perspective was limited to the students within Sample A.[4] For many of these students, social studies was not considered a major subject within the curriculum. Social studies content was rarely observed being taught in most of Sample A's practicum sites. Reading and math clearly dominated the curriculum in most classrooms. Students often said that they had taught nothing but these two subjects in their early field experiences. In grades 1 - 3, social studies was not even given an official time slot during the day. Fourth grade classrooms taught social studies for half the year and science the other half. However, these lessons were often only taught if there was enough time at the end of a given day. There seemed to

be little continuity, organization, or thought put into these lessons. Debbie, who was placed in a fourth grade classroom, summarized the experience of a number of students.

> Well, in the afternoon, if we have some time to kill, we might show a film strip or movie on some social studies topic. We're suppose to teach it more often, but there are too many other things to do (interview with Debbie).

Many students stated that their cooperating teachers were under pressure to raise the nationally standardized reading scores of their pupils, and as a result, little time could be devoted to other educational goals. For many of these students, social studies simply did not exist as part of the curriculum. Although social studies was taught in the middle level grades, compared to other subjects such as reading, it was not considered very important.

What is perhaps most surprising is that both students and many faculty members in Sample A seemed to take the dominance of reading over other possible elementary subjects for granted. This rather crucial issue was never discussed in any of the university class periods observed. When students were asked if they felt this dominance was educationally sound, whatever their answers, they all said it was the first time anyone had directly asked them that question.

Social Studies as Human Relations

Similar to the above perspective, a number of students did not view social studies as a field of knowledge, but saw it as teaching children techniques of human relations. Rather than using history, anthropology, sociology, political science, or some other social science to explore the nature of human beings and the world around them, this perspective emphasized teaching children about themselves and how to cooperate with the other children in their class.

> I think social studies should help children become more aware of themselves and how to get along with others. (She was asked how these goals should be accomplished.) I think the best way is to have them do things that make them more aware of their feelings and values. We use T.A. (Transactional Analysis) for Kids a lot. It's a great book for improving children's self image, and helping them communicate better (interview with Jeannie).

Students with this perspective did not plan and implement units of study around a given body of knowledge, but instead taught interpersonal communication, problem solving, and/or self-concept lessons.

> Jill had her third grade class make "Me Mobiles." Each had to paint faces that reflected feelings they often felt. After the period was over, Jill and her cooperating teacher collected the plates and later made mobiles out of them and hung them up around the room. When asked to explain the meaning of this activity, Jill responded, "We have them do this kind of stuff every Tuesday and Thursday. Each time we pick out a different activity from one of these books (She pointed to three books on teaching children about human relationships.) that helps them get in touch with themselves or other kids in the class. Personally, I think this stuff is a lot more meaningful than the traditional social studies I had as a kid" (observation of and interview with Jill).

The predominant characteristic of this perspective is that all these activities were conducted under the general heading of "human relations." There was no real content to be explored, nor was there a context into which these activities were placed. For example, the above activity was not part of a unit on what it

means to be a human being or even a unit on human emotions, but was simply one of many activities that the children participated in twice each week. Similar to seeing social studies as a non-subject, this perspective portrayed social studies as devoid of any substantive content.

Social Studies as Citizenship

This perspective saw social studies as the means to teach children the value of being a "good" citizen. Unlike the conception of social studies described in the introduction of this paper, the term "good" to these students did not imply thoughtful, involved, and socially active individuals. Instead, it meant an uncritical loyalty to the economic and political institutions and customs of our society. For example, Barb taught her first grade class to memorize the "Pledge of Allegiance" as one of her social studies activities. In these lessons there was no attempt to help the pupils understand what it means to pledge one's allegiance or what the flag might possibly symbolize to different individuals (observation of an interview with Barb). A few students expressed the view that setting up classroom rules was social studies in that it helped pupils become better citizens.

> Sooner or later kids have to learn that they can't do everything they want. Learning to obey rules and how to get along in society is just part of growing up, and it's important for teachers to teach these things to kids. So in this way I teach some social studies indirectly (interview with Tim).

In teaching subject matter, children were encouraged to emulate individuals who exemplified this unquestioning loyalty.

> Pupils were giving their oral reports on "Famous Americans in History." While there were numerous reports on presidents, military heros, and sports figures, there were virtually no reports on controversial

> individuals or outspoken critics of American society. The only social activist mentioned was Martin Luther King, and the emphasis of this report was on Dr. King's peaceful, non-violent intentions and his loyalty to America. The fact that individuals in the civil rights movement openly defied state and federal laws, spoke against the injustices within our society, and often spent time in jail was never really explored in this report. Neither Andy or his cooperating teacher raised these points at any time during or after the pupils' presentations (observation of Andy).

When Andy, who was placed in a 6th grade classroom, was asked why there weren't more social critics among the reports, he responded.

> This is a pretty conservative community, and that kind of stuff I don't think would go over real big here. (He was asked if he agreed with this point of view.) Yes, I guess so. There's no better place to live in the world today, and I think we should teach these kids how lucky they are instead of always focusing on the negative (interview with Andy).

This perspective also promoted the notion that to be an American citizen was intrinsically best. When compared to other cultures, for example, there was often a subtle but consistent message that our governmental institutions, production of consumer goods, written laws, wealth, size of our cities, and/or scientific discoveries meant that our society was "more advanced" than other nations of the world. These messages were often evident in lessons of history, political science, sociology, as well as anthropology.

Social Studies as School Knowledge

In this perspective, social studies was seen, essentially, as textbook knowledge; a major concern of students who held this perspective was the need

to "cover the material." These students depended upon textbooks and textbook-like materials (e.g. mimeographed handouts) in their teaching. Learning was defined as the passive acquisition of information, with little time given to questioning, challenging.or critically analyzing this school knowledge. Whether the information was the names of state capitals, the causes of the Civil War or the effects of the Industrial Revolution, pupils were expected to memorize specific information for a specified time period. Proof of learning was limited to successful scores on tests of recall and comprehension.

Students with this perspective often became dependent upon the textbooks and rarely questioned the information found in them.

> Ann was verbally quizzing the children in preparation for their test on chapter six in their textbook which compared "democracy" to "communism." She asked various questions about the characteristics of each system and if a child missed the question the pupil had to look up the answer in the text (observation of Ann).

Ann was later asked if she thought the comparison between communism and democracy was an accurate approach to take since one reflects a political system and the other an economic system (i.e., apples and oranges). Her response was typical of students with this perspective.

> Maybe that kind of questioning is appropriate for college, but I don't think these kids (sixth graders) can handle it. Besides, if I spend a lot of time discussing every little point, we won't finish the chapter in time (interview with Ann).

When asked why they were teaching what they were teaching, students who held this perspective commonly gave one or more of the following answers: 1) the cooperating teacher told me what to teach, 2) the lesson was next in line in the

textbook, 3) this curriculum was required by the principal, the school board, or the state, or 4) this is what the teachers in the next grade would expect pupils to know. These students had a deferential attitude toward curriculum experts, textbook authors, and/or professors. "They" know what to teach, and it is the job of teachers to follow the plan accordingly. Social studies was limited to the official knowledge found in professionally developed curriculum materials.

The effects of "covering the material" were dramatic. Instead of "instruction" being an activity in which teachers and pupils explore and share knowledge, stimulate interest, and work together toward a commonly arrived at intellectual goal, "teaching" became an activity or problem of management.

> When I look back at my field experiences, the thing that strikes me most is just how little actual teaching went on. (She was asked for clarification.) You know, where you sit down with the kids and teach them something (content). Mostly, you just organized the day - make sure everyone was doing what they were supposed to do, passed out worksheets, and graded tests. No one seemed to teach much, we just set things up for kids to work (observation of Susie's final conference with her university supervisor).

The most important managerial concern for these students was discipline. Students were observed experimenting with various techniques such as turning lights on and off, counting down from ten, putting names on the blackboard, etc. These techniques were used to keep the pupils on task, maintain order and "...ensure that work is being done and that learning is taking place" (interview with David).

Social Studies as the Great Connection

Social studies as the "great connection" or core of the curriculum was the dominant theme in the perspectives of a few of our informants. Students who

held this perspective emphasized the integration of knowledge; they did not teach as if there were hard boundaries between school subjects. An observer in the classroom might not be sure what "subject" was scheduled for a particular time. For example, during observations of Peter's teaching, a math lesson on measurement included measuring map distances to various national parks and was tied to a social studies unit on John Muir.

Students who held this perspective were not dependent upon textbooks. Not only did they see knowledge as integrated, but they also viewed knowledge as coming from many different sources, both inside and outside the school.

> The most interesting thing I did was plan a unit on ecology. I did a lot of my own research on the topic. ...Instead of having the kids read only textbooks and fill out worksheets, I had them make an art display illustrating the balance between all things, they saw a movie about the habitats of wild animals and how they are being destroyed, I brought in a guest speaker from a local environmental group and from the local utility company, and I had the kids read newspaper articles and children's books that dealt with endangered species and man's relationship to the earth. I ended the unit by having the students...write poems about this topic. It was neat deciding what to teach and how to teach it (interview with Judy).

These students were not merely managers of predetermined curriculum. In interviews they expressed the importance of teachers developing curriculum based upon their own and/or their pupils' interests. They believed that they could best promote inquiry and reflection among their pupils if they could exercise more control over the curriculum in their classrooms. They suggested that by integrating subjects, they were able to get their students more involved in learning.

Social Studies as Social Action

This last perspective is similar in some ways to the preceding one. Like the "great connection," the two students who held this perspective developed their own curriculum and promoted reflective inquiry among their pupils. However, this perspective emphasized a more critical stance toward textbooks, the role of the teacher, knowledge, and the social/political contexts within which schools exist. As part of their case histories, both Kate and Peter mentioned being influenced by the civil rights and anti-war movements of the sixties and seventies. They saw the relationship between the dominant political, social, and economic forces within the United States, and the role schools play in perpetuating the existing order. Each expressed a desire to, in some small way, help change our society through their teaching. They wanted their pupils to become more critical and question many of our social norms.

> What I'd like to be doing in social studies does definitely reflect what I think people, as thinking members of society, need to be able to do - that is, question things they read and the prevailing tides (political/social ideologies) of the country (interview with Peter).

As a result of these beliefs, Peter and Kate chose topics of study that would increase their pupils' social/political awareness, and would stimulate them to become more socially active citizens.

> The textbook covered the aging process, and generally, it did a pretty good job of pointing out some of the problems old people face in our country. However, we (Kate and her cooperating teacher) felt that it (the textbook) lacked a sense of real life. So we had the kids visit a nursing home down the block from the school. The kids got really involved. They started to "adopt" grandparents from the home, and we took numerous field trips

there. When they died, the kids wrote letters to their relatives and in some cases even went to the funerals. So we started talking about death with the kids. But then we realized that we were focusing only on the problems of the elderly. So we started talking about how some elderly people regain their childhood in their last years. Some travel and develop hobbies; some learn how to really enjoy life. This is something the textbook totally ignored. We discovered that a big factor in enjoying one's later years was health and having enough money. So we ended the unit by writing to the President, local congress people, and (Representative) Pepper to find out what the government does or does not do to insure proper care for the elderly (interview with Kate).

From this perspective, social studies was a means to increase pupils' sense of social responsibility, and as a result, promote a more humane society. Although this perspective was dominant in only two students, its effect in the classrooms observed was clearly noticeable.

Portrayal of Sally

The six perspectives described capture and freeze for a moment the beliefs and actions of two groups of student teachers. But, in fact, these perspectives were not as static or clear cut as the preceding descriptions might imply. Each student observed was involved in the dynamic life of the classroom; each was faced with processing, consciously or unconsciously, classroom activities, events and people: each had to confront the nature of his or her own role as a teacher. Thus, although each student manifested a generally consistent pattern of social studies teaching which is captured by one of the six perspectives described, each, at least occasionally, taught in apparently inconsistent or contradictory

ways: that is, each occasionally displayed some characteristics of holding, or being attracted toward other perspectives. In some cases, the researchers actually observed students move from one dominant perspective to another. Thus, the following portrayal is intended to capture some of this dynamic quality by describing the evolving perspectives of one student teacher, Sally.

Sally was, in some ways, "typical." She began her student teaching feeling nervous about taking charge of a class, worried about how she would manage fifth grade students, and unsure of her role as a teacher. Social studies was, however, an interest of hers and something she looked forward to teaching. Her academic focus in history and her involvement in community politics may help to explain why she showed little attraction toward the first three perspectives. She even did battle with the first perspective, Social Studies as Non-Subject. Not enough time, she said, was being spent on social studies and she was indignant that that was the subject dropped when room needed to be made in the school day for extra activities.

Sally's dominant perspective, during the first part of the semester, was that of Social Studies as School Knowledge. She expressed concern about having enough time to cover all the material and confided that she was reluctant to be too innovative in her teaching lest the pupils become disorderly and "waste time." She taught from the textbook and seemed to depend upon "expert" knowledge as the basis of her social studies curriculum. But even while she worried about covering the material she began to express doubt about the meaningfulness of textbook learning.

> To memorize facts is too easily forgotten. When you do things you tend to remember them more. Especially if it's some exciting sort of activities that the kids can be proud of and that they can learn from ... I want them to start thinking about and to start doing

their own thing.

Furthermore, her conceptions of social studies even at the beginning of the semester, expressed, albeit in a vague sense, a view of social studies as something more than covering the material. When asked to define social studies, Sally said:

> To me there is no set definition because it involves so many things and covers such a wide area. Practically any topic in the classroom can fit under the heading social studies. Basically, I see social studies as learning about ourselves and the world, very broad.

An observer watching Sally early in the semester teaching textbook lessons and listening to her apparently contradictory talk about the importance of having pupils start thinking and getting actively involved, might have concluded that her talk was mere empty rhetoric, a rhetoric she picked up in a methods class but was unwilling to put into practice. But one might also conclude that her early perspective, characterized by a concern for order and covering the material, was more a reflection of her overriding concerns about classroom management than of a conception of social studies as the knowledge of experts passed on to the younger generation.

Sally didn't find her solution to keeping order in the classroom a very satisfactory one. She talked about wanting her students to enjoy social studies, about the importance of getting them actively involved, about wanting them to develop empathy for other people. Her cooperating teacher encouraged her to "take chances" - to try new activities and approaches.

> I think I've given Sally the security to go ahead and try what she wants. ...She didn't have to worry about what my reaction was going to be because she knew I was supporting her (interview with Sally's cooperating teacher).

As the semester progressed, Sally began to incorporate a variety of activities into her social studies lessons. She got her pupils involved in small group research projects and began to help them analyze and evaluate the information they were finding. "Check more than one book," she told one group, "they don't always give you the same information."

> I've learned that we never trust the textbook alone to do a good job teaching. ...I like to provide kids with a lot of different sources, to get them in the habit looking at more than one thing and not just going by their books.

Sally began to apply her belief that providing structure to a lesson did not necessarily mean all pupils had to do the same thing and that ways could be found to give pupils choices. To Sally, structure came to mean that the teacher should create an "orderly learning environment," providing experiences which would stimulate and encourage pupil learning. Her concern for establishing and maintaining order was balanced by a concern for children's needs and interests.

By the end of the semester, Sally had moved away from Social Studies as School Knowledge and toward a view of Social Studies as the Great Connection. Her lessons began to tap her pupils' personal experiences, to encourage their creativity, to help children see connections between past and present. She began to talk about how social studies should be "more a part of the classroom" and wanted to try "integrating it with other courses." Finally, Sally began to talk about social studies as social action.

> I adamantly believe that too many of us U.S. citizens don't care about what's going on and because of that we're in a mess. I think awareness is a really big thing and learning that there are ways to act on that.

It cannot be said that Sally's perspectives toward social studies at the end of the semester were clearly characterized by Social Action. Although on the level of abstract ideas, she was committed to helping students learn to think critically and then act on the stands they take; however, she wasn't sure how to go about teaching the skills necessary to do so. In fact, it hadn't even occurred to her that there were social action skills involved in social studies until the researcher raised the point in questions. However, slowly and unsystematically she was beginning to teach her pupils skills of critical inquiry as she encouraged them to seek out new sources, evaluate the data they uncovered, and to draw their own conclusions based on the data.

By the end of the semester, Sally had gained more confidence in herself as a teacher, and in the process her perspectives toward social studies had evolved away from a concern with school knowledge and strict order. Not surprisingly her teaching was still marked by some uncertainty and her perspective remained open and changing.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The findings of this study raise a number of concerns that deserve consideration among social studies educators. As discussed in the introduction of this paper, many of these educators have similar conceptions of social studies education. Social studies should promote reflective inquiry, active participation in society, and an understanding of social science. Given these goals, two important concerns emerge from the findings of this study.

First, the findings suggest that official conceptions of social studies have little to do with students' beliefs and actions in the classroom. Even when students' conceptions of social studies are similar to our more idealistic notions, as in the case with Sample B, their perspectives provide a more

accurate portrayal of the work these students do, and the meaning they give to this work. Rather than focusing on our own conceptions of what social studies education "should be," perhaps we need to put more effort into understanding the perspectives toward social studies education that students develop during their professional preparation. It does little good to expose students to innovative ideas if they view social studies as a non-subject.

If the above implication is correct, we need more research that will illuminate the perspectives students generate during their professional education. Traditional analysis and categorization of students' beliefs and/or actions into predetermined continuums such as conservative/liberal actually tell us very little about the way in which the informants, themselves, give meaning to and act upon the professional world they are about to enter. This study, then, re-affirms the value of ethnographic methods of descriptive analysis in helping us gain insights into the complex process of becoming a social studies teacher. Are these perspectives common in other programs? If so, why; if not why not? Perhaps additional research will uncover more subtle perspectives missed in this study. If we are to improve the professional education of future social studies teachers, then we need research that will help us understand students' perspectives toward this activity.

In addition to discovering what perspectives students have, we need research that investigates the way in which their perspectives have developed. As the description of Sally demonstrates, students' perspectives are complex often interacting in unique ways under specific circumstances. The findings of this study suggest that a number of factors contribute to the development of student perspectives including conceptions of social studies education growing out of childhood experiences, significant individuals (e.g., family members, cooperating teachers, university faculty members), institutional

expectations found in the practicum sites, and social forces outside of the classroom (e.g., the accountability movement, social demands for higher reading scores).

In examining these forces, we also need to ask why some perspectives seem to dominate over others. For example, in our samples the first four perspectives were much more common than the last two. A number of educators have illustrated that schools are a major force in perpetuating a technocratic, utilitarian, and object-orientated national ideology (e.g. Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983). They argue that this ideology lacks concern from human inquiry, values, and needs. These individuals might suggest that the dominance of the first four perspectives in our study reflects the influence that this ideology has on those individuals going into the teaching profession as well as the reproductive force they will play in our schools upon entering the profession. This literature also recognizes, however, that individuals are not merely shaped into a uniform mold by this ideology. The presence of our last two perspectives tends to support this notion. To various degrees students selectively chose which beliefs and/or actions they thought were worthwhile. Some students acted upon their practicum environment as well as conformed to it. It is clear that these findings and theoretical notions are inconclusive. More research into the external forces that influence students' perspectives, and the students' response to these forces would give educators insights into the professional socialization of future teachers.

The second concern that emerges from the findings of this study addresses certain recommendations for social studies education courses. While it is important to have clear conceptions of and goals for social studies education, it is also necessary to focus on how these goals and ideals can be manifested.

The juxtaposition of the perspectives, social studies as "human relations" and "school knowledge" against social studies as "the great connection" and "social action" suggests that students need to learn more than just how to teach out of the textbook or for that matter even supplement it. The work of such students as Peter, Kate, and Judy suggests that preparation courses should focus on the skills of curriculum development and implementation. Students need to learn how to develop curriculum based upon their own and/or their pupils' intellectual interests. Preparation courses should teach students to: choose worthwhile topics of study; develop the themes, concepts, or areas of content that make up this topic; research these themes to increase their own level of knowledge concerning this topic; discover resources that children can use to explore these themes; develop activities that illuminate the themes of this topic and promote creativity and/or thoughtfulness among pupils; and organize these themes, resources, and activities into a coherent unit of study. Developing curriculum is similar to writing a documentary or an article on a given topic. It requires interest in the subject matter, motivation and skill to research relevant information, energy to discover new sources, and the ability to organize the findings of this work into a form that other people can understand and enjoy. Although it seems that most students want to teach because they "want to work with children" (e.g., Buchmann, 1982; Tabachnick et al., 1979-80; Goodman, 1982), the findings of this study suggest that preparation courses must attempt to stimulate students' curiosity toward the world of knowledge and the dynamics of learning.

It is not enough, however, to teach students only how to develop their own curriculum. Perspectives such as social studies as "a non-subject," "human relations," and "citizenship" suggest that preparation courses need to examine

underlying purposes and principles of social studies education. As part of these courses, we need to examine the relationship between our students' beliefs and actions, explore the perspectives that students have and what forces influence them, and discuss the relative merits of these various perspectives. Integrated into these courses should be questions such as: What role should social studies play in the elementary/middle school? Who should decide what content is taught? What criteria should be used to determine worthwhile social studies content and/or activities? What type of learning should be emphasized during the teaching of social studies? What is the relationship between social studies content found in the classroom and the social/political forces found within the broader society? As Beyer and Zeichner (1982) suggest, underlying questions of practice do not have to be limited to "foundation" courses. To the contrary, the findings of this study suggest that this level of analysis should be central to preparation courses.

Finally, as Stake and Easley (1978) point out, it takes more than good intentions and the existence of viable alternatives to change school practice. The institutional demands found within the practicum sites seem to have a strong influence on students' perspectives. As a result, preparation courses need to ask students to consider the importance of becoming change agents in the schools. As Kohl (1976) discusses, students should be exposed to issues concerning the "politics of teaching." Preparation courses should have students consider the problems of initiating substantive change without needlessly alienating administrators, other staff, and/or parents. Planning for short-term and long-term change, creating freedom within constraints, developing a support system within the school and the community, writing proposals for curriculum change, and presenting ideas for curriculum design and implementation at local and/or state

conferences are some of the strategies that can be examined within preparation courses.

Becoming a social studies teacher is a complex human endeavor. It often involves subtle, and at times, contradictory beliefs and actions. In our attempts to best educate these future teachers, it is mandatory that we begin to penetrate this complexity of human life. While developing innovative conceptions of social studies education is important (after all, if we don't dream we will stagnate), it is equally important to examine how our ideals can be concretely manifested. Preparation courses are not a panacea for the problems that face social studies education; however, based upon careful research we can develop useful and substantive strategies for these future teachers.

NOTES

1. To enhance the reading of this paper, the following word guide is provided: Educator - one who teaches in a university teacher preparation program and/or conducts research into social studies education, Student - one who is enrolled in a college level teacher education program, Pupil - a child enrolled in an elementary or middle school.

2. For a complete discussion of the rationale, theoretical principles, and methods used to collect and analyze the data see Goodman (1982) and Adler (1982).

3. This selection procedure was used to find students who, at least on the surface, appeared to hold conceptions of social studies education deemed "desirable" in the social studies, literature (e.g., the importance of teaching social studies orientation toward critical thinking, integrated curriculum, social interaction, and involvement). For a more detailed discussion of the selection criteria and process see Adler (1982).

4. Due to the selection process (see p. 6 and footnote 3), each student in Sample B believed social studies was an important subject to be taught, and they were given more opportunities to teach it. Since there was a special effort to do so, the researcher observed more social studies lessons being taught.

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